

tBethesda Episcopal Church
Saratoga Springs NY

Minutes: Vestry Meeting
Wednesday, July 22, 2015

Vestry

Mark Claverie
Darren Miller (excused, but appeared anyway)
Paul Ruzicka (excused)
Mary Withington
Geoff Delbridge
Gordon Boyd
Catherine Berheide
Mark Griffin
Jane Agee
Geneva Henderson
Sara Manny (excused)

Clergy

Dean Marshall J. Vang, Interim Rector
Peter Sweeney, Deacon (excused)

Treasurer

Anne Van Acker (excused)

Also present: Eileen Wiebicke - Auditor

Call to order: Dean Vang called to order the regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry at 7:00 PM on July 22, 2015 at the Parish House on Washington Street.

Devotions: Mr. Delbridge began the meeting with devotions.

Previous meeting minutes: Mr. Boyd moved that minutes from the previous meeting be accepted, seconded by Mr. Delbridge, unanimously approved.

Financial Report: As Ms. VanAcker was not present, we had a more discussion-based approach to the financial reports. Ms. Withington reported that money she had donated for the building fund seems to have gone to the fuel fund, and that if this is happening overall, it might explain why the building fund seems to be underfunded. Mr. Miller said there had been a problem with earmarked funds in the beginning of the year which has since been addressed. Ms. Berheide and Ms. Agee would like further analysis of what's going on with pledge and plate, specifically if low figures in that category signify that we're losing parishioners and, if that is the case, why. Lynne will show Ms. Berheide how Church Windows works, and Ms. Berheide hopes this will help her monitor trends in donations. The next quarterly statement should come out soon. Mr. Boyd expressed concern that donors are not receiving written acknowledgements and thanks for their donations; he wants to put a system in place for immediate sending of thank-you notes. There had been a plan for biweekly reports from Elaine to the stewardship committee but this doesn't seem to be happening yet. Mr. Griffin asked for clarification regarding the \$11,000 loss on investments; it appears that markets in general have been performing poorly this year, which explains the loss. Mr. Boyd advocated doing a person-by-person canvass to figure out why pledges are falling off. Ms. Berheide pointed out that if we figure out which people haven't been keeping up, we'll get a better idea of why.

Ms. Withington moved to accept the treasurer's report. Mr. Claverie seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Discussion of Survey of Episcopal Churches: See attached.

Interim Rector's Report: Dean Vang reported that he received the bishop's pastoral letter at 5 AM on Friday. He will print it and make it available (announcing that it is there) rather than read it aloud in church. Barbara, our new administrative assistant, will work 3.5 hours a day Mon-Thurs and 3 hours on Friday starting August 1. Dean Vang directed that all requests to go him rather than to Barbara so that we don't overwhelm her. Lynne will still be doing the liturgical work.

Home of the Good Shepherd: HGS has begun litigation in Malta, to be followed by Wilton and Moreau. Bob Chauvin is now the presiding justice in this litigation. Ms. Withington believes that the connection between Bethesda and HGS makes both parties stronger. The trial will not be until April of 2016. Home of the Good Shepherd has hired an expert to review their financial model in preparation for the trial (to help prove charitable status). Otherwise, the Homes are doing really well. The new construction on 390 Church Street (to house the memory care unit) is growing in leaps and bounds

Building Report: Mr. Boyd distributed copies of the BC minutes. The planning board is trying to pressure us into doing things that aren't actually required by law (like observing setback lines) which we're trying to deal with. The requested setback would change the current design. We have entered into a \$2,000 contract with Greenland Petersen for a traffic study as well as a \$3,280 archeology study. Mr. Boyd has spoken with Mr. Brause about using some of his property for construction laydown. We have offered to take care of snow removal and replace his fence when we're finished and we are waiting for his response. The building estimate originally appeared to be much higher than expected, but it turned out to contain errors and is really \$3,000,000 less. We no longer have a renter for the retail space. Amy Sutton is going to talk to people about renting it as office space. We probably won't break ground until Spring of 2016.

Communications— Ms. Henderson reported that the newsletter is well under way, and will hopefully be out somewhere around the end of July or the beginning of August. She still had some fine-tuning to do on the formatting and wants some other people to look it over, but she had a first draft which she showed to the vestry. She expressed that she would need access to the parish-wide email list and a list people who do not have email that will need it mailed. She will also put a pile in the back of the church for visitors or people not on the mailing lists.

Senior Warden's Report — Mr. Claverie reported that we are looking into replacing the plexiglass over the east window. Farrell has been speaking with Saratoga Renovations. Dean Vang wants to get an estimate from Allerdice as well.

Expenses: Mr. Claverie moved that Dean Vang's expenses for the month be approved. Mr. Griffin seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

Closing: Ms. Henderson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Claverie seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

NOTE: On July 28, 2015, Mr. Miller moved via email that Bethesda retain the firm of Snyder, Kiley, Toohey Corbett and Cox to represent the church regarding acquiring the easement we need for the steps of the church building, which intrude by a few inches on the public right of way. Mr. Claverie seconded the motion which passed unanimously. If we are satisfied with their work on this matter, we will consider retaining them to represent us regarding the NPH construction.

NOTE #2: On August 14, 2015, Ms. Henderson moved via email to accept the proposed addendum to the contract for sale of the Ensley property which would allow the purchaser to obtain a survey and environmental assessment by October 13. The motion was seconded by Ms. Withington and passed unanimously.