

Vestry Meeting Minutes (approved April 20, 2015)

R.E. Lee Episcopal Church

March 16, 2015

The regular meeting of the Vestry of R.E. Lee Memorial Church was held on Monday, March 16, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall of the church.

In Attendance: George Brooke, John Burluson (Junior Warden), Tom Crittenden (Rector), Susan Cross, Doug Cumming, Jim Farrar (Senior Warden), Frank Settle, Carol Elmore, Diana Kenney, Elizabeth Knapp, Grigg Mullen, Don Whittington, Daniel Wubah and Anna Crockett (Clerk); **Guest:** Ted Bickish; **Absent:** Julia Grossman and Amy Holston

Opening and Prayer: Tom noted current prayer concerns and opened the meeting with prayer.

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

Special Agenda Items:

Campaign Planning: Dennis Cross distributed a handout that included bullet points for a framework to guide campaign planning in our parish and that reflects fundraising Best Practices. Among these is the importance of thinking comprehensively, meaning lining up highest priorities and cost estimates (e.g. renovation of the Parish House and Undercroft and replacement of the organ), and comparing the needs we have identified to the funds that we think we can raise. Fundraising should not begin until we have a sense of the total costs. Responding to the question about hiring an outside consultant, Dennis responded that we have in the parish sufficient fundraising expertise and contacts/relationships with parishioners, making the expense of an outside consultant unnecessary. In terms of marketing, materials should be developed around the cogency of priorities and the mission of the parish. Dennis stressed that methodical planning and execution of the campaign is key, and that conversations with potential donors are an important part of the process.

The next step is to conclude the analysis undertaken by the Space Planning Committee. Tom will send a message to Dave Hansen asking his committee to accelerate planning to pave the way for decision points and cost estimates. Dennis, Farris Hotchkiss and Bob Glidden will continue laying the groundwork for conversations with potential donors. Dennis estimated that this preliminary process could be completed in six months, especially since VMDO already has a preliminary set of drawings based on previous meetings. We can then begin sharing thoughtful specific information with the parish and top supporters.

Jim pointed out that planning of the annual operating budget must to be considered as well. Next year's Vestry will have an important role in accelerating planning, and helping parishioners see the project as a "missional whole," thus raising the level of urgency and engagement. Dennis noted that the pledge and capital campaigns can be conducted separately on different tracks.

Organ Replacement Ted Bickish, Music Director, presented a recommendation on behalf of the Organ Committee to accept the company Casavant Frères from Quebec as our organ builder. He explained that this recommendation was based on considerable research, starting with five companies and ultimately narrowed down to two. Casavant's presentation to the committee, organ quality and Ted's personal relationship with the builder led to the committee decision. Estimated cost range \$714,130-\$731,810, dependent on the type of pipe façade chosen, and to include travel, delivery and installation. However, the cost will increase 3% or 4% after this month, and does not include removal of the current organ

(estimated at approximately \$10,000). Ted will search for someone to remove the organ and pipes to save this cost. Jim asked Ted for a breakdown of the full cost, to include replacing the pews with chairs, other chancel renovations and acoustical needs, in addition to the organ. **Doug moved to approve the recommendation to accept Casavant as our organ builder. George seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Committee Reports:

Finance: Commenting on the February Income and Revenue reports, Daniel noted that the market value of our investments has increased, and that pledges are slightly lower than projected for this month. No other budget items were of significance.

Christian Outreach: Susan reported that the committee approved allocations totaling \$25,205, to be disbursed on quarterly basis, and that \$1000 will be held in reserve for needs that may come to the committee later in the year. Susan also reported that parishioners will be providing dinner on March 24 for the VMI Timber Framers, who are constructing an addition to Project Horizon/Lisa's House.

Property:

Painting and pressure washing: John reported that his committee is continuing work on its Priority List, including exterior painting of the window frames and other painting, and pressure washing of the Parish House and retaining wall, for a total estimated cost of \$26,000. The Finance Committee has recommended funds for the project, not to exceed \$30,000, drawn from the Vestry-Designated Capital Fund (Depreciation Fund). The company, Farris Precision Painting, Inc. was also contracted for the sanctuary painting a number of years ago. John Raynal, local and East Coast expert on stained glass and lead windows, has provided specifications regarding paint to be used for the leaded windows. **Vestry approval of the FC recommendation for these projects was unanimous.**

Urinals: John reported past difficulty getting plumbing estimates for the urinals, but finally had success with Clearwater Plumbing, who looked at the project on Friday and sent him an estimate for \$1400 today (Monday). **Diana seconded John's motion to approve the project, deferring the funding recommendation to the Finance Committee (which will likely recommend use of the Depreciation Fund). Vestry approval was unanimous.**

Sidewalk connection: John shared the parish agreement with Tom Contos, W&L Architect/University Planner for W&L, to replace the stepping stone path between the parking lot and the red house with a concrete walkway. In the agreement, the Church: 1) requests a curb to limit mulch migration from the labyrinth area to the sidewalk, 2) requests keeping the storm drain northeast of the church uncovered, and 3) grants W&L permission to use the handicapped space except during funerals, and to leave it open during church services; the Church may designate another handicapped space in the future. **John moved to endorse the agreement. Daniel seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.**

Administration/Personnel: Frank reported that the committee met earlier this month to continue review of the following: staff job descriptions and staff time assessment (to provide clarity on how staff time is spent, helpful to both staff and the Vestry). Meetings for the next three months have been scheduled to complete these items. George added that the committee has also approved an agreement on use of the parish facilities, that inventories of property in general areas remain to be completed, and that a representative from the Human Resources Department at W&L will attend the next committee meeting to assist with the design of materials and guidance in procedures for effective staff performance evaluations.

Old Business:

Welcome Statement: After consensus that the statement “ The Episcopal church welcomes everyone” does not say anything new or fresh, and concern about using the word “exclude” in the first sentence of a new Welcome Statement, **Doug moved and Holt seconded the motion to adopt the Welcome statement: “We welcome you to R.E. Lee Memorial. We exclude no one as we seek the love of God and service to Christ in all persons, strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”** The motion passed unanimously.

Vestry size: In the interests of time, this item was deferred to the April meeting.

Sound System: Doug reported that the hearing loop had not worked for his mother-in-law this past Sunday, and asked if we need to be proactive in helping our users with this system. Although the loop was working for others at that service, so the problem his mother-in-law experienced have been a hearing aid issue, there was agreement that the Sound System contract needs to provide user instructions. We will ask for these and ensure that we provide them to parishioners using the hearing loop.

Suggestion Box: One comment asked for the choir to conclude practice in the chancel by 10:15 to allow parishioners adequate reflection time before the service begins. Ted will follow up on this. The second comment described the confusion in following the services created by multiple materials (e.g. bulletins, Prayer Book, Hymnal) and occasional errors in the bulletin. The Worship Committee will discuss possibly modifying bulletins, handouts, etc.

New Business: None

Comments from the Wardens:

Jim announced that he will shortly send the Mutual Ministry Review Action Steps to Vestry committee chairs and liaisons, and request reports on items completed, added, etc. by the end of the spring.

John circulated a sign-up for Vestry members to participate in the High School Sunday School project asking parishioners to discuss questions on faith and other religion-related issues. He described in positive terms the interview he recently completed, which was videotaped.

Comments from the Rector:

Vestry Retreat: Tom thanked members for a very productive vestry retreat, and asked Vestry members to let him know if they are interested in joining Doug and others in a small group to follow up with more conversations about missional goals and structures.

Theological Appeal: Tom drew attention to a letter signed by two parish families on December 15, 2014 in response to his sermon on race relations. He invited Vestry members to let him know if they are interested in joining these families as a working group to address moving on these issues and how to become part of healing and reconciliation in our community.

Parochial report: The report on the status of the congregation is due to the Bishop on April 1st. Tom will email the report to the Vestry for approval in the next week or two.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 6:50

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Crockett, Clerk