

## Security Task Force – Draft Report – November 1, 2013

Members and Friends of the FUCSJ,

Since our church is located in an urban area, this brings special challenges especially in this time of increased crime. We are reviewing our security procedures, and we want to balance our Unitarian values of openness with the need to continue to keep our facility and our members safe. Any comments that you have concerning this first draft are deeply appreciated and should be emailed to Bob Miller at [Robert@drbobmiller.com](mailto:Robert@drbobmiller.com). **The deadline is November 8** because the final report will be submitted on November 12.

Thank you.

Bob Miller,  
Building Committee Chair

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### A Report to The Program and Operations Council on Security At The First Unitarian Church

The Program and Operations Council asked for a review of the current security practices to determine if they need to be updated or if new policies and procedures need to be put in place.

On October 6 and 13 a table was set up in Hattie Porter Hall during the social hour to solicit opinions about building security. The leaders of the groups meeting in the evenings were solicited for input via email, the sexton was interviewed and members of the building ministry provided input. In addition we asked for volunteers to be on the Security Task Force that was charged with evaluating the information collected and with making recommendations.

Members of the task force include Bob Miller, John Burke, Karen Conrotto, Liz Owen, Ben West, Richard Gould, Nancy Prince, Maggie Norris and Bob Owen. The group toured the outside of the building and a formal meeting was held on Sunday, October 20.

The task force reviewed the current security procedures and all agreed that they should remain in place.

- All of the areas of the church are locked when not in use.
- Worship hosts ask a member of the congregation to sit next to a person who might possibly cause a disturbance during the service.
- We have installed telephones in the downstairs classrooms
- The office manager locks the office door when she is away from her desk.
- There is a cell phone system in place so that parents who have children in the nursery will be called immediately if there is a problem.
- Eyebolts to lock up bicycles have been installed in the courtyard

- The live plug in the alley has been turned off

The members of the task force believe that the recommendations below should be considered to increase security.

The alley between the Athletic Club and the church has been problematic. There are plenty of lights and the Athletic Club manager has installed security cameras. The task force recommends that the air conditioner unit formerly used to cool the minister's office be removed. Even though there is no electricity to the plug above the unit, leaving the unit exposed may subject us to liability if someone inadvertently restores power to that area. In addition, homeless people have been sleeping on the stairs to the youth room and they use the sewer grate as a bathroom. The task force recommends installing a fence like the one on other side.

Access to the building should be limited during the evening. So it is recommended that the front doors remain locked and groups coming to attend evening meetings enter through the back door (at the end of the ramp). The task force recommends that an automatic door be installed thus insuring that the door will always be closed. A peephole will be placed in the door to increase security. Additional benefits from the automatic door include better access to the church for the handicapped and a reduction of heat loss during the winter months.

It seems that many people have keys to areas of the building that are unrelated to their current responsibilities. The task force recommends an audit of all keys.

The task force realizes the importance of helping the homeless, so the current policies of letting people come in for coffee, using our bathroom to shave before the service and using church members to help prevent disruptions during the service are acceptable. However, the situation needs to be monitored and the policy needs to be revisited if things get out of control. Currently, more supervision is needed in the coffee area before the service and we need to formalize our training related to defusing potentially escalating situations.

Most of the above recommendations involve minimal expense. However, the automatic door will cost approximately \$5,000.00, the removal of the air conditioning unit will cost approximately \$300.00, and an exact replica of the gate on the other side would cost \$9,000.00. The gentleman who provided the quote did an onsite inspection and said that a black chain link fence with gate would be attractive and cost \$5500.00. Given the above, we would obtain bids for both the gate and the automatic door and the total project would probably be around \$10,000.00.