

Vestry Meeting Minutes (approved)

R.E. Lee Episcopal Church

June 15, 2015

The regular meeting of the Vestry of R.E. Lee Memorial Church was held on Monday, June 15, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. in the Hillel House next to the church.

In Attendance: John Burluson (Junior Warden), Tom Crittenden (Rector), Susan Cross, Carole Elmore, Jim Farrar (Senior Warden), Julia Grossman, Diana Kenney, Elizabeth Knapp, Frank Settle, Don Whittington, Sharon Massie (Program Director), and Anna Crockett (Clerk); **Absent:** George Brooke, Doug Cumming, Holt Merchant, and Daniel Wubah, **Guests:** Bruce Wardell and Natalie Feaver (BRW Architects, Charlottesville) and Martha Chester and Earle Shumate (Hughes Associates Architects and Engineers, Roanoke).

Opening and Prayer: John Burluson offered the opening prayer.

Approval Of Minutes: Minutes of the May 18 meeting were approved as distributed.

Presentations by Architectural Firms: Representatives from BRW Architects and Hughes Associates Architects and Engineers expanded on their proposals for architectural services related to the Parish House and Undercroft previously submitted to the Space Planning Committee and Vestry. Both firms described their considerable experience with church projects, as well as details on their approaches to the design and construction process. Additionally, the presenters emphasized the importance of groundwork in terms of incorporating the parish vision and mission in the facilities design process, and providing opportunities for parishioners to actively participate in these conversations that would generate energy, enthusiasm and a sense of ownership for the projects.

Vestry discussion after the presentations included agreement that both firms were highly competent, respected, and experienced, and would likely provide excellent services related to the Parish House and Undercroft renovations. Tom noted that the Space Planning Committee had come to a similar conclusion after seeing the proposals and presentations. Nevertheless, Vestry members observed that BRW 1) apparently placed greater emphasis on engaging the congregation and college students; 2) has experience helping churches with the legal process that allows non-profits to benefit from tax credits; and 3) has an acoustical expert on the staff to address the sounds issues between the Undercroft and Church, e.g. materials. (Tom clarified that the acoustician who will be contracted for the organ project will address sound issues related to the organ, but the organ builder/organ acoustician should likely work together with the architectural acoustician.) Jim observed that, as stewards of the church, we have a responsibility to make sure that space is reclaimed and properly used, and that these are therefore exciting projects. **Frank moved to engage BRW. Grigg seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** The Finance Committee will make a recommendation on bridge funds until funds are raised via the capital campaign and present this at the August Vestry meeting. Carole suggested that we make an effort to use a local construction company for the projects to support the community economy.

Bylaws Amendment - First reading As provided in the bylaws, the parish has been informed of the proposed amendment to the bylaws that would reduce voting members of the Vestry from fifteen to twelve. Anna asked about possibly adding a contingency providing for the Rector's vote in case of a tie. Tom stated that such a case had not occurred in his thirty years as Rector in Florida, and that he would feel more comfortable continuing the discussion rather than breaking a tie. Other Vestry members observed that an issue should not go forward if there were a tie vote, and that such a situation would be

similar to a “mistrial.” **Susan seconded Diana’s motion to approve the first reading of the bylaws amendment.** The motion passed unanimously. Tom will send out a second notice to the parish inviting comments before the final vote at the August Vestry meeting.

New Business:

Tom reviewed Doug’s recommendation to donate to Washington and Lee a portrait of R.E. Lee in the church Conference Room that depicts him in uniform, with insignia removed, but with a Confederate flag engraved in the framing. In exchange, W&L would provide the church with a reproduction of a print showing Lee in civilian clothes. The intent is to hold up Lee’s civilian status as a member of the congregation. Responding to Diana’s question, Tom stated that we have presumably have no record of the portrait’s source, thus there no way of knowing if it was a donation from a Lee family member or other source that would have interest in it now. Jim pointed out that W&L has also made a conscious effort to display in public areas portraits of Lee in civilian dress, choosing Lee Chapel as the proper venue for showing Lee in uniform as part of the historical story. **John moved to approve the proposal to donate the portrait of Lee in the conference room to W&L in exchange for a reproduction of a print showing him in civilian dress. Carole seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.** Jim observed that it would be helpful to assess the pictures displayed in church property and that we are taking proper care of these.

Suggestion Box: Julia read a note left by an out-of-town visitor expressing thanks for “a beautiful prayer space.”

Program Director: Sharon reported that she attended the annual Christian Formation conference at the Kanuga Episcopal Conference Center in Hendersonville, NC during the week of June 8. With “Hope in the Midst of Crisis” as the theme, keynote speaker Lyndon Harris shared his inspiring story of being thrust into the center of tragedy on Sept. 11, 2001 while serving as a priest at St. Paul’s Chapel in New York City, just beside the World Trade Center. He spoke on the power of forgiveness in a society focused on retaliation.

Comments from the Wardens: John reported help from Kappa Alpha students with a variety of projects this past weekend. In addition, the steps have been repaired and minor repairs in the courtyard completed. Michael Barry-Rec has informed us that the risers on the stairs are not well engineered, but that the expense of replacing them would outweigh the cost of periodic repair. He has also noted that the paving stones on the patio will need to be repointed periodically to avoid significant cost of laying a new foundation;

Jim thanked John and Gordon for organizing the successful work day.

Comments from the Rector: Tom provided an update on his health status.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 7:10. Julia led the closing prayer

Next Meeting: August 17, 2015; 5:00 p.m. (Vestry voted not to meet in July. A special meeting can be called if BRW Architects wants to meet with members in July.)

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Crockett, Clerk