

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting – March 16, 2008

Present: Interim Rector Carol Meredith and Assistant Priest George Magnuson; Deacon Sally Brown. Senior Warden Tim Croasdaile. Ann Luke, Diana Solomon, Susan Backus, Deb McVicker, Kevin Fletcher and Beckett Stokes.

Absent: Junior Warden Greg Geissler. Shelley Brown, Rich Rinehart, and Mike Kornelsen.

Attending: Clerk Cheak Yee.

The meeting convened at 1:00 p.m. Senior Warden Tim indicated that this Vestry Meeting would focus on only a few items of business.

Communications. Feedback from the parishioners recently indicated appreciation in the following order for the effectiveness of communications: by the Sacred Vision/Sacred Space (SVSS) task force on the capital campaign, by the Vestry (presumably on general business and specific transition matters), and least by the Search Committee on that process. An example cited was the “mystery” of how our Interim Rector selection had unfolded; this would have been particularly the responsibility of the Vestry to convey prior to November, 2007. It was noted that even a “we have nothing to report at this time” is/would have been an appreciated notification; communication will need to be as consistent/persistent as possible especially in the relocated/dislocated contexts ahead.

A concern was expressed that during the recent Vestry Retreat, while the overall theme of our relocation and the general cohesion of the Vestry received positive focus and made progress, there was not time to address the “nuts and bolts” of specific steps to take and plans to implement.

The consensus of the Vestry was to issue a “general letter” by email and snailmail by Easter Sunday. It was noted that while announcements had been briefly made at midpoints in liturgies over recent months, this is a constraining circumstance and likely the word does not get out as fully and as broadly as it needed to have been disseminated. Senior Warden Tim will draft for Vestry review such a general letter, if possible a “1-pager” – but to focus on several major topics:

- 1) the search process;
- 2) the SV/SS progress; and,
- 3) the relocation to Holy Redeemer.

At this time, the general letter needs to convey the most immediately pertinent and upcoming aspects.

To inquiry, it was noted that the Search Committee has been aware that our parishioners are feeling uninformed about this process. It was suggested that given the specialized elements in this complex process, it might be helpful to make available a brief “glossary of terms” involved. Also, it is quite likely that some parishioners would like to know if they can make recommendations on possible candidates to invite to be considered, and if so, how this might occur.

It was suggested that, in addition to the comprehensive focus provided weekly through our E-Ministry bulletins, we may wish to issue a more specialized publication on our transition topics: SV/SS, the Search, the Pilgrimage with Holy Redeemer, or anything else that arises. This could include photographic journalizing of our progresses as possible, and likely will need to appear both in an online and a hardcopy version as often as possible. Beckett Stokes volunteered to assist on this effort given her professional expertise in communications.

Senior Warden Tim acknowledged that the process of selecting members in a Transitions Task Force, as suggested at the Vestry Retreat, is proceeding, which would oversee the special degree of coordination and communication we need going forward. This Task Force will focus on taking the work of the Vestry Retreat to the next level of recommendations and implementation.

A specific step in the communications area is to establish the telephone tree of Vestry members each to approximately a dozen or so parishioners. In the upcoming general letter, this could be particularly mentioned. Kevin volunteered to coordinate the assignment of parishioners to each Vestry member; both the Clerk and the Treasurer and Tim Krueger on the staff can also be apportioned a number of parishioners. Moreover, certain assignments can logically follow the lines of communication already existing; for example, Ann Luke with her Altar Guild members, and Kathy Fleming with finance and audit volunteers. Assistant Priest George noted that at least a draft of a “job description” for this telephone tree should be disseminated on what occasions or how often to be calling, or possible roles and methods to take full advantage of the fuller communication mutually feasible from this linkage.

Relocation Pilgrimage. Senior Warden Tim and Interim Rector Carol met with Cheryl Cohen-Vader, the Senior Warden of Holy Redeemer, on aspects of this imminent collaboration in the lives of our parish families. The people of Holy Redeemer will welcome us on Sunday, April 20th, with a sandwich brunch on our arrival; on our part, we should bring the other accompaniments for such a meal together. We will formally commence our journey here with a leave-taking liturgy at 8:45 a.m. and then begin walking; those who wish to drive should arrive at Holy Redeemer by 9:45 a.m. The people of Holy Redeemer will meet us “half-way” during our procession; the specific logistics and details of this pilgrimage commencement will be further considered and then detailed to both congregations so as to ensure practical concerns are fully met. Our shared worship will be at 10:00 a.m. and that will be the only liturgy on the 20th. Prior thereto, on Sunday, March 30th, Senior Warden Tim and Interim Rector Carol are invited to attend the 10:00 a.m. Eucharist at Holy Redeemer and stay for coffee hour with as many of our own parishioners as may desire to get a preliminary sense of the space/place and people there. As of April 27th, Holy Redeemer will worship at 9:00 a.m. and we will have one liturgy only at 11:00 a.m.

The Parish Administrator at Holy Redeemer, Nancy Thompson, also welcomes our Sarah Davis to visit and explore how those functions can coordinate.

