

St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of August 21, 2007

Present: Scott A. Benhase, Rector; Margot Critchfield, Senior Associate Rector; Tim Boggs, Assistant Rector; Kate Bouvé, Senior Warden; Jim Sottile, Junior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Bill Edgar, Marc Fetterman, Keith Jones, Danette Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Jon Sawyer, Mark Shima, Bob Woolfolk, Vestry; Barbara Manard, Diocesan Delegate; Ron Hicks, Parish Verger; Mary Jane Shackelford, WSA Board Rep.; Treasurer, Chris Holmes; Andrea Farr, Secretary.

Guest: Alex Netchvolodoff

Opening Prayer

Scott Benhase called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 pm, following dinner, and offered an opening prayer.

Minutes of previous meetings

The following amendments were made to the minutes of the July 2007 Vestry meeting:

- Throughout the document the spelling of Betty Nowlan's name corrected;
- On page 2, second paragraph under "Treasurer's Report" replace "finds" with "funds"; and
- On page 3, the first sentence under "Junior Warden's Report" is to be corrected to reflect the fact that a single air conditioning unit was installed by changing "two" to "the," deleting the "s" in "units," and replacing "were" with "was."

Motion: Bob Woolfolk moved to accept the minutes of the July 2007 Vestry meeting, as amended.

Danette Kauffman seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Chris Holmes highlighted some of the items in his report. He noted that, as expected based on the traditional patterns of giving which show a slowing during the summer months, the Parish has gone "into the red."

Chris discussed a "favorable" variance. Proceeds from an annuity that is part of the bequest from Betty Nowlan have been paid to St. Alban's and, as per Vestry resolution, 10 percent of the total amount was added to the operating budget.

Certain items exceeded budgeted amounts. In particular, salaries are ahead of the budget because when the budget was established, new clergy staff had not yet arrived and it was not possible at that time to predict health insurance elections and resulting healthcare costs. Also, the budget did not anticipate the payment of salary and health insurance for Norman Scribner after May. Other "unfavorable" variances in the report were included hospitality

and the pilgrimage, although the variance associated with the pilgrimage is really an illusion because the Parish budgets a certain figure for a two year period, and the remainder from last year was not carried over to this year's budget.

Action: Chris Holmes and Scott Benhase will explore how to reflect in the budget the two (2) year budgeting cycle of the funds for the J2A pilgrimage.

Chris discussed the status of the Capital Campaign Fund, the level of the net borrowing from the Endowment, and noted that the final payment was still outstanding to the contractor. Marc Fetterman reported that St. Alban's has received two invoices that, based on the state of the punch list, are not believed to yet be due. Also, the final disbursement to the architects on the Nourse Hall project has not yet been made, and could be made by the end of September.

Motion: Sam Lewis made a motion to receive the Treasurer's Report.

Nathalie Bramson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Conversation with Alex Netchvolodoff and Tim Boggs on Strategic Stewardship planning

Scott Benhase introduced Alex Netchvolodoff who addressed the work of the Task Force on Stewardship. Alex observed that the parish has been in transition, but that the transition has occurred and it is time to move forward.

The Task Force recognized the importance on getting the theology right about stewardship. There was some tension on the Task Force concerning whether getting the theology right should be clergy or lay-led. The Task Force concluded that lay understanding is helped by the clergy, but that witnessing must be led by the laity.

There was concern regarding the soundness of the St. Alban's database and whether there was a complete record of who we are, contact information, family particulars, and individual expertise, etc. The Task Force expressed a belief that there should be a repetitive process involved in stewardship, perhaps through a committee, so that there is year-round attention given to stewardship.

Tim Boggs reiterated the importance of year-round attention to matters of stewardship. Tim outlined six areas that have been of particular interest to him:

1. *Data.* It is important to have information concerning who contributes and what is contributed. We need to identify gaps in data and gaps in substantive matters.
2. *Capital Campaign.* Tim met with Julie Russell regarding the Capital Campaign and status of the pledges.

