

# St. Mark's on the Campus Vestry Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2011

12:15 pm

**Present:** Fr. Jerry Thompson, Todd Sneller, Donna Harler-Smith, Opal Doerr, Berwyn Jones, Lyn Forester, Don Gray, Allison Cole, Lisa Sutton, Tim Hill, Kate Maattala, Colleen Baade, Jim Karas

**Absent:** No one was absent

**Guests:** Stephanie Hill, Bob Kuzelka

## **Minutes: Opal Doerr**

Opal distributed a draft of the minutes about a week earlier. A couple of typo/spelling changes had been identified and were already corrected in the minutes most recently distributed.

**Todd Sneller moved that minutes for the November 2011 Vestry meeting be approved.  
Don Gray seconded the motion. All approved.**

## **Elevator Proposal: Bob Kuzelka**

Bob reported his progress on identifying funding sources for the elevator. First, Ferd and Jo Anderson have gone ahead and donated \$45,000. Bob has spoken with several other parishioners and identified over \$21,000 in additional donations. He has also applied to four foundations for grants. So far, he has two replies – one a refusal and one a \$1,000 grant. Two have not yet replied. Canon Yates had also suggested that this purpose would probably be eligible for a United Thank Offering Grant from the National Episcopal Church. These grants are distributed only once per year. The deadline for application is January 15. Bob will work with the Bishop's Administrative Assistant to prepare a request/application for \$20,000. If available, a low-interest loan from the Nebraska Diocese might also be a funding source. Still another option would be to borrow from or use SMOC's own Capital Improvement Fund.

Responding to a question from the previous meeting, Bob also reported that the annual costs for required inspections and maintenance would be about \$500 – probably somewhat less. This includes a \$100 annual inspection fee and 2 to 3 maintenance visits at \$135 per visit.

Bob has discussed timing of the project and a payment schedule with the contractor. He indicated our next step would be to sign a proposal letter. The contractor would then prepare and offer a contract. Once the contract is signed, construction could begin within a month or two. Construction would take about a month. About \$35,000 is required as an upfront payment to the elevator manufacturer. The remaining \$44,942 could be split into three monthly payments.

Richard Toren has agreed to work with Bob as supervisor/inspector for the project.

Bob asked that the vestry:

- approve proceeding with the elevator project,
- authorize the warden to sign the contract,
- get approval from the congregation to temporarily borrow funds from our SMOC Capital Improvement Fund for the remaining unfunded elevator and window costs, and
- appoint a capital campaign committee to raise funds to reimburse the Capital Improvement Fund.

Bob will continue to seek commitments for donations and he would like three to four vestry members to help him... this should certainly include the treasurer!

Initially, there was a motion made and seconded to develop plans for a capital fund raising campaign to be kicked off at the Annual Meeting. However, before the motion was approved, there was considerable

discussion about fund raising campaigns in general – for example, they should span three to four months, be for a set amount of funds, have clear goals, and occur infrequently.

With that in mind, the consensus was that we needed to approach the possibility of a full-blown capital campaign with more care and preparation. For now we are facing a need for gap financing in support of two generous capital donations for donor-specified projects. There are still unknowns that will affect the size of the gap (possible grants and other supporting donations, for example). So, while approval of the parishioners to use of the Capital Improvement fund should be requested at the annual meeting, the vestry should wait to sign contracts until funding sources are identified. The earlier motion was modified.

**Lisa Sutton moved that we proceed with the elevator and windows projects, signing the contract for the elevator when funding sources are all identified and the vestry approves. The motion was seconded by Berwyn Jones. All approved.**

There was no controversy about dedicating the elevator!

**Lyn Forester moved that the elevator be dedicated in the name of Ferd and Jo Anderson. The motion was seconded by Lisa Sutton. All approved.**

### **Treasurer's Report -- Stephanie Hill**

Stephanie reported that the past month's numbers have been good. She also reported that the final payments for the solar panels have been made from the general fund for now. The general fund will be more than reimbursed when the stocks donated for that purpose are sold. This is proving to be a challenge because of requirements by the corporation in which the stocks are held. The church by-laws apparently don't designate who has authority to do this kind of transaction. Working with the bank, Stephanie thinks the financial authorities would accept a notarized document signed by the vestry and authorizing the sale of the stocks. This would be much quicker than the year it would take to amend the church bylaws.

**Berwyn Jones moved that there be a January 15 vestry meeting and, pending acceptance of a notarized document as an appropriate option by the financial authorities, that a public notary be engaged to attend said meeting. The motion was seconded by Lisa Sutton. All approved.**

Stephanie also reported that the Rector's Discretionary fund had been hit by fraud. The bank has reimbursed the loss and a new, replacement account has been opened. There followed some brainstorming on ways to avoid this, but it is difficult to avoid all risk. There is always some chance that a person being assisted or someone affiliated with them will not be trustworthy. However, we still need to be able to help those who are in need, so this is a necessary risk.

**Don Gray moved that the November 2011 Treasurer's Report be approved. The motion was seconded by Lisa Sutton. All approved.**

Lisa Sutton has agreed to serve as Treasurer for one year with Jessica Freeman as Assistant Treasurer. Jessica will take over as Treasurer in 2013. Lisa and Jessica plan to approach the job as a team and they will not hesitate to seek advice from past Treasurers. Stephanie has had to cope with a lot of difficult situations. Thank you, Stephanie! Thank you, Lisa! Thank you, Jessica!

### **2012 Budget**

As of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012 pledges had reached \$186,679.50. Fr. Jerry indicated that an additional expected \$26,000 in pledges would bring the total 2012 pledged income to \$212,679.50. This, along with \$14,000 in plate offering, \$2,300 in flower income, \$10,876.50 in faith contributions (pledge over payments), and miscellaneous income of \$2,780 brings the Total Income to \$242,636. This total allows SMOC to meet expenses and respond to the Diocesan Asking of \$30,000. The vestry deeply appreciates the dedicated support of parishioners who share their time, talents, and resources so generously.

Discussion included a reminder to send replacement pledge cards to parishioners who had requested them. The flower fund seems to often run low. People sign up and then forget to pay. Stephanie will work with Denise to come up with a way of regularly reminding people who haven't paid.

**Lyn Forester moved that the proposed 2012 Budget be adopted. The motion was seconded by Donna Harler-Smith. All approved.**

### **Rector Housing Allowance**

As a matter of bookkeeping and per IRS regulations, the vestry needs to annually designate \$25,000 of Fr. Jerry's salary as a housing allowance. This does not change his salary, just how it can be reported to the IRS.

**Todd Sneller moved that \$25,000 of Fr. Jerald Thompson's 2012 salary be designated as a housing allowance. The motion was seconded by Berwyn Jones. All approved.**

### **Comments/Celebrations/Thanksgivings/Concerns**

Berwyn's friend, Paul, died. Berwyn thanked the vestry for our prayers.

### **Authorization to Hire Nursery Attendant**

Fr. Jerry asked for approval to hire Kirsten Boothe as a nursery attendant, replacing Margaret Fairchild in that position. Margaret is much loved and will be sorely missed, but Kirsten seems like a good choice. She is in senior high school and plans to study special education in college. When she visited the nursery, she and the children seemed to do well together.

**Berwyn Jones moved that the vestry approve the hiring of Kirsten Boothe as nursery attendant. The motion was seconded by Donna Harler-Smith. All approved.**

### **Vestry Committee Reports**

- Lounge Remodeling/Windows:** Don Gray reported that installation of the windows in the lounge is complete. The kitchen windows still have not been installed. At the vestry's suggestion, Don will request an estimate for replacing the office windows that face the courtyard. Since replacing these few north-facing windows will certainly reduce energy consumption, this cost will be included with the fund raising for the kitchen windows.
- Website:** Fr. Jerry and others -- The new website will launch in early January. Things have really come together in the last couple of months. Amy Ebbka has provided some training and assistance with specific problems on a *pro bono* basis. Jonah Sirota, Stephanie Hill, and Denise Meredith have worked diligently to "populate" the website. It's looking great!

### **Wardens' Report -- Lyn Forester**

- Nominations:** Lyn reported that Kate Maattala has agreed to be Junior Warden. Four people have agreed to serve on the vestry. Kevin Cole, Nancy Benton-Brown, Jeanine Jewell will serve three year terms, and Sarah Fairchild will serve the remaining two years of Kate's term. Another person had also eventually volunteered. It was the impression of those who had spoken with her that she would be willing to wait until next year. Lisa will contact her and confirm that this is indeed the situation.

### **Rector's Report**

- Horn Tooting:** In an effort to better communicate the kinds of things involved in his job as rector, the vestry asked Fr. Jerry to information about lesser known aspects of the job. This month, Fr. Jerry described his work with the Inquirers Class and the Men's [Breakfast] Group.

- Summary of Hours/Pastoral Updates:** In the past month, Fr. Jerry worked about 192 hours – 12 to 14 sections which are about 3.5 to 4 hours each (morning, afternoon, evening, for example). This is more than specified in his Letter of Agreement, but not excessively so.
- Thanks from Bishop:** The Bishop sent acknowledgment and thanks that SMOC responded to the 2011 Diocesan Asking. Not all parishes do and it was pretty challenging for SMOC, so it's good to have that effort appreciated. The vestry felt this should definitely be shared at the Annual Meeting.

### **Other**

- St. Charles Episcopal Church in Fairbury is having their last services on Christmas Eve. They will be selling their church and having services in the chapel of a local nursing home instead. This parish is one of three served by Rev. Gretchen Naugle.
- Fr. Jerry plans to take a partial sabbatical in June 2012 at an Ignatian Retreat in Colorado. The Diocese does have \$7,200 which will cover the cost of supply clergy while Fr. Jerry is on retreat.
- 2012 Annual Council will be November 1, 2, and 3 in Kearney. Ray Lowther and Jeanine Jewell have expressed interest in being SMOC's delegates.
- Thanks to the retiring Warden (Lyn Forester) and vestry members (Opal Doerr, Colleen Baade, and Tim Hill).
- Pamela Starr suggested that occasional Adult Forums be “vestry time” where vestry members are available for questions and discussion. This would help keep communication flowing. Good suggestion!
- There was a reminder to feature a ministry each month. Perhaps someone should be put in charge of coordinating this?
- The orientation session for new vestry members should at least include background/training on understanding financial spreadsheets and a description of the standing committees. If you have any other ideas for what should be included, please email Fr. Jerry and/or Jim Karas.
- Fr. Jerry asked that we pray for a priest he knows who is in search of a parish.

### **Adjourn**

Don Gray moved that we adjourn. The motion was seconded by Colleen Baade. All approved. We closed with the Lord's Prayer at about 2:45 pm.

### **Upcoming Meeting Dates**

- January 15 – Document to notarize -- please be there!
- January 22 -- Annual Meeting