

# St. Mark's EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## Capitol Hill

3rd & A Sts SE,  
Washington, DC



### Minutes of Vestry Meeting November 15, 2015 1:15p.m.

Present:

Clergy: The Rev. R. Justice Schunior, Associate Rector

Wardens: Peter Sherer, Senior Warden  
Doris Muller-Burton, Junior Warden

Vestry Members: Stephen Dalzell, Gwen Dillard, Nora Howell, Martha Huizenga,  
Doug Jackson, Mary Thuell, Christina White, Karen Wiedemann

Officers: Andrew Stafford, Treasurer; Penny Hansen, Assistant Treasurer, Jack  
Burton, Manciple, Michael Knipe, Counsel, Mary Anderson Cooper,  
Register

Staff: Caroline McReynolds-Adams, Director of Youth & Family Ministries

Absent: Vestry Member Fritz Henn

Visitors: Kenn Allen, Chuck Divine, Raiford Gaffney

- I. The meeting was called to order by the Senior Warden.
- II. The opening prayer was offered by Doris Muller-Burton.
- III. The Senior Warden reported that Fritz Henn was in Europe receiving an award. Doris Muller-Burton reported that Monarc Construction, the company that did the renovation of St. Mark's in 2014, had won the Best Construction of the Year Award from the Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. for their work on St. Mark's.
- IV. Proposal to create The Archives and Parish History Committee

Doris Muller-Burton asked that the minutes show that the Archives and Parish History Committee would "not have anything" in the parish archives if it were not for the work

done by Bert Cooper over the years to preserve the parish history. Copies of his 1994 book on the history of the building and the parish were distributed to Vestry Members. Mary Cooper noted that the book had been updated in 2010 and is available electronically on the parish website. She is now revising it to reflect the work of the Vision 2020 project.

Kenn Allen presented the proposal to create The Archives and Parish History Committee, which was distributed electronically in advance of the meeting. The Committee requested \$5,000 for the purchase of equipment needed for storage and protection of materials, some of which date back to 1867 and are deteriorating.

The proposal to create The Archives and Parish History Committee was unanimously **APPROVED.**

Doug Jackson reported that there is a new app that allows him to scan hundreds of pages a day to the Cloud at his office, which might also be useful for the archives. The Junior Warden pointed out that diocesan rules require having all minutes in hard copy, whether or not they are also stored electronically. Steve Dalzell said that the Duke Ellington School might provide an intern to help with scanning. It was suggested that parish teenagers might also volunteer for this task and also for the onerous job of entering all of the thousands of names in parish registers into an alphabetical data base which would show which bound register contains the information for each entry.

V. Motion to approve the Archives funding request to the Endowment Board

Gwen Dillard moved, seconded by Nora Howell, the Vestry concurring unanimously, that the proposal be **APPROVED.**

VI. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report was distributed electronically in advance of the meeting.

Andrew Stafford reported that the Goldin Group will provide balance sheets every month. Karen Wiedemann said that the new Treasurer's Report is a great improvement over previous ones but showing a comparison with the previous year would be helpful.

The Treasurer noted that income is running behind the budget but that the next ten weeks are the point in the year where income rises rapidly as more people attend during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons and people who have been behind on their pledges catch up their payments before the end of the year.

The Senior Warden asked if Treasurers of accounts could see their accounts online in order to avoid contacting the Treasurer or Patricia Schans. The Treasurer replied that they would have to be given access to QuickBooks and suggested that for now they send their questions to him.

The Junior Warden asked that the minutes show an expression of gratitude to Linda Ewald for her invaluable help in getting the finances in order during a time of transition. The Senior Warden agreed to send her a letter of appreciation.

Christina White suggested that, in the Sunday bulletin, business-related announcements should be put in a separate section rather than mixed in with regular announcements, so that people who needed to know could find them more easily.

## VII. Senior Warden's Report

Every Member Canvass. The Senior Warden noted that canvass pledges are coming in somewhat slowly but are likely to pick up as the end of the year approaches. Nora Howell, Canvass Co-Chair, reported that so far 124 pledges have been received, including five new ones. Pledges from people who also pledged in 2015 are showing an average 26% increase, which is a hopeful sign.

Martha Huizenga asked how people who attend the 5 p.m. "get into the system." The response was that they fill out one of the green cards given to newcomers and then they are contacted by the clergy. They also get drawn into the larger church by participating in classes, baptism courses, and other events. Anyone who has written a check to the church is added to the mailing list and contacted for a pledge. Christina volunteered to invite people at the 5 p.m. service to fill out green cards if they have not done so already.