3. *Every Member Pledge.* Tim spoke with Keith Jones and Danette Kauffman. Dani will co-chair this year's Campaign.
4. *Endowment.* In reviewing St. Alban's Endowment, Tim has been thinking about whether there is a creative way to increase the Endowment, and how to address the topic of targeted endowment. There is a lot of material on this topic, and Tim has been conducting research and talking to people who have expertise.
5. *Website.* The website should be changed to make it easier for people to get information, to pledge, obtain pledging information and to make gifts (one time gifts, gifts given in memory of someone). There are plenty of resources available on this topic, and people who are willing to share their knowledge. In particular, Terri Parsons the national church's Director of Stewardship has agreed to meet with Tim.
6. *Designated funds.* The designated funds have been identified and values learned. A report is still in progress.

Tim concluded his remarks by praising the work done by the Task Force on Stewardship.

A discussion regarding the database followed. Bob Woolfolk reported that the database clean-up is underway and should be completed by September. Some of the heretofore unexploited features of the Shelby software were mentioned, including options for extracting and finding connections among data and options for restricting access to certain data. It was noted that with respect to certain data, updated data may be input into the system now. Regarding the collection of useful information, it was noted that Parishioners should continue to submit Time and Talent surveys, and that surveys will continue to be accepted on an ongoing basis.

There was a discussion concerning the idea that members of the Vestry, as parish leaders, move toward tithing—not promise to tithe, but pledge to move in that direction. There were questions regarding how to define “tithe.” Alex Netchvolodoff noted that the Task Force on Stewardship believed that each person should define tithing for oneself. It was suggested that Scott Benhase prepare an article for *The Chronicle* regarding the different definitions, and it was noted that he prepared such an article last fall.

Tim Boggs noted that it was important to take discussions regarding finances off the pedestal, and to become and remain engaged. The discussion should not be a yearly event, but an ongoing process. Kate Bouvé suggested that tithing should be discussed at the May Planning Meeting.

Junior Warden's Report

Jim Sottile addressed two issues:

1. *Proposal from Stone House Group*
Jim outlined the main features of the proposal:

- Assessment will be conducted over three months, with the final report issued in early December (a draft report issued approximately one month earlier);
- The fees will be based on the Stone House Group's professional rates, with fees capped at \$20,000 and expenses capped at \$2,500;
- The assessment will identify projects in the Rectory and Satterlee Hall that will require attention in the next ten years and are projected to cost \$2,000 and up, and will include notations concerning hazardous materials;
- The end product will be an extensive report identifying and prioritizing projects and providing estimated costs to establish planning for 1-3 year, 5-7 year and 10 year time periods.

The Property Committee benefited from the insights of Doug Yun, an assessment professional himself, to evaluate the proposal. The Committee considered three key questions:

- i. Is Stone House qualified to do the work?
The Committee believes so. Stone House specializes in performing assessments for religious institutions.
- ii. Is the proposal responsive to the RFP?
The Committee confirmed that the proposal addressed the items raised in the proposal.
- iii. Is the cost reasonable?
The Committee noted that Doug Yun reported that \$20,000 was the lowest price his firm could consider for the project. Doug suggested two modifications to Stone House's original proposal: 1) the cap on expenses and 2) that the reported expenses conform to the USGSA standards.

Motion: Jim Sottile moved that the Vestry approve the proposal of the Stone House Group to perform the assessment of the current condition and future required maintenance needs of the Rectory and Satterlee Hall consistent with the terms outlined during the foregoing discussion, with fees not to exceed \$20,000 and expenses capped at \$2,500.

The motion was seconded by Sam Lewis. A discussion of the motion followed. Jim reported that some of the expenses would be associated with travel from Philadelphia where Stone House is located. It was noted that Stone House has access to the previously performed assessment; a principal of Stone House had participated in the earlier process. It was also noted that Stone House should focus on non-cosmetic matters.

