

St. Alban's Parish, Washington, D.C.
Minutes of the Vestry Meeting of April 15, 2008

Scott Benhase, Rector; Tim Boggs, Assistant Rector for Stewardship & Outreach Ministries; Ron Hicks, Parish Verger; Kate Bouvé, Senior Warden; James Sottile, Junior Warden; Nathalie Bramson, Marc Fetterman, Kammie Hedges, Keith Jones, Danette Kauffman, Sam Lewis, Susan Morris, Jon Sawyer, Mark Shima, Bob Woolfolk, Vestry; Bill Hall, Barbara Manard, Amy Slemmer, Diocesan Delegates; Chris Holmes, Treasurer; Andrea Farr, Secretary.

Guests: Joe McLean, Alfred Brainard, Joanne Brainard, Bob Smith, Chuck Holmes, Cay Hartley, Noell Sottile, Ann Ramsey-Moor.

Scott Benhase called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm and led an opening prayer.

Minutes of previous meeting

February 2008: The minutes were tabled until the next Vestry meeting. In the meantime, comments concerning the draft should be sent to Bob Woolfolk at jgswww@aol.com.

March 2008:

Motion: Bob Woolfolk made a motion to accept the minutes as written.

Nathalie Bramson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Treasurer's Report

Chris Holmes presented the report. He noted that actual and budgeted figures match and that although there was a negative variance in plate collections it was offset by savings in utilities costs, possibly resulting from improved energy efficiency of the renovated Nourse Hall. The Endowment Fund showed a modest increase, a good result given current market conditions and the fact that a large portion of the Fund was tied up in an interest-free loan for the building project.

A discussion of the Treasurer's Report and the parish's overall financial condition followed. It was noted that Whiting-Turner has been paid in full for the Nourse Hall project. Tim Boggs reported that Capital Campaign pledge funds continue to come in, with only a few delinquencies. The Campaign is scheduled to be largely completed in 2008 with a few pledges extending into 2010.

Motion: Susan Morris moved to receive the Treasurer's Report.

Keith Jones seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Special Order of Business: Proposed Covenant with the Cathedral

The document “*Moving Forward: Cathedral-St. Alban’s Covenant*” dated April 11, 2008 was distributed. It was noted that there were a few minor factual issues to be cleaned up (*e.g.*, certain dates). Bob Smith summarized the document and the other St. Alban’s representatives to the Covenant Group - Bill Hall, Ann Ramsey-Moor and Noell Sottile – participated in the discussion that followed.

It was noted that the section “Boundary Issues” was designed to avoid certain past mishaps. The Group members commented that the document was the result of a careful process and significant deliberations as well as comments from Scott Benhase.

The Vestry observed that the Congregation’s newsletter is in the *Cathedral Voice*. The *Covenant* Appendix describes possible joint projects for the Cathedral and St. Alban’s. Although the Appendix is not intended to include all opportunities for cooperation, it was suggested that be amended to include the Crossroads Shelter because of the comprehensive nature of the possible cooperation (both personal time commitments and financial support).

The Vestry asked whether there were any outstanding issues. The Group responded that the *Covenant* represents a process; it will be important going forward to make sure that the process is followed, which could require special attention given the minimal institutional memory at the Cathedral. It will be important also for there to be consultation between the Cathedral and the parish prior to decisions to ensure that the impact on the neighbor is considered in planning. The document should help create goodwill and conversation.

The Vestry commended the Group for its hard work. The report will be voted upon at the next Vestry meeting. (The next meeting will take place on Saturday, May 17 from 9am until noon and will include orientation for the new Vestry.) It was noted that the Covenant Group agreed that there would be no changes of substance to the document.

Stewardship Commission Report

Tim Boggs and Joe McLean presented a draft Stewardship Commission report. The report includes an eight part plan. The Commission has asked the Vestry to review the report for two months so that it may be taken up at the June Vestry meeting. It was suggested that the draft report be circulated among Planning Retreat participants to provide background.

A discussion of the draft report followed. It was noted that the Finance Committee is developing guidelines for investment that will dovetail with the Endowment governance structure established by the Stewardship Commission. Gift policies are intended to instill donor confidence. Questions and/or comments should be sent to Tim Boggs.

Junior Warden’s Report

Jim Sottile presented the Junior Warden’s report.

1. *Stone House Report redux:* Copies of the executive summary of the Stone House Group's report were distributed. The complete report is some 50 pages long and will be forwarded later.

The most pressing item identified in the report is the HVAC in Satterlee Hall. Stone House estimates that it will cost \$530,000 to completely replace the existing system. The Property Committee asked Stone House to provide alternatives to completely replacing system. To replace the boiler alone, which presents the most significant failure risk, will cost approximately \$88,000. It is possible to select a new boiler that can be incorporated into the new system when it is finally completely replaced. The lost cost associated with replacing the boiler prior to replacing the entire HVAC would be approximately \$10,000-\$15,000. It was noted that some of the boiler cost could be recovered as a result of improved energy efficiency.

The Property Committee expects to recommend that the Vestry authorize the replacement of the boiler at a cost of \$88,000, to be taken from the Reserve Fund. The Committee is deferring the motion until the next Vestry meeting in order to perform due diligence (need, cost, lost cost, etc. for replacing the boiler).

A discussion of the boiler, HVAC and building needs generally followed. Jim reported that the Stone House Group estimates that it would cost approximately \$130,000-\$140,000 to replace the boiler in the event of a failure.

The cost for all of the repairs/renovations in the report is estimated at approximately \$1.6 million. The most urgent items, in addition to the boiler, include the electrical distribution panel in Satterlee Hall and water infiltration. The cost of the urgent items, including the boiler, is estimated at \$170,000. The report includes several items that are optional. Jim noted that the second largest finding in the report, in terms of cost, is not a mandatory item but should be considered: An elevator installed in Satterlee Hall at a cost of approximately \$225,000.

It was noted that the Reserve Fund is typically used for such unexpected repairs. Currently the Reserve Fund contains approximately \$535,000 and must have a minimum of \$150,000 at all times for cash-flow purposes.

2. *St. Alban's Employee Handbook:* Jim Sottile has received comments. The revised document will be circulated shortly and implemented.

3. *Finance Report:* The stewardship guidelines will be presented to the Vestry for approval at the next meeting. The parish has been notified of several bequests. It was noted that, pursuant to Vestry resolution, 90 percent of bequests are put into the Reserve Fund, and the rest goes to the Operating Budget. The Vestry noted that the plaque to Betty Nowlan has not yet been installed.

Senior Wardens Report

Kate Bouvé reported that planning for the Annual Meeting on May 4th is well underway and the reports to be compiled are in production. Kate also reported that invitations to Parish Planning Weekend (May 30-June 1) participants have been sent by e-mail.

Rector's Report

1. *Salon St Alban's*: Scott Benhase reported that the first gathering is scheduled for April 27 at the Westchester with the Reverend Martin Smith.
2. *The Alban Course*: Clergy have become overextended holding two meetings on Sunday (at 9:15 am and 11:15 am). Although the situation will be manageable during the summer schedule (when the 9:15 am and 11:15 am services will be collapsed into one service at 10:30 am and the single Course meeting held at 9:15 am), the clergy will not be able to manage two Course meetings when the regular schedule resumes in the fall. Scott hopes to work with lay leaders so there are lay catechists leading the meetings and clergy participating as guest presenters.
3. *Time & Talent Pledging*: Online registration via the website is up and running.
4. *Cuba Trip (6/23/08) and visit of Cuban Priest at Pentecost (5/11/08)*: Twelve persons are planning to make the trip, including three members of the senior youth group. Travelers are going for either five or ten days. Fr. Juan Exposito will visit and celebrate with us on May 11.
5. *Eugene Sutton's Consecration*: Eugene Sutton will be consecrated bishop of Maryland on June 28th at 4 pm at the Cathedral. The celebrations will take place at St. Alban's.
6. *Erin's Ordination*: Erin Hensley will be ordained at St. Alban's on June 29th at 4 p.m.
7. *Change in June meeting date*: Because of scheduling conflicts for the Rector and Junior and Senior Wardens, the June Vestry meeting will be held on June 10th rather than June 17th.
8. *Update on Vestry Action Items from May 2007*: Scott had e-mailed to the Vestry a copy of the action items generated at the May 2007 Vestry retreat and discussed the progress in addressing each of the items. Scott noted that the parish database still needs work. Parishioner input and institutional memory are needed to supply missing information and correct/update existing information. The summer intern scheduled to be at the parish for six weeks this summer will be able to attend to much of the data entry.
9. *Draft of Future Program Use of Satterlee & Warner Rectory*: Keith Jones, Jim Sottile and Scott Benhase are preparing a report and hope to have a draft available for the Parish Planning Weekend.

Scott reported that 12 couples will be married or blessed by fall. As long as there is potential controversy, the Rector alone will bless unions to ensure that the other clergy are not subjected to any fallout.

Old Business

1. *Handicap accessible ramp for Church:* Marc Fetterman reported that ramp drawings are essentially completed and need to be lettered.
2. *Arts & Memorials Committee:* Tim Boggs and Scott Benhase have been in touch with the Stafford family and presented the Vestry's proposal for new lighting and hanging a copy of the window near the organ chamber. The Stafford family declined, responding that they want to create a new window to be installed near the organ console.

Marc Fetterman reported that this issue was identified at the time the organ was being redone. The Committee at the time identified two options: (1) Remove the window and hang it by the organ chamber; and (2) insert back lighting. The Committee thought the second option was unsuitable as it would result in one window being lit artificially when all the other windows were lit using natural light. The church leadership never acted upon the options.

Valedictory Speeches

In keeping with tradition, those for whom this meeting was their last as members of the Vestry were given the opportunity to address the meeting. Bob Witten (by Dani Kauffman), Jon Sawyer and Susan Morris each reflected on their term on the Vestry. (Mark Shima had had to leave the meeting by this time in order to attend to Olivia and Finn.)

The Vestry expressed gratitude for the service of each of the departing Vestry members, making note of the particular challenges faced during the last three years.

Compline began at approximately 9 pm.

Executive Session

The Vestry went into executive session at approximately 9:05 pm.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 pm.

Andrea F. Farr, Secretary.