

# **The Ethical Culture Society of Essex County**

## **Minutes of Board Meeting 10/13/2021**

### **Meeting Attendance**

#### **In Attendance**

Tom Cunningham, President; Alice Robinson-Gilman, Vice President; Terri Suess, Treasurer; Peggy Toy, Secretary; Elaine Durbach; Zia Durrani; Jeanine Rosh; Jill Farrer; Lisa Novemsky; Andy Weinberger; Esther Barcun; Marshall Norstein

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

### **Agenda**

1. Consulting Leader Program
2. President's Council meeting
3. House update
4. Distribution list
5. Newcomers Day
6. Building reopening

Minutes from the 9/8/21 board meeting were approved with corrections.

### **Consulting Leader Program**

Tom, Alice and Jeanine reported on the Consulting Leader Program being offered by the AEU. Participating societies will receive a grant and be matched with a consulting leader, initially for a six-month period starting in January of 2022. Subsequently, the program will extend for a period of one year. A total of \$25,000 is currently available and will be distributed by AEU among the societies participating in the initial program. The funds are meant to supplement the costs associated with having a consulting leader. The program is meant as a stepping stone toward a society funding a permanent leader. Interested societies need to complete an application to be in the program by this Friday. Since neither the board nor the larger membership of our society has had an opportunity to consider the pros and cons of having a consulting leader, the consensus of the board was to wait until the 2022-2023 program is offered to decide if we want to participate. Tom will let the AEU know of our decision.

A suggestion was made that we consider having visiting leaders give platforms so members, particularly new members, would have an opportunity to experience what it would be like to have a leader. Others expressed an interest in doing this as well. There is an allowance in the budget for a number of visiting leader platforms.

### **President's Council meeting**

Zia attended and reported on the President's Council meeting.

We need to submit an updated list of new members on the board to the AEU.

Book discussions on racism are being held again. Information is on the AEU website, along with information on the AEU calendar about attending any other book discussions or poetry circles of interest.

Jone Johnson Lewis, from the Riverdale-Yonkers society, is in charge of all-party platforms and is the contact person for joining in programs or platforms with other regional societies.

Alice will be added to represent Essex ECS at AEU meetings, along with Zia and Jeanine.

Zia shared about our Local Hero program with others attending the presidents' meeting and got a very positive response.

Some of the societies are using various technological tools to hold hybrid (in-person/virtual) meetings. Tom will contact Bart to get information on the technology.

### **House update**

Marshall gave an update on the house.

The basement got three or four inches of water from tropical storm Ida, which caused damage to the boiler. We have a service contract with PSE&G and they have repaired it. A gutter was also taken down in the storm. Marshall will be getting it repaired.

We will revisit replacing the roof and the siding in the spring. We are planning a capital campaign at this time to raise money for the house work and, due to current economic conditions - inflated prices, 6-month back order on tiles, high lumber costs - this is not the best time to do the repair. Marshall indicated that the roof and siding are in good enough shape to get through the winter.

Terri and Marshall agreed to meet to discuss any near-term repairs that need to be done and will report on this at our next meeting..

A discussion ensued about ways to improve the air quality of the meeting space, including UV disinfecting technology and installation of exhaust fans to improve ventilation. Members agreed to continue to research these methods.

An AA group is currently meeting in person in the building. They keep a list of attendees and have stated that all attending members of the group have been vaccinated. Signs with Covid-related safety policies have been posted; hand sanitizer is available.

### **Distribution list**

A recommendation was made that we make a formal statement that our distribution/mailling list is never given away or sold to be used for other purposes and doesn't leave our organization. It was suggested and agreed that we draw up a policy statement and vote on it at our next meeting.

### **Newcomers Day**

Several members attended Newcomers Day. Twelve people expressed interest in our society. Sign-up cards were filled out with email addresses. We will need to reach out to those who did not include a name on the card. As a next step, an email letter will be sent to these individuals

thanking them for stopping by on Newcomers Day and expressing interest in ECS and letting them know that more information will follow. Jill will be in touch with Jeanine to ask Liz to put the information in an electronic format and Jill will then follow up.

Terri and Jill will discuss planning a small outdoor event to welcome and socialize with newcomers and share with them what ECS is about.

### **Building Reopening**

We have continued to hold meetings only via Zoom due to the reservations of some members about attending meetings at the building. Coming up this Sunday, 10/17, we have a meeting with the Brooklyn society and there is an all-society meeting on the last Sunday of the month. We had a discussion about possibly resuming in-person meetings on the first Sunday of November. We would like to hold hybrid meetings and will continue to research the technology to do this. Members shared ideas for platforms. A suggestion was made to hold a colloquy for the first meeting to give members an opportunity to get together. Another idea was to hold colloquies at other meetings, alternating leaders for each. Since a theme for the year is climate change, a possibility is to have a talk on the environment one day a month and possibly another on living ethical culture.

We will revisit our policy about requiring proof of vaccination at a future meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:39 pm.

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 10, 2021 at 11:00 am.

Minutes submitted by Peggy Toy