

The Ethical Culture Society of Essex County

Minutes of Board Meeting 2/10/21

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

The meeting was called to order by Tom Cunningham, President, at 11:10AM. A quorum was present.

Agenda

- Looking ahead at reopening the building
- Upcoming Platforms
- Annual Meeting in May
- Items from the Presidents' Meeting - delegates, lay leadership, AEU Assembly
- Liability Insurance
- Attendance at Platforms
- Communicating with Members
- Board Training Workshop
- Building Improvements

Looking ahead at re-opening the building

Tom suggested that a potential date for reopening the building was September 2021. Members discussed issues that needed to be discussed or addressed when considering reopening.

- Would we require evidence of vaccination? Is it legal to do so?
- Would we have to continue to require masks and social distancing and possibly limit occupancy?
- What state and local and ordinances would be in effect?
- Would we continue to require signing of a waiver of liability?
- Do we want to continue to offer a Zoom option of platforms even after the building reopens for people who otherwise are not able to attend?
- Will we be able to have refreshments after meetings due to social distancing requirements?

Jeanine and Zia meet monthly with other societies who have buildings. They will raise some of these issues/questions with them.

Upcoming Platforms

Sunday 2/14 at 11am - Tom Cunningham will be speaking on the topic "Lessons Learned in Talking about Race - from a White Person's Perspective."

Sunday 3/14 at 11am - Zia Duranni will speak at an upcoming platform on different books addressing race that were presented in book talks by the AEU.

Sunday 3/28 at 11 am - Jamie Raskin will speak at an all-society meeting.

Jill has been trying to contact Bisa Butler for a platform. Bisa will be speaking at the Ideas Festival sponsored by the Maplewood Library in April. Members may be able to hear her at that event.

Alice and Sue are considering available dates for their next platform focused on living an Ethical Culture life.

Elaine has been scheduling two platforms per month. The attendance has been between 12 - 15 participants.

Annual Meeting

- Our Essex ECS Annual Meeting is required to be held the third Sunday in May.
- The nominating committee will have to choose two new board members this year to replace Jackie Herships and Diane Beany, both of whose 6-year eligibility is ending. We'll also have to choose a new Vice President to replace Jackie, who is our current VP. Term length is one year for board members and two years for officers.
- Jackie suggested that some of the family education parents might be interested in being on the board. Tom, a family ed parent, had reached out to other parents and said several had expressed interest, but in order to become a board member they are required to be ECS members for one year.
- Members then discussed ways to encourage family education parents to become members.
 - Jackie suggested we develop a "pathway to membership" and designate a liaison with the family program, in addition to Tom.
 - Elaine suggested that the parents' group might consider doing a platform in March or April.
 - Terri suggested we come up with platforms that would be of interest to the children.
 - Tom indicated that many of the children are too young to sit through an entire platform.
 - Elaine asked if one of the children might like to give a short platform. Tom said one of the children in the family program is interested in Black Lives Matter and might be interested in giving a short presentation as part of the same platform as Zia, on Sunday, March 14th. He will contact them to see if there is interest in doing that.
 - Jill suggested we ask ed program families to give a talk on the topic of how remote learning has affected both the children and their parents. Tom thought this could be done as a video.

Lay Leadership and AEU Assembly

- There will be AEU Lay Leadership meetings on Tuesdays in June.
- The theme for the AEU assembly is Truth. Sessions of this track will be Thursday evenings in June and July.
- There will be sessions on the topic of Ethical Culture on Tuesdays in July.
- The Assembly will be held on Saturday August 7th. Since it will be held remotely this year, all society members will be able to attend.
- Delegates will be designated to attend and will have voting privileges on resolutions presented at the Assembly.

Tom sent the AEU calendar to members with dates and times.

Liability Insurance

Tom said a discussion was being had about the possibility of getting liability insurance as part of a group of ethical societies that could be less expensive. Tom will put Jeanine in touch with the AEU individual who is looking into the possibility of a group program across organizations to discuss the advantages or disadvantages.

Communicating with members

Jill is Membership chairperson. She will work with Zia to make a list of members to contact and connect with. Jeanine will send out the current directory to members.

Board Training Workshops

- Alice has been in touch with Bart Worden. They are looking at possible workshop dates in April. All members of the society would be invited to attend.
- Tom shared that Jone Lewis has been working on leadership training modules that are going online. We will be able to download these resources to better run our board meetings.

Building Improvements

Terri talked about the need to do improvements on the ECS building, both the exterior and interior. She felt that this would be the perfect time to do some of this work since no one is using the building. Terri and Jeanine will be in touch with Marshall to discuss this.

The meeting ended at 12:30.

Minutes submitted by Peggy Toy

