

**St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.**  
**Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of October 23, 2007**

**Present:** Scott A. Benhase, Rector; Margot Critchfield, Senior Associate Rector; Tim Boggs, Assistant Rector; Kate Bouvé, Senior Warden; Jim Sottile, Junior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Keith Jones, Danette Kauffman, Susan Morris, Mark Shima, Bob Witten, Bob Woolfolk Vestry; Mary Jane Shackelford, WSA Board Rep.; Bill Hall, Diocesan Delegate; Chase Felker, Youth Rep.; Chris Holmes, Treasurer; Andrea Farr, Secretary.

**Opening Prayer**

Scott Benhase called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 pm, following dinner, and offered an opening prayer.

**Treasurer's Report**

Chris Holmes noted that although there have been some favorable developments with respect to income, there have been more negative developments with respect to expenditures.

The 2005 audit is complete except for the review of the clergy discretionary fund. Inadequate recordkeeping has held up the report on that fund. It is possible that the auditors may provide their opinion without that report.

The Vestry asked about best practices at other parishes regarding recordkeeping in connection with the clergy discretionary fund. Chris responded that recordkeeping in this context can be either clergy-controlled or office-controlled, and recommended that St. Alban's switch from the former to the latter. Scott Benhase noted that that switch had been made in September 2006.

Margot Critchfield noted that the 2005 audit was the first to include the clergy discretionary fund. Chris added that the clergy discretionary fund was not included in the operating budget because the fund includes direct discretionary donations. As a result, however, outreach funds have been understated.

Chris reported that he estimates a year end deficit of approximately \$10,000 due primarily to healthcare elections by new clergy and additional costs for extending Norman Scribner's benefits.

**Motion:** Bob Woolfolk moved to receive the Treasurer's Report.

Bob Witten seconded the motion and the motion carried.

## Minutes of previous meetings

The following amendments were made to the draft minutes from the September 18 Vestry meeting:

- On page 4, under “Rector’s Report” second line, change “Prosperity” to “Posterity”; and
- On page 5, in the motion, change “Pritchard” to “Birchard”.

**Motion:** Bob Woolfolk moved to approve the minutes, as amended.

Kammie Hedges seconded the motion and the motion carried.

## Stewardship Report

Tim Boggs presented a written status report concerning financial stewardship and discussed the highlights. He noted that many things are being done right. The parish has maintained a large operating budget notwithstanding a rector change, conducted a capital campaign and appointed a stewardship task force.

Tim touched on several points including new approaches implemented for the 2008 EMP. Tim noted factors that can assist in building the endowment including 1) additional governance to create public confidence in the endowment effort; 2) increased emphasis on planned giving, particularly through a reinvigorated Phoebe Nourse Society; and 3) increased attention to designated giving, especially for ministries to which St. Alban’s has made a long-term commitment. Offerings given in thanks or in memory of a loved-one should be recorded and remembered. Tim is working with the Arts and Memorials Committee to develop a catalogue of gifts for those considering a gift. The catalogue will list the size of the gift and the cost of the gift in order to provide clarity and consistency in the process.

The Vestry asked whether the designated endowment should be built-up after the general endowment has been grown. Tim suggested that the two should be built at the same time. The Vestry asked whether the pledging for the designated endowment would take from other pledging. Tim responded no, but that the endeavor must be approached in a careful and thoughtful manner.

The Vestry asked about sequencing for the different endeavors. Tim responded that the completion of the Capital Campaign is the priority. Tim noted that some of the proceeds from the Capital Campaign will be used to repay a loan from the endowment. As a result, completion of the Capital Campaign will have the effect of rebuilding the endowment.

Tim noted that he had determined that there were remnants of twelve (12) funds –funds whose original objectives had been completed—totaling approximately \$30,000 for which the Vestry will have to assign a use.

Tim introduced a separate document “Stewardship Commission Resolution.”

**Motion:** Dani Kauffman moved to accept the resolution to create a Stewardship Commission as set forth in the document entitled “Stewardship Commission Resolution.”

The motion was seconded by Bob Woolfolk. The motion carried.

### **Junior Warden’s Report**

Jim Sottile addressed the following issues:

1. *Satterlee Hall bathrooms.* The authorized work on the Satterlee Hall bathrooms is nearly completed. The final cost will be approximately \$3,200, significantly below the budgeted \$6,000.
2. *Painting high windows in the church and Warner Rectory.* The painting is underway and should be completed in approximately ten (10) days. The winning bid of \$12,300 came from Javier.
3. *Stone House assessment.* An on-sight visit was scheduled for October 24. Following the visit the Property Committee will discuss with Stone House when the Committee could expect to receive the report.
4. *Mutual Ministry Review report distribution.* The report was distributed after every service last Sunday, and, because of attendance patterns, this process will be repeated for the next few Sundays.

The Vestry asked whether there had been any reaction to the report. Jim responded that there had been some and it generally had been positive.

Tim Boggs suggested that Jim (or someone designated by Jim) prepare a piece for publication in the *Chronicle* regarding the Stone House project, as part of keeping the parish fully apprised of Vestry actions and expenditures.

**Action:** Jim Sottile will produce an insert for the *Chronicle* concerning the Stone House assessment.

### **Senior Warden’s Report**

Kate Bouvé noted that the Spring Retreat planning group’s first task is to define the groups to be represented at the retreat. The second task is to gather ideas regarding the issues to be discussed. The Vestry noted that Loren Mead had suggested that, in light of the MMR, the Vestry should be careful how the retreat is handled so yet another change is not “dumped” on the parish. Kate responded that the Vestry must communicate effectively with the parish, and that armed with what was learned in the MMR, the Vestry has the tools necessary to do so.

### **Rector’s Report**

Scott Benhase distributed a memorandum prepared by Sandy Loether containing a review of St. Alban’s personnel policies. The memorandum included suggestions, and the next step is for a labor lawyer or human resources professional to revise the existing policies.

**Action:** Jim Sottile will endeavor to find a labor lawyer to revise the parish’s HR policies *pro bono*.

Scott presented a draft outline for the Hospitality Commission. The Vestry suggested that the draft outline be revised to give the Commission responsibility for coordinating the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Fellowship. Accordingly, the draft outline was amended as follows:

- Change the first line of the third paragraph to change “three areas” to “four areas”; and
- add the following to the list of the Commission’s areas of ministry:

“4. Coordinate the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Fellowship.”

**Motion:** Keith Jones moved to establish a Hospitality Commission as set forth in the amended draft outline.

Dani Kauffman seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Scott Benhase noted that there was a need for someone to organize special receptions. Any suggestions should be forwarded to Scott.

Signage for St. Alban’s will be developed. It should be unique for St. Alban’s but work with the Cathedral’s signage. It was noted by the Vestry that any signage at St. Alban’s will be subject to review by historic and other regulatory bodies.

Brian Keene will be attending a conference where he will have the opportunity to get information from various companies that do solar power projects. Scott distributed a report on the “greening” of a parish.

**Action:** Scott will ensure that the highlights of the energy report are shared with the parish in the *Chronicle*.

### **New Business**

*Regional Gathering:* Bill Hall commented that there is a plan to wean the diocese off the Soper Trust. The Vestry noted that doing so could take several decades. It was noted that Bill Hall has been nominated to the regional diocese committee. The election is in January.

*Cathedral Group:* Bill Hall reported that the St. Alban’s representatives had expressed to Cathedral representatives concern over the absence of mindfulness regarding St. Alban’s as evidenced by the failure to consult St. Alban’s when changing Sunday service times. It was noted that the Cathedral was beginning an “Every Member Pledge” campaign in January. Scott Benhase suggested that any specific concerns to be raised with the Cathedral Group be forwarded to Bill Hall or to any other St. Alban’s representative.

## Old Business

*Handicap accessible ramp:* Nothing to report.

*Building project:* Marc Fetterman reported that the punch list initially went on for 16 pages; it was reviewed last week and is down to 2 pages.

*Close Parking Committee:* Mark Shima reported that there have been several meetings. Scott Benhase has offered to organize a meeting with the PECF. In order to guide discussions and assist in terms of budgeting, Mark Shima proposes that the Vestry establish an initial negotiating position offering to pay \$1,100/year for each of the four spaces in front of the Warner Rectory. If the PECF believes it should receive more, then the PECF will have to enumerate reasons.

**Motion:** Mark Shima moved that St. Alban's, through the Parking Committee, offer \$4,400/year as the parish's parking contribution to the PECF in consideration for four (4) parking spaces in front of the Warner Rectory.

Susan Morris seconded the motion and discussion followed. The Vestry addressed what other numbers should be considered in the event of back-and-forth negotiations, and it was suggested that the figure could go up to include additional funds for goodwill to total approximately \$9,000.

The Vestry was given a copy of a letter dated 1/23/2001 from the Superintendent of Horticulture at the PECF that outlined the current ground services agreement between the parish and the PECF for which the parish pays \$1,800/month. The Vestry noted that there were items listed that the PECF was not currently doing.

The Vestry discussed what exactly the parish contribution would pay for. It was suggested that given the large use of parking spaces by those engaging in activities at the church, a contribution of \$4,400 may be unsatisfactory. It was also noted, however, that the surface parking is free after 3:30 pm and on weekends, and so the parish should not have to pay for something that is, in effect, part of PECF outreach. The point was made that, as part of the community, the goodwill associated with the availability of the parking should be acknowledged in the parish's parking contribution. It was suggested that anything less than the \$25,000 requested by the PECF may not be seen as reasonable by the PECF.

It was suggested that the Parking Committee should be authorized to negotiate a parking agreement and the Vestry should specify a limit. Accordingly, the motion was amended to read as follows:

**Motion:** St. Alban's, through the Parking Committee, will offer \$4,400 in consideration for four (4) parking spaces in front of the Warner Rectory, with possible negotiated increase to a figure not to exceed \$10,000, as the parish's parking contribution to the PECF for 2008.

The question was called and the motion, as amended, carried.

*Outreach Commission.* The Commission is scheduled to meet on November 13.

**Motion:** Kammie Hedges moved to add Joanne Brainard to the Commission as parish representative.

Keith Jones seconded the motion and the motion carried.

The Vestry noted concerns about fundraising in the parish and that there had been, so far, four (4) fundraisers to finance a trip by the choir to Italy. There was some question as to whether this is the sort of endeavor for which there should be fundraising at the parish. The Vestry also reported some discomfort with this development, suggesting the need for policies governing fundraising and that the policies should be prepared by the Stewardship Commission.

**Compline** followed at 8:55 pm.

### **Executive Session**

The Vestry went into Executive Session at 9:05 pm.

### **Adjournment**

**Motion:** Susan Morris moved to adjourn.

The motion was seconded by Bob Woolfolk and the motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary