

St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of July 17, 2007

Present: Scott A. Benhase, Rector; Tim Boggs, Assistant Rector; Kate Bouvé, Senior Warden; Jim Sottile, Junior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Marc Fetterman, Keith Jones, Danette Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Susan Morris, Jon Sawyer, Mark Shima, Bob Witten, Bob Woolfolk, Vestry; Bill Hall, Barbara Manard, Diocesan Delegates; Colin Mahaffey, Youth Representative; Andrea Farr, Secretary.

Opening Prayer

Scott Benhase called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm, following dinner. Scott welcomed The Reverend Tim Boggs, Assistant to the Rector for Stewardship & Outreach Ministries and offered an opening prayer.

Minutes of previous meetings

Minutes of the May 2007 Vestry Retreat

Marc Fetterman noted that the report currently fails to explain the reason behind the Vestry's interest in reviewing the list of names of the members of the Cathedral Congregation. Accordingly, Marc made the following motion:

Motion: to add the following language to page 3, paragraph 2, third line from the bottom, before "Marc Fetterman": "In an attempt to get an idea of how many St. Alban's parishioners have joined the Cathedral Congregation,".

Danette Kaufmann seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Barbara Manard noted that the report identifies the new Cathedral body as the "Cathedral Community" when it is properly called the "Cathedral Congregation."

Minutes of the June 2007 Vestry Meeting

Changes were made to the following sections of the minutes:

"Minutes of Previous Meetings"

Motion: Bob Witten moved to add the following language to page 2, bullet 3, between "Vestry members," and "would be given": "in an attempt to get an idea of how many St. Alban's parishioners have joined the Cathedral Congregation", as taken from the revised minutes for the 2007 Vestry Retreat.

Keith Jones seconded the motion and the motion carried.

“Conversation with Steve Rippe of the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation”

- To the first paragraph, third line, change “PECF” to “the Cathedral”;
- To the first paragraph, last line, delete “in part”;
- To the second paragraph, third line after “free” add “, except after 4 pm in the garage”;
- To the third paragraph, second line, after “Rectory” insert “,” and delete “and”;
- To the third paragraph, second line, after “garage” add “, and its use of parking spaces on the Close at times when fees are not charged.”; and
- To the fourth paragraph, third line, delete “Sunday.”

Motion: Keith Jones moved to accept the minutes of the June 2007 Vestry meeting, with the amendments as described above.

Bob Woolfolk seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report

The Vestry discussed items in the Report. The Senior Warden noted that pledges are running ahead of the budget. The budget had been established to reflect a historical understanding of the pattern of how pledges come in over the course of the fiscal year. The Rector noted that it would be useful to breakout the line item for “Institutional Grants.”

It was noted that the parish will prepare a “facebook” in 2008, but that this process does not take funds out of the parish budget because the company that prepares the book does so in exchange for offering parishioners the opportunity to buy photo packages.

Motion: Sam Lewis moved to receive the Treasurer’s Report.

Mark Shima seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The Vestry discussed the quarterly report regarding fund 050 “Designated Gift Funds,” and a document containing a list of the designated funds and a description of each.

Motion: Danette Kauffman made a motion to require that an appropriate body look at the funds in Fund 050 (“Designated Funds”) and develop a process for their use.

Keith Jones seconded the motion and a discussion followed. It was asked why the Vestry could not specify the body to address Fund 050, and there was discussion as to whether the task should be assigned to the Stewardship Committee or the Finance Committee. An amendment was offered to designate the Stewardship Committee, but concern was expressed as to what would happen if the committee structure changed such that St. Alban’s no longer had a Stewardship Committee.

The Vestry expressed concern that some of the listed funds do in fact have designated uses. The understanding is, however, that funds listed without a parenthetical restricting use are undesignated. It was noted that in evaluating the funds the will of the donors must be determined.

The Vestry asked whether all the undesignated funds were accounted for, noting, for example, that the Piano Fund was listed on the document describing the various funds but not on the chart. The Senior Warden noted that the undesignated funds, taken together, are included in the audit but are not part of the operating budget.

Action: Scott Benhase will ask Vilma Smith to confirm that all of the undesignated funds are identified in the report to the Vestry.

It was suggested that these kinds of gifts should be commemorated, perhaps with a plaque or in a document published annually. Such recognition could encourage additional giving.

After agreeing to a friendly amendment in which it was agreed to identify the funds to be examined as the “050 Funds” (because that is how the various undesignated gifts are identified in St. Alban’s records), the motion carried.

The Vestry reviewed the Quarterly Report on special funds, including the capital campaign fund. It was noted that the parish was withholding the final check to be paid to Whiting–Turner until all of the items on the “punch list” are addressed. The funds outstanding total approximately \$60,000.

It was suggested that the Finance Committee obtain professional advice concerning the management of parish investments in order to maximize returns without having to develop the expertise internally. It was noted that there exists on the Committee a great deal of investment experience. Nathalie Bramson reported that the portfolio is still in transition, but is well diversified. Nathalie also noted that some of the small investments have been maintained because the funds are closed to new investors and the Committee decided to leave some small amount in the investment as a place holder for St. Alban’s.

Motion: Nathalie Bramson moved to receive the Endowment Fund Report.

Bob Witten seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Junior Warden’s Report

Jim Sottile reported that the window air conditioning unit was installed today in the kitchen in Satterlee Hall.

At the June Vestry meeting, prior to approving the proposed renovations to the Satterlee Hall bathrooms, the Vestry had discussed the involvement of the St. Joseph’s Guild. Since then the possible involvement of the St. Joseph’s Guild in the project has lead to a complication in that: 1) the involvement of volunteers requires additional coordination of the work; and 2) the contractor was not prepared to proceed with the same bid if he has to work and coordinate with St. Joseph’s Guild.

Motion: Jim Sottile asked the Vestry to approve proceeding as authorized at the June Vestry meeting with the renovations to the Satterlee Hall bathrooms using the St. Joseph's Guild as the Property Committee deems appropriate.

The motion was seconded by Sam Lewis and carried.

The Vestry discussed the volunteers visiting from Wesley Methodist Church who were working to improve various shelters, including the Crossroads Shelter.

Action: Scott Benhase will, on behalf of St. Alban's, give the volunteers a certificate of thanks.

The Junior Warden reported that the Property Committee had just received a proposal from Stonehouse Group in response for requests for bids to evaluate the parish's facilities. Having just received the bid, the Property Committee was not yet prepared to make a recommendation but Jim provided some initial observations concerning the bid. Stonehouse has proposed providing a draft report in October and the final report in November. In terms of fees, Stonehouse proposed charging an hourly rate not to exceed a total of \$20,000. Jim expects to have a recommendation for the Vestry at the August Vestry meeting.

Senior Warden's Report

Senior Warden Kate Bouvé provided a written report to the Vestry. A discussion of some of the items followed.

The trial concerning the will of Betty Nowlan began on July 16. Frank Wade attended the first day and thought the trial would conclude on July 17. Papers concerning an annuity of Betty's that names St. Alban's as beneficiary (and is not at issue in the trial) were completed and sent in to AIG. As yet there has been no response.

Action: Kate Bouvé will follow up with AIG regarding Betty Nowlan's annuity.

The Vestry discussed the Rector Position Description that, according to the terms of the Letter Agreement between Scott and the Vestry, should be completed by the end of Scott's first year as the Rector of St. Alban's. The process should be completed at the September Vestry meeting.

The Letter of Agreement also contemplates a Mutual Ministry Review by the Rector and the Vestry. The objective is to evaluate our progress. This will be an annual occurrence. An instrument intended to assist in the process was provided to the Vestry. The forms should be completed and submitted, anonymously, to Kate Bouvé. It was expected that, in completing the forms, members of the Vestry would bring their individual views to the task, but be mindful of their role as the representative elected body of the parish.

Rector's Report

Scott Benhase announced that Alex Netchvolodoff, who served on the Stewardship Task Force, will speak to the Vestry at the August meeting concerning the Task Force's findings and reports.

The Vestry proceeded through the list of action items generated during the 2007 Retreat and discussed the progress made. In particular, it was noted that the Shelby expert was scheduled to arrive on August 20th to work on the system and train the staff.

The Rector presented a written draft proposal for the Parish Planning Weekend. Such a weekend should occur every five years. It was noted that the draft proposal reflected a positive approach to exploring the future of the parish. A list of action items would be created in the process and clarified before a vote at the conclusion of the Weekend. The final product would be communicated to the parish.

