

THE INTERFAITH ALLIANCE OF ROCHESTER
+People of Faith Working Together For Justice in Public Policy+

Board Meeting Minutes,
February 21, 2008

Attending Board Members: D. Bird, P. Brayer, G. L'Esperance, E. Herman, N. Jaschik, E. Johnson,
G. Mott, H. Parreno, G. Strother, and Marilyn Wienk
Attending Members: Jeannie Gloss and Marie Hickey

1. Opening Reflection—By P. Brayer: Summarized a passage by Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero, assassinated because of his Liberationist stance, who said: What we are doing now is “planting” for “growth in the future.”

Good News—G. L'Esperance reported that Bill Spilly's heart surgery went well and that he is now recovering at home.

2. Minutes—Motion by N. Jaschik; seconded by E. Herman to approve the Minutes of December 20, 2007 as well as of January 17, 2008

3. Issues:

- Follow up regarding Arun Gandhi—G. L'Esperance reported that people at the January meeting of the Prayer in America Committee acknowledged there is a need to heal the hurt caused by Arun Gandhi's recent remarks about Jews on his blog as well as continue efforts to pursue the ideals and goals of the Gandhi Institute. Discussion ensued that revealed different opinions regarding what Arun Gandhi said in his interview by Tim Macaluso in *City*, February 13-19, 2008. H. Parreno would like to form a subcommittee of TIAR to plan a forum and other efforts to open up a “third way” to approach the dissension in the community caused by Gandhi's Blog remarks.
- Poverty
 - a. Poverty Task Force—P. Brayer reported that he and Ed Lemon have presented the DVD program at the Rochester Society of Friends (Quakers) to their youth group. They are scheduled for an upcoming program at Temple Sinai.
 - b. Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE)—G. L'Esperance reported on her recent visit to Kodak about their contract to put people up at the Crowne Plaza. She clarified that CLUE is saying you have to have a fair process, not that there must be a union. She also passed out sign up sheets for three different possible actions concerning the upcoming boycott—to leaflet, to phone bank, and / or to be part of delegations contacting clients of the hotel. N. Jaschik distributed a flyer about the Boycott Launching Rally, Saturday, March 1, at Noon, outside of the Crowne Plaza, 70 State Street, Rochester. P. Brayer raised a question about the NLRB—why it was not involved in this case. The law and its enforcement have been significantly weakened over a number of years; legislation passed by the House to strengthen it has been stuck in the Senate. M. Wienk reported that the Public Policy Committee of the Episcopal Diocese is seeking parishes' endorsements of the Crowne Plaza Boycott.

- b. Increasing the welfare grant—G. L’Esperance encouraged the action of letters / calls / mails to NYS officials (a draft and the addresses will be found on the web site).
 - c. Public Defender—G. L’Esperance announced that on Wed., March 5, 7:00 p.m., at the Sisters of St. Joseph Mother House, 150 French Rd., GRCC will host Tim Donaher, the recently selected Public Defender for Monroe County for a community conversation. Concerning what can be done about the selection process in the future, G. Mott mentioned bills in the state assembly and senate that would take appointments out of the hands of local county legislators. E. Johnson proposed and G. L’Esperance seconded a motion to put N. Jaschik in charge of finding out more about these bills.
 - d. Burial Committee—H. Parreno reported that after nearly two years of this committee’s efforts, the County once again will provide dignified burials for the indigent, which means the families do not have to select cremation against their wishes. The burial committee will continue to provide oversight, and there is still a need for the Burial Fund to continue.
- Peace
 - a. Peace resolution—M. Wienk reported that a mailing of the TIAR Peace Resolution, cover letter, and fact sheet about the cost of the Iraq War to local communities was sent to over ninety elected officials of Monroe County, including all levels of government. She has mailing labels (including 2007 newly elected ones) for future mailings. G. L’Esperance was contacted by a reporter for the *Brighton-Pittsford Post* to provide more information about the cost of the Iraq War to the community—He had heard about the TIAR peace resolution at a Brighton Town Board meeting as a result of this mailing.
 - b. Town Hall Meeting March 6—M. Wienk moved and P. Brayer seconded that TIAR co-sponsor and contribute \$200 for the Town Hall Meeting on the Iraq War, Thursday, March 6, beginning at 7:00 p.m., at the First Unitarian Church on Winton Road.
- Local / State / National
 - a. Rochester Voter Alliance—P. Brayer reported that a good number of organizations is participating, and voter registration will be welcomed at the Public Market among other venues. The Center for Disability Rights has a staff person working with RVA who has contacts at Rochester Housing Authority sites. Volunteers are needed by April to take part in a training session that month and then to help staff registration tables in June, July, August, and probably September.
 - b. “Clean Money, Clean Elections” campaign—N. Jaschik reported that the local group has raised enough money for an ad in *The D&C* to appear on Feb. 26. G. L’Esperance said six states have already adopted Clean Money, Clean Elections legislation. Go to www.citizenaction.org for more information.
 - c. Concerning the Separation of Church and State (First Amendment)—N. Jaschik moved and G. Mott seconded a motion for TIAR to co-sponsor MCPEARL’s invitation to the Rev. Barry Lynn for a program on September 21. No amount of funds was determined. It was recommended that Milt Lederman be our rep to the joint planning committee and Marie Hickey offered to transport Milt to planning meetings concerning this event.

- Immigration—H. Parreno reported the New Sanctuary Movement still needs investigation. Meanwhile forums are continuing to educate about the needs of undocumented people in the area. Speakers include Attorney Wally Ruehle, Luis Torres, and Sister Janet Korn. H. Parreno asks that Board members check their notes to see if they took away the petition she had circulated on immigration reform.
4. Membership—Report next time
 5. Nominating Committee—Report next time
 6. Annual Meeting: Planning Group—G. L’Esperance reported that Paul Womack has consented to be the speaker and the topic will focus on his experience as a chaplain in the Iraq War.
 7. Calendar year report (for 2007) to TIA national: N. Jaschik will send this out to all of us.

The next Board meeting will be Thursday, March 20, 2008 at 4 PM
at Covenant United Methodist Church, (Culver at Parsells).