Senior Warden Tim advised that at the recent preliminary interactions with several of the potential construction contractors who may be bidding for the work at St. Andrew’s, their opinions were expressed that the administrative functions in our Parish House need not relocate during the construction period. The SV/SS therefore has requested the Vestry to consider whether or not this aspect, with its potential cost savings, ought to be re-considered. In the subsequent discussions, the following aspects were revisited –

- a) while there may not be immediate displacement of administrative functions, the site must be affected for a significant time by considerable noise and dust and even hazard;
- b) while there may be certain cost savings, it would divide our time, effort, and focus to be bi-locational; and,
- c) it would, however, be reasonable for the construction oversight committee of the Task Force to base out of the Rector’s office in the Parish House during the upcoming work, as that specific function would be both on site and time-sensitive.

It was moved, seconded, and passed to relocate our administrative functions to Holy Redeemer as we had previously contemplated.

Parking Lots Acquisition. Senior Warden Tim advised a clarification on the previous preliminary report that these sites had once been directly underneath a gasoline station and a dry cleaner; rather both of these operations were nearby. This of course is welcome news, confirming the accuracy of the drilling report indicating no subterranean contaminations from the toxic chemicals respectively associated potentially with these businesses. (On the other hand, structures of the time period likely involved may likely have involved some asbestos insulation, although this is primarily a concern for airborne hazard during renovation/demolition.)

Nonetheless, our acquisition strategy for these lots is substantively affected by the other factor which time has revealed: the actual monthly income level from parking fees at \$4,000 would place the buyer financial profile overall upside down: the contemplated expenses of \$6300 are no longer fully defrayed by the previous estimate by the seller that monthly income was at a \$7,000 rate.

Of course, we and the Denver Urban Land Conservancy (DULC) will endeavor now to re-negotiate the purchase price downwards, which would be a relief from a heightened mortgage loan outlay; it is by no means certain that the seller will agree to reduce the price. Clearly, given our site close to the central city core of Denver, the price of these lots is based on more than the value of any parking lot fees, but to no small extent (possibly primarily) on the potential (re-)development valuation. The previously contemplated purchase price had been and may remain at \$1.45 million; we shall aim to see if the seller will agree to \$1.2 million.

In the event that no price reduction is obtained, we and DULC have little choice but to up the amount of the downpayment and thus reduce the long-term debt involved. DULC has indicated their willingness to maintain the 50/50 financial relationship involved in this potential change.

Our Endowment Committee has been advised of this development and its Trustees do seem committed to the importance of this acquisition; their meeting is scheduled for March 24th on the option of an additional \$100,000 from our endowment to be authorized as a contingency if price reduction cannot be negotiated. If this further \$100,000 is authorized by the Endowment Committee and Vestry and is ratified by a special All-Parish Meeting scheduled for April 13th, then the approximate current balance of \$287,500 in the endowment would decline by that amount. Moreover, this shift in the encumbrance picture will also need the approval of the Diocesan Standing Committee at its next meeting.

Fortunately, the interest rate from the lender, given the softening of the markets lately, may now be at 4.5% rather than the 6% heretofore calculated for long-term debt outlay. Of course, any final contract for acquisition will be presented to the Vestry for formal review and adoption if it is satisfactory given these moving targets in associated concerns.

It was also noted that a possible long-term option for the Parish if these lots are acquired, and given that any re-development maintains our vital interest in having available parking while the urban core continues to alter around us, may involve affordable housing, which can potentially yield income. It was reassuring to receive an informal advisement that such for-profit income is not necessarily an imperilment of our tax-exempt church status if we document the usage of such income for our usual eleemosynary purposes. (Any such possible usages for these sites would of course be discerned appropriately by a task force that would equally involve the DULC and its mandated non-profit purposes. And, any such future planning would be considerably enhanced by the quality and capabilities of the DULC on a number of levels of expertise and influence.)

It was moved, seconded, and adopted unanimously to endorse a contingency usage of up to \$100,000 from the endowment of the Parish for the acquisition of the parking lots, if authorized by the Endowment Committee and then further ratified by the Parish.

Clergy Transition Timeline. Senior Warden Tim reminded the Vestry that when Interim Rector Carol was retained, her contract specified a two-year employment that could end as early as 1.5 years, and could continue beyond 2 years on a month-to-month basis. Now that the Parish Profile will shortly be posted and the search process will ratchet up, we are closer to contemplating how the advent of a new Rector, and the departure of an Interim Rector may or may not dovetail given the multiple vectors involved both directly, and not unimportantly indirectly as well in our Parish life with this relocation pilgrimage during construction imminently to commence.

Clearly, while the contract may be date specific for concluding, we are involved in overlapping timelines where we cannot and will not be wedded to any hard and fast dates. Rather we will need to be sensitive and nimble all-around. Assistant Priest George noted that when we meet with the Search Committee and Canon to the Ordinary Bill Martin on April 5, we should explore the hows, whos, and whens involved in the decision-making and timeframes in this quite complex panorama emerging.

After a closing prayer, the meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheak Yee, Clerk