The Vestry established a committee to plan the Weekend: Danette Kaufmann, Sam Lewis, Nathalie Bramson, Jon Sawyer, and Kate Bouvé. Kate will convene the Committee.

The first meeting of the Cathedral Covenant Group is scheduled for July 18, 2007. The Group is to take as much time as necessary to develop a document that will be acceptable to the Vestry and the Cathedral Chapter. Bill Hall is responsible for reporting to the Vestry on developments.

Scott Benhase added an item to the agenda in order to discuss relocating the nursery from the second floor of Satterlee Hall to room 203 (located at the back of Trenbath Assembly). Under this proposal, the toddlers would stay upstairs, and the former nursery would be used for catechesis for three to six year olds. The Rector stated that having young, immobile children on the second floor of Satterlee Hall presented significant safety concerns in the event of an emergency.

Motion: Keith Jones made a motion to relocate the nursery to room 203 of Satterlee Hall.

The motion was seconded by Marc Fetterman. A discussion of the motion followed. Among the issues raised were: noise disrupting activities in Trenbath Assembly; loss of the use of the space during the Forum and other events in Trenbath Assembly; impaired access to handicapped bathroom; security concerns caused by a location in a high traffic area. Scott emphasized that his was a temporary solution, intended to provide time to find a permanent solution. It was asked whether there were any other possible options. Scott noted that Stonehouse, in its assessment, should be able to provide some suggestions. It was emphasized that something must be done. The point was made that the Vestry needs an analysis of all possible alternatives in order to make a decision at the August Vestry meeting. Scott noted that his second choice would be the Library in Satterlee Hall.

Motion: Bill Edgar moved to table the motion concerning the relocation of the nursery until the parish staff reports back on possible alternatives.

Mark Shima seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Action: Scott Benhase and the parish staff will compile a list of possible locations for the nursery.

Old Business

Susan Morris reported on behalf of the **Outreach Committee** that it is in the process of implementing the proposals approved by the Vestry. Marc Fetterman reported that the **Arts and**

Memorials Committee had no definitive answers yet, but had developed a way forward in order to make recommendations for the items currently under consideration as well as establishing general parameters and guidelines. Mark Shima reported that the **Parking Committee**, composed of Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Susan Morris and himself would meet this week and report back to the Vestry at the August meeting.

New Business

The **Mutual Ministry Review**, noted in the agenda, was discussed during the report of the Senior Warden.

Danette Kauffman proposed that St. Alban's establish a **Commission structure** to cover all aspects of parish life. Dani distributed copies of an e-mail Dani sent to the Senior and Junior Wardens and the Rector outlining the proposal as well as the rationale behind the proposal.

A discussion of the proposal followed. It was noted that St. Alban's had a similar structure in the past, but that it had disappeared after it had become difficult to convene meetings. It was suggested that this would be a great way to have more parishioners involved in parish leadership, but that it would require some encouragement to get people involved. Further, it would provide an additional opportunity for communication. It was noted that there were practical issues, specifically whether the Commission structure overlaps with existing committees and that the structure would obligate leaders to attend yet another meeting. Dani responded that where committees already exist, they could function as a commission. The function of the commission would be more visionary than bureaucratic, with an eye to the future in order to be proactive in planning and meetings held just a couple of times a year.

Action item: Scott Benhase will put together a summary of the structures that already exist and the Vestry can identify remaining needs at the next meeting.

Barbara Manard asked the Vestry to reconsider its decision to review the list of the members of the Cathedral Congregation. Barbara reported that given the ease with which one is added to the members list, the presence of the name of a St. Alban's parishioner is meaningless in terms of gauging whether the individual is drifting away from St. Alban's. Further, review by Vestry members of the list could be seen as some sort of witch-hunt. The Vestry responded that it never intended to engage in a witch-hunt, that the motivation was to find out 1) how many are leaving the Parish in order to combat, with facts, the rumor that people were fleeing the Parish for the Cathedral and 2) the effect of the Cathedral Congregation on St. Alban's. The Vestry thanked Barbara for her comments and concluded that Vestry members would not review the list of names.

Compline followed at 9:40 pm.

Executive Session

The Vestry went into Executive Session at 9:45 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 pm.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary