

St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.
Minutes of Vestry Meeting of June 26, 2007

Present: Scott A. Benhase, Rector; Jim Sottile, Junior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Chase Felker, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Keith Jones, Danette Gentile Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Susan Morris, Jon Sawyer, Mark Shima, Bob Woolfolk, Vestry; Bill Hall, Diocesan Delegate; Ron Hicks, Director of Operations; Andrea Farr, Secretary.

Guests: Bob Smith, Steve Rippe.

Opening Prayer & Devotions

Scott Benhase, presiding, called the meeting to order following dinner, at 6:35 pm. After offering an opening prayer, Scott introduced Steve Rippe.

Conversation with Steve Rippe of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation

Steve Rippe, Executive Director of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, discussed the history behind the recent addition of parking garages for cars and buses on the Cathedral Close. The bus garage cost approximately \$13.5 million, to be paid by PECF, and the parking garage cost approximately \$23 million, with the cost to be paid in part by PECF.

Steve provided information concerning parking availability on the Close. From Monday through Saturday, fees are to be charged for parking in the garage. Surface parking spaces are assigned weekdays, but become available after 3:30 pm. Parking on Sundays will be free. (The prohibition on parking in fire lanes, however, will remain in effect.). It was noted that during the due diligence on parking needs conducted prior to construction, St. Alban's reported using 21,500 parking spaces per year on Sundays

The PECF has asked St. Alban's to contribute \$25,000/yr in exchange for the dedicated use of the four spaces in front of the Rectory and ten spaces in the new garage. Although this figure is not based on a mathematical calculation, but the PECF believes it accurately reflects the lost income associated with not charging parking fees in the garage on Sundays.

A discussion concerning the requested fee and parking matters generally followed. The Vestry asked what part St. Alban's played in planning the parking projects, and was told that St. Alban's had provided its own Sunday parking data. Steve was asked whether the signs marking the fire lanes could also note the \$100 fine associated with parking in such spaces, and he responded that he would consider the matter.

The Vestry asked what St. Alban's would receive for the \$25,000 contribution. Steve said that one of the services provided included managing the payment of St. Alban's utility bills. The Vestry disputed this claim. The Rector noted that St. Alban's receives its own utility bills and pays them directly. The Vestry also asked whether the fees would change over time, and perhaps end once the garage is paid off. It was noted that there is a 30-year mortgage on the garage, so Steve does not expect the requested contribution to increase.

There was additional discussion concerning the factors that went into setting the amount requested. Steve indicated that the fee concerned parking and that no specific fees are covered by the contribution. He indicated that he mentioned services provided by PECF to St. Alban's so a complete picture of the give-and-take that exists between the institutions.

It was asked whether the PECF would consider allocating to St. Alban's more surface spaces, which are closer to the church, rather than the in the garage because the distance to the garage could prove difficult for some parishioners. Steve indicated that would require negotiations with the heads of the other Close institutions since all this been decided.

The Vestry thanked Steve Rippe for his report and then returned to the order of business.

Scott Benhase added an agenda item for the Rector's Report regarding the formation of a Covenant Group consisting of representatives from the Cathedral and St. Alban's.

Minutes of Previous Meetings

The following changes were made to the report from the Vestry's 2007 retreat:

- During the session on financial stewardship it was decided that members of the Working Group would be invited to speak to the Vestry;
- During the session on financial stewardship it was decided that St. Alban's would continue to use the Shelby data management platform;
- During the session on Sundays it was decided that Marc Fetterman and Bob Woolfolk, and other interested Vestry members, would be given the opportunity to review the list of members of the Cathedral Community.

The Vestry requested that the documents noted as attachments in the report be re-sent.

Motion: Jon Sawyer moved to receive the minutes, as amended. Nathalie Bramson seconded the motion and the report was accepted.

Treasurer's Report

Praise was offered for how well the expenses are tracking the figures in the budget. In order to provide more information to the parish, beginning with the next issue, the Chronicle will show year-to-date as well as current monthly data.

A discussion followed concerning items appearing in the report. The line item for Outreach was discussed, and the Vestry noted that parishioners had asked about what expenses are included in that figure.

Action Item: Scott Benhase and Vilma Smith will investigate ways to breakout the Outreach expense line item in the report to provide more information to the parish.

It was suggested that the surplus appearing in the line item for "Miscellaneous Designated Offerings" is misleading. Because the moneys pass through to the designated recipients, no

funds were put in the budget for this line item. The income, however, is reflected in the report and gives the illusion of a surplus when in fact the funds are not part of the operating budget. It was also noted that the graphic entitled “Operating Fund Year-to-Date Deficit” was misleading because there is no deficit.

Action Item: Scott Benhase will raise the issue of the line item for Miscellaneous Designated Offerings with Treasurer Chris Holmes.

Action Item: Revise operating fund chart to delete the term “Deficit” from the title.

Motion: Bob Woolfolk moved to receive the Treasurer’s Report. Jon Sawyer seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Junior Warden’s Report

Jim Sottile presented the minutes of two meetings of the Property Committee. Included within the minutes of the June 22 meeting is a proposal for the improvement of the bathrooms in Satterlee Hall.

Motion: Jon Sawyer presented a motion to the Vestry for consideration and discussion to proceed in accordance with the recommendations of the Property Committee to renovate the bathrooms in Satterlee Hall as set forth in the minutes of the June 22 meeting of the Property Committee, for an amount not to exceed \$8,000, with funds to be drawn from the Reserve Fund. The motion was seconded by Sam Lewis.

Discussion of the motion followed. Concern was expressed regarding drawing from the Reserve Fund. It was noted that this is the type of work for which the Fund should be used, but the Vestry asked whether there was a way to soften the blow of this sort of expense on the Reserve Fund.

Jim Sottile noted that a number of proposals were considered for work on the buildings, but the proposal concerning the bathrooms was the one that the Property Committee could agree warranted drawing down the Reserve Fund. It was noted that a previous committee also looked at the bathrooms in Satterlee Hall, and that compared to the findings of that group, the work covered by the proposal is superficial given the structural changes that are needed. The work described in the proposal also was characterized as needed maintenance.

The Vestry asked whether parishioners could perform some of the tasks, such as painting, that are listed in the proposal. Jim Sottile responded that Chris Larsen Don Durkee could do much of the work, but that the Property Committee had established a higher-end budget just in case volunteers cannot do much of the work. Annie Bissell has provided her expertise for free and she is willing to provide her workers at cost. It was suggested that if the Vestry accepts the proposal, a request for volunteers should be made to the parish and the request should identify specific skills needed.

Danette Kauffman called the question and the motion carried.

The Jr. Warden addressed the need for better ventilation in the kitchen. Notwithstanding the efforts of Ron Hicks, the Satterlee Hall kitchen fan has not yet been repaired and the kitchen is terribly hot when in hard use. It was noted, however, that even when it worked, the kitchen fan tended to suck cool air out of Satterlee Hall. As a result, Ron suggested that the parish purchase and install two (2) window air conditioning units for the kitchen. Ron priced out two one-ton units at \$1,775 (installed).

Motion: Jim Sottile moved to approve the purchase and installation of two window air conditioning units in the kitchen in Satterlee Hall at a cost not to exceed \$2,000. Sam Lewis seconded the motion.

Discussion of the motion followed. Concern was expressed that two new air conditioning units could raise the parish electricity bill. Jim was unsure of the impact on the electricity bill, but it was noted that an increase could be offset by the reduction in power costs resulting from correcting the loss of cool air created by the fan. The fan is to be repaired, even with the purchase of the new air conditioning units, but would be used in cool weather only. It was noted that fans should not suck cool air out of the building, and that an electrician could assist with correcting that condition. It was also reported that the hood unit works.

Jim Sottile reported that the Property Committee contacted Neil Wilson, who uses the kitchen regularly, and he confirmed that air conditioning was needed, regardless of the status of the fan. Competitive bids were not sought for the units because so much of the cost was for hardware that tends to be priced consistently.

The question was called and the motion carried unanimously.

Marc Fetterman, who has made some preliminary drawings concerning the handicapped-accessible ramp, reported that when the doors on the south narthex were changed approximately 10 years ago, they were made too narrow for handicapped access.

Senior Warden's Report

The Senior Warden was not in attendance but her report was discussed. In particular the Vestry noted that the trial concerning the bequest of Betty Nowlin totaling approximately \$80,000 was scheduled to begin on July 16.

Rector's Report

Scott Benhase announced that at every Vestry meeting he intends to review the action items that were generated at the Vestry Retreat in order to check on progress. A discussion followed concerning the action items. Bob Woolfolk and Ron Hicks will coordinate to ensure that the database is "cleaned up" by August in preparation for Staff training.

During the third week in July, Scott and Brian Keane will meet with representatives from SunEdison to determine whether St. Alban's can participate in their solar project.

Scott reminded the Vestry that Erin Hensley and Harriette Sturges begin next Sunday and that there would be a reception following the 10:30 am Eucharist. Tim Boggs is scheduled to arrive on July 15.

Jane Volkema is going to receive computer training in Dreamweaver and html to enable her to become St. Alban's webmaster so that St. Alban's will no longer have to contract out work on updating the website. Scott intends that, within one year, program leaders will be able to update website information concerning their programs.

There was discussion concerning Scott's proposal for a Strategic Leadership Planning Weekend that would take the place of the Vestry Retreat. The Planning Weekend, scheduled for May 23-24, 2008, is to involve parishioners and the Vestry. Participants will establish the agenda. Popular vote will determine the priority. Scott recommended hiring an outside facilitator to lead the discussions.

The Vestry then discussed Scott's proposal. The Vestry questioned 1) waiting so long to hold the Planning Weekend and 2) replacing the Vestry Retreat. Scott responded that a Fall date might be too soon for the new clergy, and that having a Vestry Retreat in addition to the planning weekend would require members of the Vestry to commit two weekends to parish business. It was suggested that, in addition to the Planning Weekend, there could be a one-day retreat at the church for the Vestry, shortly after the Vestry election, so the Vestry can become acquainted.

It was noted that there was a lot of work to be done in preparation for the Planning Weekend in order to ensure a broad representation of groups within the church. It will be necessary to look at the parish and how it is structured in order to identify interest groups and the leadership within the interest group. Scott suggested that participants, once identified, could be magnets for ideas from parishioners. There was some discussion concerning the leadership helping to shape the agenda, but Scott noted that by developing an agenda by consensus rather than "front loading" the items, the Vestry may be surprised at the issues that are of concern to the parish.

The goal of the Planning Weekend is to establish long term objectives. Scott said that the first step in the process is to develop lists of interest groups that should be included in the Planning Weekend and then identify individuals to put in the slots connected with the interest groups. It was suggested that it is important to think not of individual persons but of structure and organization.

Action Item: Scott will prepare a description of the Planning Weekend in time for the July Vestry meeting, at which point the Vestry will establish a committee to plan the Weekend.

Scott spoke briefly about Bishop Chane's visitation, scheduled for April 13, 2008. There will be a reception following the 11:15am service.

Scott then addressed the item added to the Rector's Report. There is to be a Covenant Group involving St. Alban's and the Cathedral community in order to establish the parameters of the relationship. It was noted that there is a "felicitous" relationship between

the Cathedral and St. Alban's, but also some underlying tension that could be ameliorated by clarifying our relationship. Bob Smith and Bill Hall will serve as representatives from St. Alban's, and the Rector will select two additional representatives. Neither Scott, nor the Cathedral Dean nor the Vicar will participate in drafting a covenant. It was suggested that Vestry participation may communicate the seriousness with which the Vestry sees this issue. It was noted that experience in conflict resolution would be useful, and that it was important that men and women, individuals of different ages represent St. Alban's. Ultimately the Vestry will have to ratify any decisions made by the Covenant Group, as will the Dean of the Cathedral. Scott invited the Vestry to contact him with suggestions for representatives.

Old Business

Susan Morris and Kammie Hedges reported that the Outreach Commission had distributed a survey asking what groups would like in terms of support from the parish. Susan reported that with approximately 85 percent of the surveys completed, groups asked for support such as additional clergy involvement or storage space. The groups were not primarily interested in additional financial support.

Scott Benhase reported that the Cathedral has inquired about partnering with St. Alban's in the Crossroads Shelter. Scott will have more information on this as he learns more.

Marc Fetterman reported on the Arts & Memorials Committee. The Committee will consider a proposed gift of a stained glass window to be located in the south façade lancet window, in the chancel, just above the floor. (Also under consideration is Ron Hicks's suggestion that the window be located in the Nourse Hall Wade Room.) Another proposed gift, a stone carving of an angel blowing a trumpet, also is under consideration. The Vestry noted that there is to be a plaque to Betty Nowlin installed by the elevator in Nourse Hall.

Action Item: Marc Fetterman will distribute a photograph of the stone carving.

New Business

There was no new business.

The order of the meeting deviated from the agenda so that compline followed at 8:55 pm.

Executive Session

The Vestry went into executive session at approximately 9 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 pm.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary