

**R. E. Lee Memorial Episcopal Church**

**Vestry Meeting**

**20 February 2017**

**- MINUTES –**

**(DRAFT)**

**In Attendance:** Woody Sadler (Sr. Warden), Don Whittington (Jr. Warden), Susan Cross, Doug Cumming, Lynn Dent, Catherine Harcus, Susan Lawrence, Buster Lewis, Keith Gibson, Daniel Wubah, Anne Hansen, Grigg Mullen, Tom Crittenden, (Rector), Sharon Massie (Program Director), Mo Littlefield (Clerk).

**Absent:** Merce Brooke

**Guest:** Megan Hess (Chair, Finance Committee)

**Welcome and Opening Prayer:** The Senior Warden welcomed all and called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. followed by his offering the opening prayer.

**Approval Of the January Minutes:** With no response for corrections or additions, **the January minutes, as distributed electronically by Rector, were declared approved by common consent of the Vestry.**

**Capital Campaign:** The warden announced that to date the capital campaign had succeeded in generating funds nearly sufficient to pay for the elevator, with great progress in raising funds for the college room. Doug inquired whether unrestricted gifts, if not needed for the elevator or college room, are to be allocated first to the undercroft or to the new organ. He inquired if a decision on that matter needs to be addressed soon. General discussion followed with the conclusion that once it was clear that both the elevator and college room were fully paid for, the Vestry needed to be prepared to decide the priority for the use of the remaining unrestricted funds. Buster announced that the Organ Committee was to meet soon, and that he would have a report germane to this issue following that meeting. The question was raised as to the appropriateness of applying the portion of the R. E. Lee Endowment Fund set aside by the Vestry in 2011 in a Property and Maintenance Fund toward the completion of the capital campaign if needed, **whereupon the Chair of the Finance Committee (Megan**

**Hess) responded that she would research the amount available and the stipulations placed by the Vestry on this portion of the R. E. Lee Endowment.**

**Standing Committee Reports:**

**–Finance:** Daniel distributed a written report from the Finance Committee, noting that new members of the committee were introduced along with the new Financial Secretary, Angie Fafatas. The Chair (Megan) provided an update on the search for a new Treasurer, citing the need for speeding up the process, since she had been serving not only as Chair of the Finance Committee, but as church treasurer, too. She announced that Joe Simcoe had offered, if no one else volunteered, to assume the role of Treasurer which she wholeheartedly endorsed, **whereupon motion by Daniel, with second by Doug, the Vestry unanimously approved Joe Simcoe as the Treasurer of the church.**

Daniel further announced that the Finance Committee discussed at length the need for a more appropriate software to handle the church finances, with the conclusion that the church should continue using the current ACS software but plan to migrate to Quickbooks in the future after all the accounts have been reconciled.

Discussion was also given to the timing of the next Audit, with some Finance Committee members urging that the task be undertaken sooner than later while the majority of the committee members preferred to wait until the new Financial Secretary has had the time to understand the ACS system and make any necessary corrections to the accounts. Megan reported that a projected full audit is expected to cost \$9,000, meaning that by setting aside \$3,000 per year starting in year 2015, a full audit could take place in 2018. She noted that if we chose to do a full audit a year earlier, we would need to raise an additional \$3000.

Megan further reported that it is hoped that the new software and accounting system would be up and running prior to the full audit. Tom pointed out that the Endowment Committee and the Investment

Committee were combined a few years ago and gave to the Finance Committee the responsibility to oversee the investments of the church endowments. **Megan pointed out that the Finance Committee drafted an investment policy in 2015 and will provide the Vestry a copy of that policy.**

Tom proposed that there be a motion by the Vestry to rename the Finance Committee to be the Finance and Investment Committee, **where upon motion by Daniel, with second by Doug, the Vestry unanimously approved the name change.**

**Property:**

Susan L. reported for the Property Committee, announcing that the Committee has been studying the condition of the façade of the Parish House where rust is appearing on several stones on the exterior of the structure. She reported on two bids received to address the issue – one for \$36,000 which would include replacing the affected stones (hence ordering from the same source where the original stone was mined) and a second bid for \$4,500, which calls for removing the rust and sealing the area where water seepage impacts the stone. (Grigg explained that the stone blocks contain limestone with iron content and that when water leaks in, it forces the iron content to the surface). Susan L. further explained that even the lower bid may be insufficient to cover the actual cost, not knowing what sort of problems the contractor may run into during the repairs. Discussion was given to taking the funds to meet the lower bid from the Vestry Designated Capital Fund **whereupon motion by Susan Lawrence, with Second by Doug, the Vestry by unanimous vote approved the project for the lower bid (noting that the contractor providing this lesser bid was the one who had installed the labyrinth), but with the condition, by the concurrence of the Vestry, that such repairs are not to exceed ten thousand (\$10,000).**

Susan L. also introduced the issue of a curtain for the Parish Hall stage, pointing out that it is somewhat unsightly for formal receptions and other appropriate affairs held there with the open stage. She advised that the

replacement of the stage curtain fits within the approved budget of the Property Committee, **whereupon, by common consent of the Vestry, she was advised to move ahead on acquiring the curtain.** A brief discussion was given to the curtain design and color, with the general consensus of the Vestry that it was not necessary to perfectly match the new curtains currently hanging over the windows of the Parish Hall, **while Keith pointed out that it would, however, be essential to choose a curtain made of material that would meet the approval of the fire marshal, to which the Vestry concurred by common consent.**

Susan L. announced also that the results of the most recent Fire Marshal's inspections had made it mandatory that nothing is to be stored in the stairwells or walkways of the church or the parish house.

Susan L. further reported that security of the property was still a matter of concern, especially for the staff working after hours at night, and asking whether the locking of doors could occur and if security cameras could be put into place enabling those working inside after hours to have vision of the exterior when unexpected late night visitors show up. **The Vestry, by common consent, took this suggestion under advisement.**

Susan L. concluded her property report by noting that, while recognizing the limited parking space behind the Parish House, nevertheless volunteers who come to the church to do special work and repairs on the property often find it difficult to locate a parking spot for their utility vehicles containing the necessary tools to do the repairs; and she asked whether or not it would be possible to reserve a specific temporary parking space for that purpose. **It was the general conclusion by common consent of the Vestry that for the purposes of a utility vehicle of a volunteer parishioner, or for paid service utility individuals, an appropriate parking spot should be made available while the work is going on.**

**Discovery & Discernment Committee:** Keith reported that this committee's work is moving ahead as planned, suggesting that in the not-too-distant future a joint workshop for the Vestry with the consultants may be called for. Noting that the entire process has been exceptionally time-

consuming, citing numerous meetings of the consultants with this committee having already taken place, Keith suggested that it still may call for a full day meeting to wrap up the conclusions of the discernment process and to finalize the recommended follow-up action. Doug, having recently become the Vestry liaison for the Administrative and Personnel Committee, noted that while this particular committee had not met all last year, from reflecting on its mission and duties and when combined with the results of the Mutual Ministry Review of two years ago, suggested that there seems to be some parallels with the early conclusions of the Discovery and Discernment Committee. He inquired whether the conclusions from those two entities might very well be included in the Discovery and Discernment process. Keith noted that he and Anne, in their work on the D & D Committee, came to the same conclusion.

Discussion followed concerning the end game and the projected timeframe for the wrap up and the cost of the D & D process. A letter dated 2/20/2017 just received from Consultants, James Isaacs and Barbara Robbins, pointed out that the original contract, costing twelve thousand (\$12, 000), covered the Listening Phase, the Interim Report and the Recommendation Phase. It also consisted of fourteen (14) meetings with the church's Discovery and Discernment Committee, four (4) interviews and a presentation of the interim report to the Rector, one to the Vestry and another to the entire congregation. In addition, the consultants spent forty-two (42) hours in off-site time in support of the process. Billing to date has been \$11,040, for services and travel expenses (with \$318 of travel cost waived). Since the above involvement, an additional three meetings with the church discernment committee and twelve (12) additional hours off-site time including travel expenses have been undertaken by the consultant team. This latest involvement added another \$2,245 to the cost, thus exceeding the original estimate of twelve thousand dollars by \$1, 285, which does not include the original contracting phase or the final implementation phase. The consultants further suggested that the process will still require as many as four more evening meetings with the D & D Committee and a half-day session with the Vestry to finalize

## Page 6

recommendations, requiring additional travel expense and off-site time, costing an additional \$5,000. The consultants concluded that, because of scheduling issues, to accomplish everything left to be done could take until May before the Recommendation Phase is finally completed.

The Rector noted that the payment for the Discovery and Discernment process came from the end of the year 2015 surplus in the operating budget, with a remaining amount of \$6,967 still available. Buster noted, as did several other Vestry members, that going much beyond the month of March to complete the process, along with the projected additional cost, would be testing the patience of both the vestry and the parish.

Catherine inquired if it was possible to negotiate the remaining projected costs, perhaps reducing costs by having one consultant, rather than two, to finish the project. Keith pointed out that the process is designed for the two consultants to work as a close duet. Anne, with concurrence by Keith, noted for the record that the entire process has been enormously involved, has brought the discernment committee very close together, and made the entire experience very personally rewarding. Still given the possible expanded time and increased cost to completely wrap up the process, as recently announced by the consultants, raising further concerns from the Vestry.

However, Grigg pointed out that not to complete this entire project would have serious consequences for the church, suggesting that it is extremely important to this Parish to have the task fully completed. Buster also added that, given the long-term anxiety within the parish, the Vestry appropriately stepped forward to solve the problem, and it now needs to keep the faith and support the process through to completion, stating that it will be well worth the cost if the problem is solved, whereupon **Woody proposed, and the Vestry agreed by common consent, that Keith and Anne contact the consultants and ask just how much over-budget and additional time are absolutely essential to see the project to completion.**

**Administrative & Personnel Committee:** Tom explained that practice has been for the out-going Warden to chair this committee, but that Jim Farrar

## Page 7

found that he could not assume the duty this past year because of his involvement with the presidential search at Washington and Lee; consequently the committee did not meet all last year. Woody announced that he plans to reconstitute this committee soon and that he would chair it.

**Suggestion Box:** Susan L. reported on the suggestions taken from the suggestion box which included the need to upgrade the bathrooms and to find the ways and means to **make the church more accessible.**

Another suggestion box comment proposed that it was felt that the rector did a more thorough job of announcing activities and invited greater participation when he made the announcements at the Sunday services, suggesting further that Vestry members should become better acquainted with the announcements in advance and, if unsure of the pronunciation of content matter, to ask the Rector or Program Director for clarification. Don suggested that the value of having the Vestry members introduce themselves and to make the announcements helps to bring to the attention of the congregation who is on the Vestry. **After further discussion, it was agreed by common consent that the Vestry members would continue to introduce themselves and make the announcements at the Sunday services.**

Lyn suggested that we need more ushers and noted that the Clerk has offered to help recruit them. Keith and Catherine volunteered to become ushers, and Susan L. volunteered her husband.

Keith suggested that it would help to have training sessions for ushers to assure that they know all that they are expected to do.

Tom announced that usher training was to take place on February 26.

**Program Director:** Sharon gave a brief overview of the upcoming Lenten Offerings and encouraged all *“to try something new”* at R. E Lee Church during this Lenten season. She also pointed out that our own youth, Caroline Webster, had been announced as *“Rector of Happening #10,”*

## Page 8

which will take place this spring, possibly to be located at R. E Lee Memorial Episcopal Church.

**Comments from the Wardens:** Woody, having just returned from travels afar, announced that he will now be in full swing with church matters, including meeting with the Campaign Committee and following up on Vestry decisions.

**Comments from the Rector:** Tom announced how pleased he was that the new Financial Secretary, who is highly qualified, is now on the job, that Anne Grizzle's ordination will be in May, and suggesting further that the Vestry, as our church leaders, consider having Vestry meetings opened with a brief (perhaps fifteen minutes) participation in a Bible study exercise of God's word. A brief discussion followed, with Woody pointing to the need to allow sufficient time to complete the agenda and Doug offering whether an in-depth review of the mission of the church, growing in God's knowledge and addressing fellowship among ourselves, would be equally beneficial. Keith noted that this type of exercise is offered at the Discovery and Discernment meetings.

**Closing Prayer:** With agenda having been completed, the Warden adjourned the meeting at 6:28 p.m. with Susan Lawrence offering the closing prayer.

Faithfully submitted, -Mo (Clerk)