Suella Henn Bequest. The Senior Warden directed Vestry Members to a memo from Fritz Henn regarding the bequest from Suella Henn of \$60,000. Fritz stated that "She wished to provide for a rain garden and have the remaining money go to pay renovation costs from Vision 2020. She did not specify which Vision 2020 account." The funds are currently in a holding account, pending Vestry action. Since the cost for a rain garden was estimated during the Vision 20/20 proposal process, there was concern expressed by several Vestry members that an updated estimate should be obtained before any decisions were made. There was uncertainty about whether the intent of the bequest was that the building of the rain garden should proceed if the cost would be substantially higher than the original estimate. The Vestry agreed to postpone a decision on the matter until Vestry Member Henn was present to clarify the intent of the bequest.

The Junior Warden moved, seconded by the Senior Warden, that a decision on the use of the bequest be postponed until an updated estimate is obtained, hopefully by the December meeting. Two Vestry Members opposed the motion, which was **APPROVED**.

## VIII. Junior Warden's Report

The Junior Warden distributed a financial report electronically in advance of the meeting. She expressed her thanks to Charlie Rupp and Nora Howell for covering her responsibilities during her vacation.

She reported that there is a leak in the 1990 undercroft because of pipe deterioration. A new valve will be installed to make it possible to cut off water in the old undercroft without shutting off the rest of the plant.

Repairs to the gutters will start within a few days and the restoration of the stained glass windows will begin in the spring. More chairs are needed for the parish hall and she hopes more can be obtained shortly.

She noted that we are still rejecting many space rentals because there are still some unresolved issues, although a fee schedule is now in place. Martha Huizenga reported that the internet connectivity in the parish house is very poor and needs to be improved before the space is rented for conferences and meetings.

The Junior Warden noted that a request has been received for a sign-up board in the foyer. It is under consideration.

#### IX. Standing Committee Reports

Youth and Family Ministries. The report was distributed electronically before the meeting and there was no additional report.

Membership. Mary Thuell reported that members of the Committee are working on a redesign of the green cards and ways to get them into the hands of newcomers. Caroline McReynolds-Adams and Peter Sherer agreed to help with follow-up to families.

The Committee is creating a group to greet newcomers and help them connect to the church. There will be some “floater” greeters who are not assigned to a specific date but will pay attention to newcomers whenever they see them. Vestry and officers will be asked to stand so newcomers can find them, rather than asking visitors to stand. The Committee also wants to reinstate name tags for parishioners. The Committee is working on ways to reach out to people who have drifted away.

The Flocks Within Flocks plan is moving forward. Josie Jordan is in charge of this effort to organize parishioners by zip code to help them connect socially and in times of need.

Communications Working Group. Christina White reported that the group is working on redesign of the website. Proposals have been sought from local vendors and the hope is to have a new website running by the end of the first quarter of 2016.

The Vestry expressed its gratitude to Thia Hamilton, who has led the process to find a new vendor.

Mary Thuell moved, with Doris Mueller-Burton seconding, approval of the proposal that the Endowment Fund provide \$15,000 for the development of a new website. The motion was unanimously **APPROVED.**

X. Old Business

Rector Selection: Doris Mueller-Burton moved and Karen Wiedemann seconded that the Vestry go into Executive Session.

The result of the Executive Session was the decision that the Discernment and Search Committee will provide the Vestry with the names of the top three among the candidates they have interviewed, indicating their first choice. The Vestry will schedule interviews with all three as close together and as quickly as possible. Vestry members are asked to propose questions for the candidates, to be discussed at the December meeting.

Mary Thuell moved, Peter Sherer seconding, that the Executive Session end.

XI. New Business

Vestry Minutes. Mary Cooper circulated a memo electronically outlining a plan intended to simplify the process of approving the minutes. She will draft minutes shortly after each meeting, email them to members, and ask that they send all corrections to her. She will then incorporate all changes and recirculate the minutes for final approval electronically prior to the next meeting. Following approval by a majority of Vestry Members, the minutes will be posted to the Google Drive.

Annual Parish Meeting. Each class of Vestry Members has specified duties, as spelled out in the Vestry Manual. The Annual Parish Meeting is March 11. Nursery and children's activities will be needed. The APM will be discussed at the December meeting.

XII. What's Working?/What's Not?

The Vestry greeting system seems to have broken down. The Senior Warden often does the greeting at 9 a.m. if he does not see another Vestry Member there to do it.

Vestry meetings are running too long. The Senior Warden said that those who have made written reports in advance should not expect to have agenda time too unless there are new developments.

XIII. The Closing Prayer was offered by Manciple Jack Burton.

XIV. The meeting was adjourned at 3:57.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Anderson Cooper