

UCM Covid-19 Task Force Final Minutes  
Thirteenth meeting 3/18/21

Present: John Bond, Kathleen Bryant, Rhoda Chickering, Allen Clark, Claudia Clark, Liza Earle-Centers, Vic Guadagno, Scott Hess (facilitating), Judith Hinds (recording), Rev. Joan, Tina Muncy (hosting on Zoom), Paul Ohlson, Janet Poeton, Noah Sexton.

Agenda:

- Changes to the agenda
- Comments/feedback from church members/community
- Air quality remediation update from Paul and Allen
- Discussion of changes announced by Gov. Scott, current and potential
- Discussion of current and future protocols for the physical church and gatherings
- Other business
- Next meeting

1. Changes to the Agenda

Add:

- Seasoned Souls request from Liza, now item #6(a)
- Sign-in sheet request from Joan, now item #6(b)
- Community Pouch request from Janet, now item #6©

2. Feedback/Comments from Others

The ET and Board accepted our recommendation that the church building remain closed through June (end of the church year).

3. Air Quality and Potential Remediation

Paul, Allen and Barbara have done further research. While all sources agree on air quality standards for new construction, no one knows whether meeting these standards would significantly reduce virus transmission. There is no clear standard for remediation, and there is no data regarding whether the addition of “makeup air” (fresh air/ventilation) would significantly reduce virus transmission. If we did everything the consultant recommends, we could still not guarantee to anyone that they couldn’t get Covid in our building. Therefore the Property Committee recommends that we not disturb the ductwork or do any major renovations at this time. While better air quality is desirable, the actual benefits are unknown and unmeasurable given available data. It would be more economical to wait to do this work when the furnaces, and probably the ducts, are replaced – hopefully within the next few years. We briefly discussed the possibility of moving ahead anyway, but realized this decision is not directly related to our mandate as a Covid Task Force.

One thing that can and will be done easily and cheaply is to replace the current filters with better quality filters and seal the gaps around them.

**Note:** Following the meeting, Claudia and Paul emailed two different documents addressing the clean air issue. They provided additional information, but no hard data regarding virus transmission. Subsequently, Barbara – who was unable to be present at the meeting – sent an email (appended below) detailing her diverging opinion about the need for makeup air, and then after that, Allen emailed his opinion (appended below) that the Property Ctee. does need to

proceed with some air quality improvements, regardless of the lack of specific data about Covid transmission.

Although everyone seems to agree that this issue falls outside the mandate of the Task Force, we may want to revisit it briefly at the next meeting to be sure we have clarity.

**Once again, we thank Barbara, Allen and Paul for this important and time-consuming work.**

#### 4. Gov. Scott's Guidelines

We discussed the most recent loosening of restrictions in the community, and how they might impact UCM. (See also #6, below.)

#### 5. Current and Future Protocols

We still need to develop our own criteria for reopening the building to small or large groups, whether vaccination will be a criterion, etc. John found and passed along this draft policy from a UU church in Illinois. **We should all read it before the next meeting:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1rtP1QUxNvURY8la9IZtWCwQgUvnbabwys3-ITsfZ7ag/mobilebasic>

Joan asked our opinion about whether the building should be open to summer rentals. We recommend “no.”

#### 6. Other Business/Additional Agenda Items

(a) Seasoned Souls – there are 5 groups; some have been together for quite a while. If all members have been vaccinated, could they meet in person in members' homes? This is clearly OK per the Governor's latest guidance, but there should be no pressure on anyone to meet in person until/unless they're comfortable doing so. Each group should discuss the pros and cons, and abide by their covenant.

On a related topic, we see no problem with youth groups meeting outdoors again in warmer weather, following the guidelines we established last year.

(b) The building sign-in sheets are somewhat out of date, as criteria have changed. Claudia and John volunteered to review and update them.

(c) Janet, representing the Community Pouch ad hoc group, asked about providing tangible objects needed by some of the groups C.P. has supported in the past. Could things be stored temporarily in the building? (Mirroring Holiday Fair operations.) This would take place in May. We tentatively approved this idea, pending further details.

#### 7. Next Meeting: Thu. April 1st at 5:30 pm.

Email from Barbara dated 3/21/21:

Hello Judith:

Thank you for putting these minutes together. Although I was not at the meeting due to prior commitments, recommendations were made in my name that I do not agree with, so I will address them here.

Particularly, this section is false:

“There is no clear standard for remediation, and there is no data regarding whether the addition of “makeup air” (fresh air/ventilation) would significantly reduce virus transmission.”

In fact, there are many references cited previously that fresh air does reduce virus transmission. As our knowledge has progressed, proper ventilation, along with masks, has been cited as one of the most effective methods of reducing transmission.

At the least, a basic level of outdoor air is required for a healthy building, especially one that has been insulated and tightened up as ours has.

“If we did everything the consultant recommends, we could still not guarantee to anyone that they couldn’t get Covid in our building.”

Of course not —there are no ‘guarantees’ that someone won’t get the virus. The closest we can come to that is full vaccination. If we are unwilling to require that, then the LEAST we can do is provide outdoor air to make a healthier building.

I’m not sure where the information came from at the meeting, but it is NOT what I recommended. I believe that Allen agreed with me but I’ll let him speak for himself.

Frankly, after all the discussion we’ve had on this topic, I’m shocked that ‘do nothing’ was the recommendation, and I can’t stand by it.

I would ask that the minutes be adjusted to note my objection.

Thank you.

Barbara

Email from Allen dated 3/22/21:

All,

I just wanted to confirm that I fully support Barbara’s comments - we do need make-up air!

Unfortunately I wasn’t expecting to have to defend the need for make-up air to make a building safer and healthier. As recently as Paul’s email to Barbara and me, on the previous Sunday, I felt that Paul still supported the use of make-up air.

I have drafted a schedule for our next steps for proceeding with an RFP, contacting design/build contractors and other steps needed to move this project along as quickly as possible. I will share with Barbara and Paul (Paul is tied up today and Tuesday) and share with the ET by Wednesday - as the minutes indicate this decision is not part of the mandate of the covid task force.

Allen