

Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting
June 16, 2021
Beacon Hill Drive, Saratoga Springs

Attendance: Fr. Charles Wallace, Priest in Charge
Darren Miller, Senior Warden
Kate Berheide, Junior Warden
Karen Finkbeiner, Treasurer
Pam Houde
Field Horne
Laura Kszan
Marcia MacDonald
Sara Manny
Steven Rucker
John Van der Veer
David Wilder
Ann Bullock, Clerk

Absent:

Opening Prayer

The regular meeting of the Bethesda Episcopal Church Vestry was called to order at 7:10pm on June 16, 2021, by Fr. Wallace

Devotions:

Fr. Wallace offered devotions.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of May 19, 2021, were unanimously approved. (K Finkbeiner, movant; F Horne, second)

Priest-in-Charge Remarks:

Open House at new office well attended, with a good cross-section of parishioners. The new space is much appreciated. Intention to use the space for other purposes, including fellowship space for small groups (knitting group is using it now; Bible study to come, etc.) The space is too small for larger groups.

Barbara is in five days a week now and allows for Fr Wallace to take Tuesday off with less pressure. Mondays allow for planning and organizing for future services, including increasing , numbers of weddings.

The Deanery will meet June 21 to begin process of calling a new Bishop. May take one and a half to two years to elect a new Bishop. The Diocese is likely to be watched closely given the circumstances under which the prior Bishop left. Jeff Wentling and Lynn Priestly will attend the Deanery meeting tomorrow.

Fr. Wallace will be away June 20 and has ordained deacons covering all services. Fr Wallace has connected with several younger ordained individuals and sees positions in which they might be able to assist with programs in the church.

Treasurer's Financial Report: K Finkbeiner, Treasurer

K Finkbeiner sent report with note that operational expenses are slightly under budget seemingly—because Elaine has not billed her services in full. Giving is on budget and we are now slightly ahead year to date versus budget. Expenses are on budget. June and July are usually higher giving months and the budget reflects this.

Our designated income is well ahead of designated expense: FEAST, Easter flowers and bills for new altar frontals are ahead of the expenses presently. The Pascahl candle is paid in full with a little ahead as of today. The billing for the sign is incorrect: some of the donation was given last year and the rest of the donations to support are dependent on the actual correct billing for the sign.

There is more funding coming for the FEAST project; there is also some extra funding for the vestments, which could be used for repair of the vestments in future.

Cash on hand would indicate that we are behind, but this does not take in account the PPP loan and the funds that we had in hand at the end of FY 2020. All bills are being paid on time. The PPP loan is not booked in yet since the loan is not a grant until it has been forgiven.

Financial report received with thanks.

Churchwardens' Report:

Senior Warden: D. Miller

PPP loan forgiveness document has been submitted.

Roof contract under legal review now and to be signed shortly to get started on the project.

City requires a letter of credit on file with the City in order to support the storm water system to be part of Mercy House. Saratoga National Bank is giving us this letter of credit.

Adelphi owner, Michael Dubb, is seeking a letter of support for his planned project for the Adelphi Hotel. Dubb has been involved with BEST and would like to speak with us about MH. F Horne moves; second by M MacDonald, that we issue a letter of support of the apartment/residence and underground parking project to be constructed in the lot across from the church. Discussion: This might be a source of Sunday parking: question include whether there will be blasting in the parking lot which may affect the church.

Motion passed unanimously.

In meeting with Adelphi re construction project: Address parking; D. Wilder noted that the Tiffany windows will need to be protected from blasting; may require seismic monitoring to protect the historic building and infrastructure.

Also need to address dust to protect the church and organ.

Paul Duchames of BEST is speaking on August 8 at Bethesda. May ask Dubb to attend that day.

Mask wearing: some parishioners are raising objections to wearing masks in church. The Diocese still requires masks when singing in Church. Kate Berheide reports that at Skidmore all must wear a mask unless they know that those around them are vaccinated: suggests that at 8am we not wear masks and wear masks at 10am when there are more people and we are singing hymns, given the risk. Discussion of how to apply a uniform rule to compromise.

