



St Philip's
episcopal church

worship • love • action
a church for all people

Vestry Meeting Minutes

Monday June 24, 2024

Attendance

Vestry Present: Lowell Dargbeh
Sue Guptill
Sarah Johnson
Wes Newman
Shamieka Rhinehart
Mike Uhl

Erin Gasch
Rebecca Hix, *Sr. Warden*
Marty Nelson
Jeff Pitts
Liz Sappenfield, *Jr. Warden*
Richard Williams

Vestry Absent: None

Clergy: Rev. Maryann Younger, *Rector and Chair*

Guests: Matthew Snider, *Treasurer*
David Kneeburg, *Clerk*
Elizabeth Newman
Henry Kennelly
Duncan Smith

Call to Order

The regular monthly meeting of the Vestry of St. Philip's Church convened on June 24, 2024, at 6:02 PM in the Parish Library with the Rector presiding. Erin led the group with an opening prayer and a reflection on the spiritual journeys of 2024 Olympians headed to Paris.

Consent Agenda One (May)

- Minutes of the April Vestry meeting
- Treasurer's Report and Simplified Financial Report covering April
- Rector's Report
- Senior Warden's Report
- Junior Warden's Report

Rebecca moved approval of the Consent Agenda, Shamieka seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda Two (June)

- Treasurer's Report and Simplified Financial Report covering May
- Senior Warden's Report
- Junior Warden's Report

A brief discussion occurred regarding the definition of *favorable variances* in the Treasurer's report. Matthew agreed to simplify the language in the next report. Jeff moved approval of the Consent Agenda, Marty seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

Discussion

The Trees - Update

Elizabeth, Henry and Duncan represented the Trees Discernment committee in an update to the vestry. Elizabeth began the presentation with the background of Jackie's generous gift, then elaborated on the property transformation where God has opened many doors of opportunity and healing. Henry followed with an overview of his experience where the Trees has become "alive with the people of the city". He then started a video presentation of three groups that have used the property recently. In the first video, Ronnie Lily described the joyful journey of the Prayers and Poetry group. In the second, a LEAP facilitator described the transformative influence of the Trees had on a young girl that feared the outdoors. Finally, Phillip Bass described the growth of the Beloved Community group meeting that addresses the healing of religious trauma.

Elizabeth presented a proposal to hire an architectural firm (Notch Design) to analyze zoning requirements, building codes, and 3rd party easements in order to determine options for moving forward. The proposal is a flat fee of \$16K for 80 hours of work from Notch Design. The current balance for the associated fund is \$52K. Discussion and Q&A followed. Vestry members were very moved by the testimonials and grateful for the update. Marty Nelson will be the primary liaison to the Vestry regarding the Trees. Elizabeth will provide monthly updates via Marty in the future. The architectural proposal motion was moved to approval by Wes, seconded by Shamioka and approved unanimously.

Rector's Report

Maryann gave a verbal Rector's report for June. She appreciated all the work done in her absence. She also reflected on the new hire of Hanna for youth ministry – a highly qualified candidate who will now oversee the 9 AM service and the introduction of intergenerational worship programs. In addition, Maryann reported on the J2A pilgrimage that just returned from Bavaria. She complemented the incredible youth at St. Philips and the fabulous adult leaders.

Episcopal Housing Ministry

Matthew presented an opportunity to accept a grant from the Episcopal Housing Ministry for \$275K - \$300K to increase the availability of affordable housing in our community. His recommendation is to accept the grant and form a discernment committee to consider the use of funds. The committee can consider proposals from St. Philips parishioners and/or collaborate with other grantees. In addition, the committee could engage with Durham CAN - a great resource for affordable housing efforts.

No decision is needed now. A vote can occur at the next vestry meeting in July.

Racial and Reconciliation Training

Sue introduced a recommendation from the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Ministry – requesting that the St. Philips vestry, staff, and ministry undergo the *Introduction to Dismantling Racism* diocesan training course by the end of 2024. A general agreement followed with discussion of training logistics. Course registrations are full for upcoming sessions in July and September – leaving an in-person November session as the only 2024 opportunity. Sue motioned that the Vestry, Staff and Ministry of St. Philips shall commit to the diocesan *Introduction to Dismantling Racism* course by end of 2025 and require that new Vestry members join in the ongoing commitment, seconded by Marty. The motion was approved unanimously.

Columbarium Policy

Matthew presented the proposed Columbarium policy from the finance committee. The price of brass has increased significantly since the last policy. This proposal designates a \$1,500 deposit with the balance paid at time of inurnment. This will replace the requirement that St. Philips cover rising fees in the future.

Liz moved to approve the new policy, seconded by Marty, and approved unanimously.

Visioning

Rebecca led the group in a visioning exercise that reviewed the last Visioning Sunday. The Vestry shared feedback regarding:

- a) the most important thing they heard
- b) what to celebrate
- c) one key message to congregation
- d) one thing to do differently next time.

Discussion followed with scheduling Visioning dates where all vestry members could attend and facilitate parishioner sessions. Rebecca asked the vestry to review their calendars and send her Sunday dates they could not attend in July and August.

Standing Committee Reports

Staffing

Sarah reported that the committee is reviewing resumes for the three Sexton Assistant candidates. Interviews are being scheduled individually with committee members and will include a walk-around with Gwinnetta.

Finance

Matthew reported on the budget development timeline. Teams are assembled and their reports are due July 1st, to be reviewed on the 7th. The final report will be presented at the July 22nd Vestry meeting.

Directory

Jeff shared an update on Realm. He suggested that the Vestry begin working via Realm, as well as select committees. Also, he has begun rollout plans for setup and notification procedures. Sue noted that she is still investigating if Realm provides automated service scheduling. Maryann has asked Amanda to write a brief procedure to teach parishioners how to set up desktop and mobile Realm accounts.

Executive Session

An executive session was not required.

Epistle Talking Points

As published in the week following the meeting:

The vestry met Monday, June 24. Here's what happened:

The vestry approved a new policy regarding placement of cremains in the columbarium. Due to the rising cost of brass plaques, going forward those reserving a columbarium niche will pay a deposit, with the remainder paid when ashes are committed. Those who've already reserved a niche will be grandfathered in and won't owe anything more. Prices for committal in the garden close will stay the same. Look for the website to be updated soon with a new contact form and fee schedule.

The Trees Discernment Committee presented an update. The committee is on track to finish their discernment work in late fall. The vestry approved the committee's request to work with an architecture firm on what zoning options are possible at The Trees. The vestry heard moving testimonials from visitors and guests at the Trees' many blessed programs. God continues to open doors at our forest retreat.

Maryann shared highlights of the youth pilgrimage to Bavaria. She complemented the incredible engagement of St. Philip's J2A pilgrims as well as their faithful group leaders. Pictures and stories coming soon!

The vestry discussed the thoughtful feedback from recent visioning interviews with groups, ministries, and individuals. They would like to thank the congregation for opening their hearts and sharing their voices. St. Philips's vision is "of and by" – you!

Adjournment

Maryann ended the gathering with a closing prayer, and the vestry meeting concluded at 8:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

David Kneeburg, Clerk of the Vestry