

## The Ethical Culture Society of Essex County

### Minutes of Board Meeting 10/14/20

Present: Tom Cunningham, Jeanine Rosh, Elaine Durbach, Lisa Novemsky, Zia Durrani, Jackie Herships, Jill Farrer, Peggy Toy, Terri Suess

The meeting was called to order by Tom Cunningham, President, at 11:13am. A quorum was present. Previous minutes were approved.

Tom suggested that going forward an agenda for the Board meetings will be created at the beginning of the meeting and members can continue to add items until the close of the meeting.

The suggested agenda items for the 10/14 meeting were:

- Sharing by members who attended the workshop given by Bart Worden and Bart's offer to provide training on how to operate as a Board.
- Discussion of a proposal raised by Alice and Sue around Living Ethical Culture.
- An announcement regarding the Apostolic Church pertaining to the rental of space in the ECS building
- Discussion of speakers at platforms
- Report on the honoring of Sue Willis
- Re-opening of the building
- How we can support members attendance at Board meetings

Sharing by members of a workshop given by Bart Worden, Executive Director of the American Ethical Union, which focused on managing a society without a leader. Attendees were: Tom, Zia, Jeanine, Elaine, Sue, Alice and Jackie

Jeanine spoke about a survey attendees were asked to complete in which they rated how effective our society has been without a leader. Tom noted that points Bart brought up to consider were:

---how we take care of members as well as those who come to platforms and events but may not be members

---our role in the community and society

---the stewardship of the organization and the educational components

Tom said he felt overall the ratings reflected both attendees' pride in some aspects of our society as well as a desire on the part of some to do a better job in certain areas.

Jeanine said the ratings tended to be higher on social issues and somewhat lower on reaching out and connecting with members and people that are part of the society.

Discussion to determine members' interest in Bart Worden's offer to do a training on how to run a Board

Some points made:

- The workshop would cover items like how to vote, how boards should function, how to make decisions together.
- The training could be open not only to members but also to anyone interested in the topic.
- It might be beneficial to have questions and possible outcomes in mind prior to the program.
- Maybe the training could be given in shorter sessions rather than one long one.

Tom will reach out to Bart to reschedule and set up the workshop(s).

### Platforms

Elaine reported the following:

- Alice and Sue will be doing a shared program before Thanksgiving on Nov 22nd on Gratitude.
- Riverdale ECS is offering a talk on the end of policing on November 15th.
- The Brooklyn ECS is offering an all-society event on January 31st. They are looking for a national speaker.

There was some discussion about the possibility of having more frequent platforms to increase interest and membership in the society along with the recognition of the challenge of providing these platforms on Zoom while the building is closed. Elaine is aiming for one speaker a month and one colloquy a month, so we will be meeting every second Sunday. The last Sunday of October is tentatively set for the next platform.

Four or five all-society events have been scheduled - mid-November, end of January, mid-March and mid-May.

Jackie brought up a request to hold platforms at a later time in the day. Members weighed in with pros and cons. It was decided that, without a compelling reason to change the time that would benefit the society as a whole, we would keep to the 11am time for platforms.

### Update on Apostolic Church

The Apostolic Church was informed that we are not reopening our building at this time. They said they will have to look elsewhere for their meetings and asked that their \$500 deposit be returned. The Board unanimously agreed to return the deposit. Jeanine will send a check along with a letter expressing appreciation to the group. Members commented that they were good tenants and would be welcome to come back at a future date when the building reopens.

### Honoring Sue Willis

Sue will be honored by the Maplewood South Orange Coalition on Race on a Zoom call on October 17. The cost per person to attend is a \$100 donation. ECS is donating \$100 and Jeanine will be attending on behalf of the Society. Tom also plans to attend. Jeanine will also write up and send a letter in recognition and appreciation of Sue's contribution.

### Living Ethical Culture in Our Times

Sue and Alice have proposed continuing with this topic and would like an ad hoc committee to talk about how we can continue to explore it as a group.

--Elaine will connect with Sue and Alice to schedule dates for platforms.

--The board, and possibly a subcommittee, can take up additional activities around the topic, such as workshops, as they come up.

--Terri and Jill committed to working with Sue and Alice on this topic.

### AEU Book Discussions

Zia announced that the AEU has been running book groups, which started this month, on the subject of race. Zia has been attending and will write up a paragraph on the value they have had for her. It will be sent out to members.

### Reopening the building

There are no plans at this time to reopen.

### Misc

Members will reach out to others who haven't been attending Board meetings or who would like a reminder to attend. Jeanine noted that if someone decides to leave the Board mid-year, another member can be appointed without a vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:27pm.

Minutes submitted by Peggy Toy