

Grace Memorial Episcopal Church

Vestry Meeting Minutes

October 15, 2019

Members of the Vestry

Andrew Eshleman, Sr. Warden

Robin Gault

Curt Germundson, Treasurer

Phillip Koop

Charles McGee

Nora McLaughlin

Louise Tippens

David Waldow

Ben Snead, Youth Representative

Clergy

The Rev. Martin Elfert

The Rev. Jeanne Kaliszewski

Others

Sharon Loomis-Malin

Nancy Entrikin

Trell Anderson

Destin Ferdun

Bishop Michael Hanley

Alicia Perkins Lehrle, Clerk

Members of the Vestry Absent

Elyssa de la Cruz

Cameron Denney

Peyton Snead

1. Formation

1.1 Opening Prayers

- The meeting began at 6:05pm with an opening prayer from Martin.

2. Items

2.1 Meeting Representatives from Northwest Housing Alternatives (NHA), Trell Anderson (E.D.) and Destin Ferdun (Director of Real Estate)

- Information was provided to the Vestry before the meeting regarding NHA. Trell further explained NHA and how its mission statement aligns with the Grace Commons Project (GCP). NHA has both a strong team and healthy balance sheet, as well as experience with capital campaigns. Trell and Destin spoke of NHA's past housing experience. Destin is new to NHA but not new to housing and has architectural experience. Both are excited about the project.
- Listening sessions are occurring right now, and they were impressed with the progress made so far by Grace and the logical progression of the project to date. Both have experience working with Walsh Construction and Carleton Hart Architects. The St. Francis project was briefly discussed as Trell was with Catholic Charities at the time of the project and closely involved; some Vestry members have toured St. Francis and were very favorably impressed.
- A number of questions were asked by Vestry members, which included a capital campaign and how to pursue affordable housing funding. NHA has a good track record for obtaining funding for projects, and experience with capital campaigns. Questions were also asked about managing change successfully for both the parish and neighbors, and regular and inclusive communication seems to be the key. Also, the current GCP organization should continue to work well going forward as it is already well-integrated and functioning effectively.
- Trell and Destin are Grace Art Camp parents, which helps them understand Grace's facility. They also understand the housing needs in Portland and discussed the proposed populations to be served by the GCP.
- The Vestry was urged to visit the NHA campus, which is both beautiful and peaceful. Trell and Destin are open to more questions at any time and stressed NHA will be transparent with the project's budget and progress. (Trell and Destin left after concluding their remarks.)

2.2 Moment of Grace

- A passage from Corinthians, provided by Charles, was read in turn and discussed.

2.3 The Planning Committee recommends Grace pursue an MOU with NHA as developer for the Grace Commons Project

- Nancy, Martin and Curt noted all the prospective candidates for the GCP were great, and all brought different strengths to table. However, they feel NHA is the strongest candidate with the best understanding of the project. Charles made a motion to pursue a Memorandum Of Understanding with Northwest Housing Alternatives for the Grace Commons Project. Louise seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

2.4 Visit with Bishop Michael

- Bishop Michael was made welcome and a brief additional discussion was held regarding the GCP. The Bishop explained any initiative that would see property sold or encumbered by debt would need to be

approved by the Diocesan trustees. He added the Diocese does have some resources, if needed. He was thanked for the initial funding from the Diocese for the GCP, which was much appreciated.

- The Bishop asked that he and the Standing Committee, including Rick Grimshaw, the new Diocesan treasurer, be kept in the loop as plans develop. He asked for more information on the GCP and commented it is wonderfully ambitious for a relatively small parish.
- When asked for strategies for maintaining and growing, he said a healthy clergy who preach well and are attendant to the parish, as well as laity and clergy working together, are some of the elements. It should be remembered physical limitations will limit growth to a certain degree. Churches grow because people invite their friends, and members of the parish are loved, cared for and respected.
- In the 9 years of the Bishop's stewardship, the Diocese has closed 3 churches while others are growing. He thinks the parishes known for something in particular, such as Grace Art Camp, are the ones growing. Long term clergy also help with growth. The national Episcopal website has information about attendance, giving and membership for each church, which could prove interesting for Grace to review. (He thought the key search words to find the information are "Study Your Congregation.") He concluded by saying he believes the Diocese is in better shape now than 9 years ago, and he does not think Grace is in any danger of not thriving.

2.5 Consent Agenda Items

- The Consent Agenda Items were previously distributed via e-mail to the Vestry for review and consideration. These consisted of the September Vestry Minutes, the Grace Institute Report, Approved Grace Institute Leave Policies, the Rector's Report and the Jr. Warden's Report. Andrew asked if any items needed to be moved off the Consent Agenda and discussed. There were none, and Andrew moved to accept the Consent Agenda Items as presented. Nora seconded the motion. There was no further discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

2.6 Treasurer's Report

- Curt noted expenses were a little over budget last month, but he is not alarmed. Some adjustments are needed to correct the budget, and Curt will follow up, especially with the service calls that occurred. There have also been some changes in investments.

2.7 Other Business

- Phillip reported the Auction grossed approximately \$40,500. He noted food costs were up, but this increase was in the budget. Overall, he thought it went well. Philip expects to have final figures at the next Vestry meeting and noted only about \$500 remains to be collected. The Vestry collectively thanked Phillip and his family and volunteers for all their work to make the Auction a success.
- Charles, who had to leave early, and Nora will be asked by Andrew to update the parish on Sunday regarding the Vestry meeting. The Vestry members present will be out of town on Sunday.

2.8 Closing Prayer

- Martin offered a closing prayer, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Alicia Perkins Lehrle, Clerk