

Vestry Minutes
Christ Episcopal Church
Montpelier, Vermont
February 19, 2018

Members present: Bruce Story, Senior Warden, Chair; David Blythe, Shawn Bryan (via phone), Josh Fitzhugh, Sarah Hofmann, Diane Holland, Ted Long, Junior Warden; Joan Murray, and Liz Slayton

Others in attendance: Rev. Paul Habersang, Priest-in-Partnership; John Jaworski, Treasurer; Virginia Catone, Secretary; Lynnette Combs, Choirmaster and Organist; and Sharon Fannon

After Bruce called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary, Paul read a prayer in the form of a poem for the beginning of Lent.

1. 150th Anniversary Celebration: Lynnette, as leader of the team that is planning special events, reported that the group has been blessed with suggestions and offers of help from the congregation. She distributed a sheet reflecting programs and projects in progress, including four special events during the week starting June 1, and elaborated on some of them. Lynnette envisioned that the celebration will continue throughout the remainder of the year.

In addition to Lynnette's description of numerous planned events and projects, she and Paul reported on two wonderful developments that will enhance the commemorations. She advised that a man who is relocating to this area and will attend Christ Church has offered to write a piece of appropriate music. Paul has met with a member of the congregation who is an artist and sculptor and is willing to create a dove-themed sesquicentennial banner for the front of the church. He also will allow his design to be used in other ways by the church community.

Lynnette would like the Vestry to make a financial commitment toward the celebration to cover not only the costs of producing the banner but also to pay the musicians who will be invited to play during the big June week of events. Joan, a member of the planning team, mentioned the need to seek volunteers from the congregation to interview some of the folks who have attended Christ Church for a long time.

3. Consent agenda: On a motion from Josh, seconded by Diane, the Vestry approved the Consent Agenda, consisting of the minutes of the January 15 and January 28 minutes, the Priest-in-Partnership report for January-February, and the January financial report.

4. Vestry ministry liaison list: Bruce sought volunteers to serve as liaisons between the Vestry and several among the numerous ministries of the parish. *(That list will be circulated with these minutes.)*

5. Housing Committee update: An inquiry by Liz as to whether there is a plan for the parish house in the event that erecting housing on the site does not materialize prompted strong remarks from Ted about the need for Christ Church to advocate aggressively for itself given what he regarded as indifference on the part of the city and other entities as to the church's position with respect to the erection of a parking structure closely behind our hoped-for housing units. He observed that it will be difficult to sell the housing project in the absence of associated parking, and he stressed that it is up to the church to promote our needs.

In the course of the discussion Shawn pointed out that there are a lot of moving parts to the situation and that the best approach for the church at this point is to continue working with the Basharas, owners of the current parking lot property behind and adjacent to the church property, on setting aside some parking spaces in their intended parking garage for church-related needs. There are many ramifications if that does not happen. Ted also urged that an alternate plan to the housing units be developed as soon as possible and he stated his intention to meet with Steve Dale, head of the long-term housing committee, to learn more about the status of negotiations with the Basharas.

6. Capital campaign feasibility study: Josh reminded the members of the announcement to the congregation at the recent Annual Meeting that the Vestry would meet with Sharon Fannon to review the results of her interviews with about twenty households identified as consistent and committed donors to the church. The purpose of that survey was to determine the feasibility of conducting a capital campaign of limited, short-term scope to address highest priority external repairs to the sanctuary, as well as to explore the potential for longer term giving to address all the identified restoration needs. *(Secretary's note: Copies of Sharon's five-page written "Feasibility Report on Christ Church Capital Campaign" dated January 25, 2018 were sent electronically to the Vestry members prior to this meeting.)*

Josh further reported on his discussion with Sharon regarding the possibility of her taking a leadership role in conducting a capital campaign. He then invited her to describe her reaction to this idea. She told the members that she had contacted Maryann Doyle, the church capital campaign consultant from Connecticut who met with the Vestry in August 2017 to describe her approach to capital campaigns. Sharon told the members that there are two possible approaches to embarking on a campaign: hire a professional fund raiser or alternatively to undertake what she described as a "home grown" one. While she was confident that she has the skills and experience to manage a campaign, she acknowledged she lacks the knowledge - the "tricks of the trade" - required to plan and embark on one. Although Mary Ann was pessimistic as to the latter approach reaping as great a financial commitment from the congregation as hiring a professional would, Sharon nevertheless expressed

confidence that leading a team she could successfully run a campaign on condition that she could consult periodically with a professional church fund raiser. She also said that subsequent to their conversation, she had reached out to ask if Maryann might be willing to serve periodically as a coach to help guide Christ Church's campaign. As yet she has received no response but will try again. Sharon stressed that once a decision is made as to how to proceed, it is crucial to have confidence in that approach. Responding to an inquiry, she affirmed her willingness to manage a capital campaign even if Ms. Doyle cannot serve as coach, while making clear that she would need to find someone else to serve in that role.

David inquired as to the cost of engaging a professional fund raiser for advice and feedback on a limited basis as a capital campaign plan is developed and implemented. Sharon pointed out that Maryann charges five percent (5%) of the total raised, and she said that percentage would be agreeable to her. Although initially she was skeptical about her ability to devote six weeks full time to launching a campaign, she later reconsidered and said that might be a possibility.

Sharon indicated that in addition to following up with Maryann or someone else experienced in conceiving and leading church capital campaigns, she would contact someone connected with a church located in Peacham, Vermont regarding its approach to a capital campaign and establishing an ongoing fund for maintenance of its church which would include inviting the community to make donations.

Also discussed briefly was the possibility of making an appeal to the broader community, an idea which Maryann does not endorse but which Vestry members considered valid in Montpelier for various reasons.

At this point, at Josh's suggestion Sharon departed from the meeting and the Vestry continued its consideration of engaging her to manage a capital campaign and of the scope and time frame of the endeavor. Josh praised the work she has done so far and opined that she is the right person for this job.

Although the Vestry made no decisions about the size and length of a campaign, there was clear support for retaining Sharon. Furthermore, there seemed to be a consensus that there is sufficient financial support among the congregation to embark this year on the most critical projects discussed at prior meetings and that once begun, the fund raising campaign is likely to snowball and may well extend to the broad community.

Among the points on which there appeared to be agreement were that it is imperative to establish a time frame and goal for a capital campaign; to conduct an every member canvass and inform the whole congregation before launching the campaign that a significant number of them have already committed to contributing X amount; to define clearly what Sharon's role will be; and to set a compensation limit for Sharon (including her engaging the services of a coach) of five percent (5%) of the total raised through a capital campaign.

Josh suggested the end of this year as the appropriate capital campaign end date. He also reiterated Sharon's advice on the importance of the Vestry's having confidence in its approach, of this body not second guessing itself once it makes the decisions pertinent to launching a capital campaign.

The discussion came to a close with the adoption of a motion from Josh, which Diane seconded, to negotiate a contract with Sharon Fannon setting out the terms of her services as manager of a capital campaign, at a total compensation of 5% of the amount raised, including the cost of her consulting with a coach; that the contract will include a specific plan for the scope of a capital campaign; and that the contract will be presented to the Vestry for approval.

Although not encompassed in the motion, there was agreement that the Senior Warden will appoint a committee to negotiate a contract with Sharon. Bruce set the March Vestry meeting as the goal for making a decision about the capital campaign.

7. Finance Committee update: John said the transition to QuickBooks continues. Paul announced that the preliminary estimate of the Diocese's 2017 deficit which will be assessed to parishes is approximately \$12,000, much less than the earlier estimate of \$30,000. If the revised figure holds, the incremental assessment to Christ Church would be about \$550.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Virginia Catone
Secretary of the Vestry