MESSAGE FROM YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am writing to clarify the Board's action related to the Apartheid Free Communities pledge.

Yesterday afternoon, at its monthly meeting, the Board voted on a request from our Palestinian Solidarity and other Justice teams asking the Board of Trustees to "vote to sign on to the Apartheid Free Communities pledge and commit our society to take steps aligned with this action."

This issue was first discussed at the Board's February meeting; at that meeting, the Board heard from the Palestinian Solidarity Team and from a congregational member who asked the Board not to endorse the pledge. After some discussion, the Board decided to postpone a vote until yesterday's March meeting, so that Board members could learn more about other thoughts on the issues. At the time, the Board was considering both its own endorsement and the possibility of putting the question before the congregation.

At yesterday's meeting, because of a Community Messenger message received just before the meeting that referenced asking the Board for a congregational vote, a Board member asked the members of the Palestinian Solidarity Team who were present at the meeting to clarify whether they were asking the Board to endorse the pledge itself or to put it before the congregation (or both). The members present at the meeting said they wanted to stick with their original request; as noted above, that request was for the Board to endorse the pledge, not for a congregational vote. They also said they did not want any amendments to the pledge.

Following that clarification, a motion was made and seconded for the Board to endorse the AFC pledge (with no mention of a congregational vote). After discussion, the motion to endorse the pledge failed by a vote of 2-7. I believe the Board acted on the request it was asked to act on.

I also believe that the Board did not fail to follow our own policy about endorsements. Last year, the Board adopted a policy on requests for public statements, and that policy was followed in considering this request. We will try to get a copy of the policy added to the "Governance Documents" on the FUUSB's website soon.

This decision was not an easy one. Board members have tried to educate ourselves about the issues so that we could act in the best interests of our Society. We recognize that some members of our Society may disagree with the Board's decision, and others may agree, and we encourage everyone to focus on respectful and open dialogue.