

Committee on Socially Responsible Investing
Minutes
February 27, 2007
UUA, Boston MA

Present: Sheldon Bennett (UUMA Liaison), Tim Brennan (UUA Treasurer), Joan Cudhea, Glenn Farley, Jim Gunning, Susan Leslie (staff liaison), Vanessa Lowe, and Sydney Morris (Chair)

Check-In: The meeting began with personal check-ins; followed by personal theological reflection on what about our Unitarian Universalist faith brings each committee member to engage in SRI. There was rich sharing of personal histories, journeys, faith development, and how SRI is a strategy for living out our faith values.

Review of CSRI History: Sydney Morris led a review of UU SRI history. (She is writing a book about this.)

She noted that James Luther Adams trained Dick Gilbert and Ken Brown to do shareholder advocacy at Kodak Eastman in the late 1960s. This was the first time shareholder advocacy was engaged in as the UUA. They worked with Saul Alinsky (famous community organizer – *Reveille for Radicals* - on the Kodak campaign.

The 6th General Assembly named shareholder advocacy as a way to hold corporations accountable and to work against minority oppression (that was the language at the time).

Homer Jack, Dana McGreeley were on the shareholder advocacy committee.

Since the 1960s the UUA has also been engaged in community investing.

Bob West was the President of the UUA at the time that there were no funds to honor the GA commitment to provide \$1M in funds to the Black Affairs Caucus (BAC).

The history review led to discussion about President Bill Sinkford's call for truth and reconciliation, including reparations, around our racial justice history:

If there had been truth in the room at the GA that voted to fund BAC – that there was no money – UUs at GA could have raised the \$1 M for BAC

With inflation that amount is \$2.4 million.

President Bill Sinkford has invited the association to engage in a conversation about truth and reconciliation and reparations. The finance committee has had a conversation. CSRI needs to have this conversation too.

Community investing is one place where the UUA has held the course of being faithful to our resolutions.

Review of Working Groups and Their Mandates:

Report from Community Investing Working Group: Vanessa Lowe

Guidelines and policy on GIF Community Investing have been developed by the Working Group on Community Investing. They are in dialogue with Kathryn Dion of the Investment Committee. Vanessa shared the tools that CSRI uses to identify CDFIs. Next step is that Kathryn will take the proposed guidelines and policy to the IC.

The committee reviewed the CI Working Group draft proposal for new CI Guidelines. The proposal includes that all community investments currently held by the UUA are eligible for inclusion in the GIF. However, they will not be automatically rolled over unless they meet the terms for new community investments.

The UUA President has discretionary power to invest up to 25% of the community investing funds available for the UUA to invest – 1% of the GIF. This needs to be included in the policy. (Tim will add and bring to IC meeting).

The guidelines provide flexibility with favor and avoid language and with approval by the IC as advised by the CSRI to embark on some new community investments.

The policy includes review of UUA community investments by a consultant. That report will be reviewed by the UUA Treasurer and the CSRI.

Motion: Proposal that non-GIF monies in community investing be subject to the same due diligence as GIF community investments, with reporting from CSRI to the Finance Committee. See attached policy.

The CSRI voted unanimously to adopt the motion.

Action: A separate recommendation to the Finance Committee is that all funds – GIF, Operating Fund and any other funds in community investing should be reviewed annually. Perhaps these could be reviewed by the same consultant that will review the GIF. – *CI Working Group*

New proposal will be brought to the Investment Committee Meeting. – *Tim & Vanessa* will draft.

Note: Proposal was brought to February 28th Investment Committee Meeting and adopted. New policy is attached.

Report from Education and Outreach Working Group: - Sydney Morris

General Assembly workshop with Ben Cohen confirmed. Sydney and Tim will be responders connecting the dots to Ben's presentation on ethical business models and how UUs can participate through SRI.

Actions: Glenn and Vanessa will serve as a sub-committee to work with Susan and Meg Wilcox on a redesign of a website.

Proposal to spend \$2K more to have Meg Wilcox create an SRI Workbook – include follow-up from SRI seminars, congregational stories – *Susan*

GA Booth: Need Volunteers, Sign up for times etc. – *Joan & Glenn* will organize.

Report from Shareholder Advocacy Working Group:

Jim Gunning phoned in to report.

Shareholder work going well. UUA working with ICCR, international labor unions, and public pensions funds.

Some of the resolutions are getting votes in the high 30s percentages on CEO pay.

Getting some good press – Tim Brennan quoted in the Chicago Tribune.

Climate change/global warming – co-filing on TXU which announced that they were going to build 11 new coal burning plants.

UUA primary filer on Starwood Hotels – good dialogue where we asked them to disclose their best practices to reduce carbon emissions. If they do, we may withdraw our resolution.

Following up on our success with Home Depot on adopting non-discrimination policies regarding sexual orientation, UUA has now co-filed on a resolution asking them to disclose more details on their EEO data.

UUA working with ICCR, labor unions and others on universal health care. We co-filed on Wal-Mart.

Still doing work on HIV/AIDS with UUSC.

Susan sent out report in February edition SRI-News.

How can congregations get involved in shareholder advocacy?

Invite them to write and call corporations that the UUA is filing resolutions with.

Action: Next meeting – figure out the mechanics of how to do this. – *Jim, Tim & Susan*

Tim Brennan reported:

Exciting season. First time filings on climate change.

CERES has developed all kinds of reporting protocols and has led the shareholder campaigns on climate change.

UUA is a primary filer with Starwood Hotels on carbon disclosure.

Also primary filer on “Say on Pay” – shareholders want reports on CEO compensation and perks and want a say in this.

Full report on shareholder advocacy season attached.

Action: *Glenn Charbonneau* of Treasurers Office is working on an excel sheet type report to track shareholder advocacy.

Advise & Assist UUA Working Group:

Glenn Farley presented a report on Sudan Divestment for UUA GIF.

CSRI will explore its grounding to divest from Darfur.

Glenn Farley is working on a PowerPoint about SRI returns.

Action: A CRSI Recommendation on Sudan Divestment Policy will go to IC. -- *Glenn*

Budget

The committee reviewed current budget and made decisions on unspent funds:

- \$2,000 for SRI Workbook (Meg Wilcox)
- Registration Fees for CSRI
- Research Project re SRI Performance (Glenn Farley)

New Members:

Action: Need a job description that is sent to the Committee on Committees. – *Sydney*

Recommendations for new members can be made to the COC by the CSRI. Send names to Sydney. - *CSRI*

SRI in the Rockies

Vanessa Lowe attended this year's conference for CSRI. There was a group of UUs who met to discuss UUA SRI initiatives. Vanessa got everyone's contact information and will look for possible new members for CSRI as well as SRI Advocates.

Vanessa attended an exciting workshop on Post-Apartheid: South Africa and SRI.

Continuing Education on Anti-Oppression and Anti-Racist Multiculturalism:

The Committee viewed *Wilderness Journey* – the story of the Black Empowerment Controversy in the UUA in the late 1960s. This film provided background information for a CSRI response to the President's call for reparations.

Meeting with Investment Committee

CSRI attended the Investment Committee meeting the following day on Feb. 28, 2007. See Minutes by Nancy Gladyszack (staff liaison).

It was agreed that at the next IC meeting, CSRI members will make a presentation about CSRI proxy decisions and the how CSRI makes ethical decisions and recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Leslie
Director, Office for Congregational Advocacy & Witness
Staff Liaison