Fr Wallace suggests that we put on masks after sermon or after peace and move the hymn to the second half of the service, so that parishioners do not wear masks for the first part of the service. No masks at 8am service, except to go to receive communion. Must wear masks when moving about, including entering and leaving Church. Diocesan guidelines may be changing as the governor's mandates also change.

Laura reports that July 11 we are having a concert by the NYCB Orchestra and friends. We hope to have 120 in attendance, which is maximizing occupancy and may require masking—depending on governor's and diocesan guidance.

Guidelines on service sheet to be amended.

Upcoming expenses involving Parish House project: we are being charged nothing per K Finkbeiner by JG Waite as design work is done. The rest due is for construction management which is on pause and Sano Rubin is not charging us on anything since there is no construction on-going. The Sano Rubin contract does not yet have a guaranteed maximum clause; were we to get out of that contract we would have some expenses for work that has been done to date. We still do not have a figure from the donor. K Finkbeiner reports that we can be on pause for some time without expense.

Lift to be on site next week: Roof is to be measured for final panel count next week. Woodwork photos to be available to order woodwork and all must be done to order roofing panels.

D Wilder asked if the donor has a maximum amount in mind yet to allow us to know whether we can meet the expenses of the projected building. D Miller suggests that obtaining the building permit still is a valuable exercise since we will have work prepared when we are in a position to proceed.

Discussion of the donor and the relationship between the church/vestry and the donor versus the relationship of the donor to the MH project organization.

Junior Warden: C. Berheide

Wardens and treasurer have determined we should establish a visioning committee. S Rucker will head this, with P Houde and F Horne. Thoughts about how to come up with alternatives, including use of the undercroft for parish use if the new parish house is not possible. L Kszan is willing to serve on this committee as well.

In the event that there is work that needs to be done or one undertakes work at the church for repairs, inform Barbara in advance because she knows who is doing what project, when.

The sprinkler needed to be repaired on account of a faulty valve. Had to replace the valve and the city came to turn off the water but couldn't do that because we own the water line. OnCall came and found that the pipe in the street may have to be excavated, in order to allow us to shut off the water to the church. There may be a solution in bypassing the piping in the basement altogether and installing a new valve. We do have an operational sprinkler—except it leaks and will not pass inspection.

Commission Reports:

Rectory committee: Laura Kszan

Report presented and a market analysis presented. The Rectory has appreciated since construction in 2017. The exterior amenities are not quite as impressive as the interior—allowing a future owner to do further work.

Discussion of housing for Fr Wallace when the Rectory sells. Consideration of options including investment and rental supplement; purchase of home; or housing allowance to allow Fr Wallace to purchase. D Wilder suggests that City RC churches may have housing.

We may not be able to find a home in the City for the amount we have to spend. On the other hand, investment income may be sufficient to support an apartment. Fr Wallace is agreeable with living in a rental for a period of time. Allows for more time to look and for the market to slow a bit.

Motion to market the home for sale with Keller Williams subject to the approval of the Standing Committee (D Wilder; P Houde, second) L Kszan will prepare listing agreement for Darren to sign following Standing Committee approval expected after meeting June 21, 2021.

Will need to work to stage the Rectory.

In the interest of transparency, once the Rectory is on the market, we must report this in the service sheet. May request suggestions for a home to purchase or rent.

Continuing Business:

West Doors: Burke Funeral Home reminded of their promised contribution. F Horne will follow up again—it appears that this was forgotten. Question of work to be completed.

Sound system: S Rucker reports that Tom Mueller finds that there is a void in the front few pews which speakers do not cover. Suggestions include testing the hearing loop.

Verne Hinkle will remind all lectors to project. P Houde suggests that readers need to be reminded to speak into the microphone. Perhaps there will be some training of lectors.

Kszan reports that she could not hear the sermon on Sunday; suggest that we have a second portable microphone. S Rucker will talk with Tom Moeller about this

New Business: none

Next meeting: July 21, 2021

Blessing and Adjournment

Blessing by Fr. Wallace

Meeting was adjourned by motion of M MacDonald; second, K Finkbeiner.

Passed unanimously at 8:53pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ann C. Bullock, Clerk