A vote on the motion followed, and the motion carried.

2. *Bathrooms in Satterlee Hall*
The renovations are scheduled for the week of August 27.

Jim Sottile noted that reports concerning the effectiveness of the air-conditioning unit in the Satterlee Hall kitchen have been positive.

Senior Warden's Report

Kate Bouvé had prepared a written report. A discussion of the items covered followed.

St. Alban's has received the proceeds from an annuity left to the Parish by **Betty Nowlan**. The funds, totaling more than \$67,000, were applied in accordance with the Vestry resolution--90 percent to the Reserve Fund and 10 percent to the Operating Budget.

Scott has prepared a draft of his **position description**. Katie and Jim Sottile are reviewing the draft.

Kate will talk to Lauren Mead regarding the **Strategic Planning Weekend**, as he is writing a book covering the issue. Kate noted that it was important to consider who will attend the Planning Weekend, and urged patience as the Parish learns how to this process is done.

Kate asked the Vestry to provide input regarding **the Mutual Ministry Review** to either the Junior or Senior Warden by September 15. On Saturday, September 29, in the morning, the Vestry and Wardens will meet with the Rector to discuss the results. It was suggested that the deadline of September 15 could be too soon. Kate asked that everyone do his/her best, and noted that this process will be repeated every year. Kate also noted that extending the deadline would push it into EMP campaign and other fall activities. It was also noted that the September 15 deadline means that the Review will have been before the Parish for a month. It was suggested that August be discounted as time applied to the Review because of absences due to the summer holidays.

There was discussion concerning a mechanism to participate in the Review anonymously. Scott Benhase noted that normally the Review is conducted by the Rector and Vestry, but because this is the first one for St. Alban's, there will be more direct parishioner input. Because one cannot respond, engage or otherwise follow up on comments received anonymously they are not as useful as acknowledged comments, but would still serve to expand participation. It was noted that some parishioners have expressed concern that the process was hidden and not open, like a "Star Chamber." It was suggested that anonymous comments are not problematic but there is a need for the Vestry to filter information supplied in the Review.

It was suggested that a line be added to the Review announcement that emphasized that this was "standard diocesan procedure."

It was determined that the deadline for input would be moved to September 16, and that the meeting for the Vestry, Wardens and Rector would take place on Saturday, September 29 from 9 am to 11 am. It was also decided that, in order to facilitate communications between

the Vestry and parishioners, the e-mail addresses of Vestry members would be published in the bulletin.

Rector's Report

Scott Benhase led the Vestry through the list of action items from the May Vestry Retreat provided a status report for each.

Scott has just received information from Brian Keane regarding SunEdison and noted two issues. First, there is a great deal of interest in what SunEdison is doing, and as a result, SunEdison is extremely busy right now. Second, there is a shortage of silicon, limiting production of solar arrays.

Scott reflected on the recent J2A pilgrimage to Spain. He noted that these are amazing young people. At the end of September the J2A will address the parish at a Forum. It was asked whether there was something special that could be done to acknowledge the J2A, and it was suggested that the Wardens could address the same Forum.

Action Item: Scott Benhase will provide to the Vestry the link to the website that contains over 900 photos from the pilgrimage.

A written report prepared by **Harriette Sturges** was distributed to the Vestry. Harriette will address the Vestry at the September meeting.

Old Business

Tim Boggs introduced a report addressing St. Alban's outreach ministries prepared by the **Outreach Committee**. The report includes a draft list the various outreach ministries, grouped according to the level of support provided by the Parish as well as by type of ministry. The report includes a list of proposed members of the Outreach Commission. A detail concerning the various ministries also is included. In order to compile this information, Kammie Hedges and/or Susan Morris spoke to each leader who completed a survey.

Motion: Keith Jones moved that the Vestry establish the Outreach Commission with the membership as set forth in the report, with the initial term of membership to last until September 2008.

Danette Kaufman seconded the motion. A discussion followed. It was noted that the ex-officio members would be selected by the organization in question.

A correction to the draft was noted: The WSA should be listed under the groups "Not funded by St. Alban's."

It was observed that the proposed membership was heavily weighted towards women. Concern was voiced that the motion as initially expressed specified the members and that, as a result, any change in membership at any time would require Vestry approval. The motion

was amended to add “,with the initial term of membership to last until September 2008” which provided a timetable for review of the Commission membership. It was noted that once established the Commission could define its mission. Following the discussion the Vestry voted on the motion as amended, and it carried.

It was noted that any comments on the draft categories should be directed to Susan Morris, Kammie Hedges or the Commission.

Marc Fetterman, on behalf of the **Art & Memorials Committee**, addressed the two outstanding proposals.

1. *Stone carving*
The Committee recommended that the stone carving be brought to St. Alban’s for further evaluation.

2. *Stained glass window*
The Committee recommends that the Vestry decline to accept the gift of stained glass currently under consideration because the proposed design is inconsistent with the general character of the stained glass already in the church.

The Committee also recommended that, given the relatively few remaining windows, the Vestry establish policies for evaluating future proposed gifts of stained glass, addressing issues such as iconography, artists, and the amount of the gift.

Marc reported that the old Choir Room already had been named, for Dr. Felix Kloman. The new Choir Room has been named for Norman Scribner, so a different room should be selected to be named for Dr. Kloman.

Ruth Cline has been collecting art from the around the church buildings and the items are being stored in the Rectory. Marc and Wendy Reeves will make a recommendation to the Committee regarding what to do with the items, and the Committee will in turn make a recommendation to the Vestry.

Motion: Marc Fetterman moved for Vestry approval of the Committee’s recommendation that St. Alban’s decline the gift of this stained glass window.

The motion was seconded by Sam Lewis and a discussion followed. The Rector noted that the Parish must make it possible for people to make memorial gifts, and that without procedures setting forth locations and suggesting appropriate characteristics and costs, the Vestry is put in the position of having to decline gift. Scott emphasized that it was only this design that was being declined, and that the donor family should be given the first opportunity to propose a design, perhaps near one that they have previously donated. The Vestry voted on the motion and the motion carried.

Marc Fetterman reported that work is continuing regarding the plans for the **Handicap accessible ramp**.

Mark Shima presented an update from the **Close Parking Committee**. Mark discussed the written report that was included in the Vestry Packet. Scott Benhase reported that Steve Rippe knows that the PECF will not receive anything from St. Alban's this year and that St. Alban's Parking Committee is addressing the issue. Scott also noted that Frank Wade had told him that, at least during Frank's tenure, there were no written agreements between the PECF and St. Alban's concerning parking. There is a written agreement concerning snow removal and grounds upkeep, for which St. Alban's pays \$1,800/month.

Action item: Ron Hicks will provide a copy of the maintenance agreement to Mark Shima.

It was asked whether, given the importance of the four spaces in front of the Rectory, St. Alban's could buy the spots. The Vestry observed that the Cathedral parking garage was not convenient for those going to St. Alban's and that Sunday parking needs were driving the matter. It was noted that these issues should be considered by the Parking Committee. Mark asked when the Committee should issue its recommendations so that they may be considered in the budget process. Scott responded that he would like a budget by December. Kate Bouvé noted that as a general matter budget items should come to the Vestry in the fall.

Danette Kauffman suggested that there was a need to go forward with two commissions in the **Commission Structure**: 1) Hospitality and Special Events Fellowship; and 2) Stewardship. Scott responded that Tim Boggs is addressing stewardship and will have a proposal for the September or October Vestry meeting, and that Erin Hensley also is involved with respect to newcomers.

Compline followed at 9:15 pm.

Executive Session

The Vestry did not go into Executive Session.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary