



MAY VESTRY MEETING

MEETING MINUTES
May 27, 2008 6:00-8:30pm
St. Nicholas Bldg, Rm 216

Vestry Members Present

Randy Urmston, Senior Warden
Bob Muglia, Junior Warden
Margaret Rothschild, Junior Warden
Sam Fleshman
Phil Haas
Carol Hoerster
Michele Hasson
Miller Adams

Vestry Members Absent

Antonio Foglia
Randy Revelle
Kate O'Sullivan
Herb Williams
Bishop Greg Rickel

Staff Members Present

Liz Sloat, Executive Assistant to Dean
Rev. Marilyn Cornwell
Rev. David Mesenbring
Rev. Ralph Carskadden, Priest in Charge
Mary Coon, Interim COO
Virginia Lenker, Recording Secretary

Officers Present

John Hoerster, Chancellor
Steve Moen, Treasurer

8 guests were present

Call to Order

Randy Urmston called the meeting to order at 6:15pm and referred to the agenda and materials which were previously distributed by email.

Spiritual Reflection

Margaret Rothschild offered a reflection on meditation and companionship with God.

Action Item

Consent Agenda

The Vestry accepted the Consent Agenda consisting of the following:

- Approval of Minutes of April 22, 2008 Vestry Meeting
- Receipt of Reports/Notes/Minutes of Meetings of Vestry Committees:
 - Facilities Committee minutes – 5/20
 - Finance Committee meeting notes – 3/25 ,4/23
 - Stewardship & Development Committee minutes – 5/13

Elections

Randy thanked Walter Stuteville and the Nominating Committee for their quick work in finding candidates to fill Vestry openings. After receiving 12 names, the committee presented a slate of five candidates. Biographies of the five were distributed. Randy asked the Vestry and staff to speak to the qualifications of the candidates, and consider how their skills would help fill committee openings in Holy Orders, Facilities and Personnel. The Vestry voted by paper ballot, with the agreement that whoever receives the most votes will have the longest tenure.

Terry Brandon and Kathleen Croston were elected to fill Vestry parish representative openings. A third candidate was elected should there be a future Vestry resignation. Randy agreed to contact all the candidates to thank those not elected and invite them to participate in committees.

Randy nominated Virginia Lenker, currently serving as Recording Secretary, as Vestry Clerk. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. In addition to taking minutes, she will submit a monthly article summarizing the Vestry meetings for the Rubric.

Priest in Charge Report

Tent City 3 Photo Exhibit

Ralph spoke about the photo exhibit by residents of Tent City 3 and the amazing work parishioner Elsie Ford had done to pull it off. Elsie Ford, who was herself once homeless, wanted to pass on the kind of encouragement and appreciation that had been so meaningful to her. Despite being offered fiscal support from Ralph and Sue Reid, Elsie got donations and/or discounts from area merchants for refreshments, cameras, photo developing, photo mounting and frames. Elsie had even educated Ralph that the photos should be small enough to carry around.

Textile Project

Ralph talked about the textile project he has been planning. With the help of long-term tenants Seattle Weavers Guild, he hopes to have a floor loom set up in the nave in July, so people can work on it in shifts during the day. He suggested thinking of the congregation-- "the lost, the angry, the disappeared, as well as the happy, the satisfied, and the fully functioning"--as the threads that are woven together. Ralph showed a proposal for a new banner featuring a lion on one side, and a quilted Rose Window on the other.

South Parking Lot

Mary and Ralph reviewed the history of the purchase of the Saint Nicholas building and the South Parking Lot (former Scottish Rite Temple parking lot). In 2003, the Cathedral entered into a five year Lease with Option to Purchase the South parking lot with a plan to launch a capital campaign prior to 12/31/07 to purchase the lot. Very generous friends of the Cathedral purchased the lot with the intention of selling it to the Cathedral at their cost. No detailed plans were made nor were any actions taken to purchase the lot during the five year period. The owners extended the lease with option to purchase from 12/31/07 to March 31, 2008. The lease without the option to purchase was extended through June 30. There will be publicity about parking lots behind the Saint Nicholas Building and at Diocesan House which are available on Sundays. Michele Hasson suggested eco-friendly options such as buses and bicycling, and thinking about ways to use the property more efficiently.

Skinner Auditorium:

Ralph asked Mary to talk about the resolution to renovate Skinner Theater. Currently, the theater space is rarely used because there are no restrooms on site, no tables and chairs and no sound/acoustical system. This proposal addresses these issues and makes significant improvements to the space, making it more useful to the Cathedral, the Diocese and outside renters and which would increase its cash flow potential. Work would include adding bathrooms (using space from the auditorium), adding storage areas, restoring the stage and creating a catering prep kitchen. The funds for the renovations would come from the St. Nicholas account which is currently at \$600,000. These funds are from rental income from the two primary tenants: Gage and Bright Water. The resolution would still leave the contractually required "cushion" in the account of \$250,000. Timing is critical for starting the work since Bright Water leases Skinner Monday-Friday daytime, and this work would need to happen during the summer break. Michele suggested that the roof should be inspected at the same time.

Vestry Resolution #P-08-FI-09 (Skinner Theatre Renovations—was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously, with the proviso to authorize spending up to a limit of \$250,000.

Senior Warden's Report

Update on Committee work

Randy displayed an inspirational gift from Elsie Ford, which demonstrated the truth that “before you set the church on fire, the bottom has to drop out” and noted that thanks to Mary Coon and Ralph Carskadden, along with the work of Bob Muglia and the Mission and Strategy committee, the church is on fire. He gave kudos to Phil Haas for a wonderful start with the Finance Committee. Randy Revelle is off and running as chair of the Stewardship and Development committee. Randy and the Rev. Marilyn Cornwell have been working on plans to approach 250 former pledgers who haven't pledged in the last 2 years, and as well as plans to raise the money for major gifts and grants. He praised Carol's work on promoting deferred maintenance issues in the Facilities committee. He noted that Margaret Rothschild is excited about chairing the Governance committee and working with Larry Meyer “who knows everything” and Sam Fleshman who will give the Diocesan perspective. Herb Williams and Susan Barley will chair the Personnel committee. Carol will chair a new Hospitality committee to inject a bit of fun into serving on the Vestry. Her responsibilities will include organizing the joint Foundation/Vestry dinner in July, and some surprise treats for the Cathedral staff this summer.

Vestry Orientation and Staff Hello

An orientation for new Vestry members was discussed. Margaret invited anyone interested to participate, especially as last year's newcomers never had an orientation. Ralph noted that the Donovan Report recommended a social event for Vestry and Cathedral staff, to get to know each other. Liz will help schedule a Vestry/staff event this summer, which might be held on the same date as the orientation. David suggested that having a small, informal “hello” in the next month would help the groups start to mix, and hopefully foster some meaningful conversations at the traditional Vestry/Staff dinner in September.

Treasurer's Report

Steve Moen began by bringing the following resolutions before the Vestry.

Proposed Resolution #P-08-FI-05 (Clergy Housing Allowance: David Mesenbring) was moved seconded and passed unanimously.

Proposed Resolution #P-08-FI-06 (Funding for Interfaith Taskforce on Homelessness) was moved seconded and passed unanimously.

Proposed Resolution #P-08-FI-07, (Changes to Dean and Clergy Discretionary Accounts) was moved seconded and passed unanimously.

Proposed resolution #P-08-FI-08, (Changes to signature authority for banking and investment relationships) was moved seconded and passed unanimously.

Steve reported on the Operating Fund Summary April 08 with Forecast. He and Randy recommended posting it on the Cathedral website. YTD revenue as of April 30 is \$66,000 short of budget, but is consistent historical patterns of pledge payments and is not a big concern. He is more concerned about the \$181,000 which needs to be raised in Major Gifts and Grants to meet that budget line item of \$500,000. Mary said she has confidence that the \$319,000 already pledged will be receivable. Raising the remaining moeny will be a major task for the Stewardship and Development committee, and all of the Vestry.

The Cathedral expenses are currently under budget due to personnel vacancies, but will become a bigger expense in the fall. Mary is working to maintain flexibility in the budget. Since a Capital Campaign is not planned, a development director does not need to be hired this year. They expect to have a clearer idea of total 2008 personnel expenses soon.

Holy Orders

Sam Fleshman, Chair of the Holy Orders committee, referred to reports from the discernment teams and letters from the Holy Orders committee in support of the nominations for Laura Ellen Muglia and Carla Robinson for Postulancy. Sam recommended that Carla be put on a fast track for ministry, since she has already been through seminary and been ordained, and has had parishes of her own in the Lutheran church. She would still go thru postulancy, but not need to stay in that stage as long as most people do.

Proposed Resolution #P-08-HO-01, recommending Laura Ellen Muglia to the Bishop for Postulancy was moved and seconded and approved with Bob Muglia abstaining. Kathy Elkins, Chair of Laura Ellen's discernment committee, spoke of how impressed they were. Laura Ellen shared her appreciation and excitement, starting with her trip to Africa where she was blessed to "go forth."

Proposed Resolution #P-08-HO-02, recommending Carla Robinson to the Bishop for Postulancy was moved, seconded, and approved unanimously. Steve Moen spoke on behalf of Janet McCully, Chair of Carla's discernment team. He conveyed the committee's admiration and enthusiasm for Carla. Carla spoke of her remarkable journey and her delight in having an opportunity to lead the people of God. Carla also praised Elsie Ford, one of her heroes, and thanked the Vestry for speaking of her so highly. Ralph added that he knew Carla years ago, and they were both very happy to have a chance to meet again.

Sam added that he has had a long history of meeting ministry candidates, dating from his service on the Diocesan Standing Committee, and Laura Ellen and Carla are two of the finest candidates he has ever seen.

Church in the World

This resolution was first presented to the Vestry at the January 2008 meeting. David gave background information on the proposal to designate Saint Mark's as a Jubilee Congregation, in conjunction with efforts of Jubilee Northwest. He talked about the history and injustice of the high level of debt in third world countries such as Congo. David appreciates the revised wording of the resolution because to ask pledgers to check off a donation box on their pledge cards means the Jubilee Committee will need to educate the congregation about Jubilee.

Proposed Resolution #P-08-GO-04, (Jubilee Congregation) was moved, seconded and approved. Michele voted no, due to concerns that the wording is too sweeping.

Committee Reports

Ralph and Marilyn recommended that committee chairs write up descriptions and advertise in the weekly email "Sundays and Beyond" and the Sunday Bulletin, in order to get more parish members interested and involved. They also suggested that personal invitations are more flattering and successful than general notices.

Mission and Strategy Committee Report

Bob talked about the recent congregational forum with Kate Roosevelt from the Collins Group, where ideas for a proposed Strategic Plan were discussed. The committee needs to balance moving forward to establish a new vision, with focusing on key questions over the summer. Bob hopes to present a good list of questions to the Canon Missioner.

Finance Committee Report

Phil said the Finance committee has changed their meeting dates earlier in the month in order to get more timely financial reports from the Cathedral, and give more accurate reports to the Vestry. The committee is considering going to a more active way of managing investments, either with a consultant who doesn't invest, an investor who doesn't consult, or an investment banking firm like Goldman Sachs to give advice. There is concern that the current passive method has been unsatisfactory. The Diocesan Investment Fund and Marshal McReal (committee member and Goldman Sachs advisor) will make presentations to the committee at their next meeting. Phil also talked about changing auditing firms, since they have used the same one for approximately 15 years and best practice suggests more regular change. They have received proposals from Moss Adams and Clark Nuber—the latter is the firm used by the Foundation. Michele recommended contacting Jacobsen Jarvis as well.

Stewardship and Development Committee

Randy Urmston reported (in Randy Revelle's absence) that the Stewardship Committee is counting on all the Vestry members to be fundraisers. The committee has a lot of energy, and they are meeting every 2 weeks. Marilyn discussed an idea for simple thank you gatherings. She, Sue Reid and Virginia Lenker have started working on facilitating neighborhood house parties this summer—very informal, just coffee and cookies—to thank those who are consistent donors. The Vestry will be asked to host and/or attend the gatherings. Marilyn shared the idea making of a short DVD promoting stewardship and mission, similar to something created at Emmanuel, to give to newcomers, prospective dean, put on the website, etc. The Foundation Board was excited about the concept.

Facilities Committee Report

Carol reminded the Vestry of their fiduciary responsibility to maintain the Cathedral's facilities, as is stated in the National Church's recommendations to Vestries. The current line item of \$75,000 for deferred maintenance is just a drop in the bucket. She cited the lack of funds budgeted to maintain the Cathedral's copper roof built with funds from the Century II capital campaign. Without maintenance, the roof will not last as long as intended. Fixing Leffler and Cathedral porches are urgent safety, not cosmetic, needs. Carol said that many repair needs, such as fixing windows that are falling apart, will actually save energy and funds. Ralph agreed that many systems, including alarm, heating and ventilation, plumbing, need attention.

Governance Committee Report

Margaret reported she had become passionate about governance. Many of the problems at Saint Mark's are endemic to churches and all kinds of organizations. They aren't new, nor the result of one person. She recommended several books for people to educate themselves and have a shared terminology. For example, people tend to return to old patterns, a situation called "homeostasis." Margaret invited people to join the committee, whose next meeting is June 12.

Holy Orders

Marilyn, who has assumed responsibilities in Stewardship and Development, announced that Sue Reid will assume oversight of Holy Orders.

Open Mike

Kathy Elkins thanked Ralph for his weekly emails, which are very comforting and reassuring in letting the parish know what is going on. Jeff Helgesen suggested that the Sunday Bulletin include guidance on how to sign up for those emails. Steve said he carries Ralph's letters, along with copies of sermons, when he takes communion after the Sunday services. Liz recommended going to the Saint Mark's website (www.saintmarks.org), look at the left column and click on "Join our Email Mail List."

Ralph shared the title of a book he is reading: *Congregational Leadership in Anxious Times; Being Calm and Courageous No Matter What*.

Closing Prayer

Phil gave the closing prayer.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30pm.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 24, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Lenker
Recording Secretary

Liz Sloat
Executive Assistant to the Priest in Charge