

ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH
SPECIAL VESTRY MEETING
MINUTES
February 10, 2022

Present: Junior Warden-George LeBlanc, Treasurer-David Brierley, Clerk-Mattie Gustafson, Julie Zecher, Lee Ferreira, Anne Wood, Rita Verespy, John Corbishley, Richard Updegrove, Matt Spohn and the Rector- the Rev. Jennifer Pedrick.

Via Zoom: Peter Collins and Ray Edler

Guests: Ron Machtley, Ed Burman and Tripp Burman of E.W. Burman General Contractors

Absent: Senior Warden-Marlo Pratt

Jennifer began the meeting began at 6:04 with a prayer.

Presentation by Ed Burman

Mr. Burman gave an overview of his company and its history. Of great interest to SMC was that EW Burman has done a good deal of work on historic buildings and also on churches, (e.g., St. John's Cathedral in Providence and St. Luke's in East Greenwich) and other non-profit organizations.

Questions

Q: John C. asked if Ed could outline the steps in this project?

A: 1) control water coming in from the outside; 2) figure out the plaster issue – what shape is it in and what does it look like underneath; 3) then standard renovating – painting, electrical, heating, furniture, floors., etc. And all this needs to be carefully coordinated. Erecting scaffolding once is much cheaper than having to do it multiple times.

Q: Richard U. asked if Ed could say something about the current challenges vis a vis cost overruns?

A: Getting products can be difficult these days, but we don't need any kind of major equipment (e.g., an elevator) for the project. The time frame for the renovation is 4-5 months. Any hiccups that are encountered would typically be the kind you can work around.

Ed said that Burman bills monthly. They will set up weekly meetings once the project starts to keep everyone up to date and what is going on and what decisions need to be made and by when, etc.

Q: When do you need our commitment?

A: Ron said a decision needs to be made by March. And the sooner the better.

Ron recommended that before construction starts, we do a video of the interior of the church – so we can preserve a historical record and also have something to show foundations that might give us grants. One idea mentioned was creating a separate 501C3 for the project, but the application process might take a lot of time.

Jennifer thanked Ed and Tripp and Ron for their presentations and openness to answering our questions. Ed and Tripp left the meeting.

Wrap up

Jennifer said the big question we have to ask is when are we going to feel comfortable locking in a contract? We need to assess what money is available, what money we can expect to raise and how much we are comfortable borrowing. The Vestry needs make some key decisions regarding signing a contract and beginning construction, funding, and communicating what we are doing to our community. And these decisions need to be made quickly and almost at the same time.

Review of Annual Meeting and Some Questions

Mattie said it was obvious to her that folks responded very positively to getting this project moving and finishing it. The other members of the Vestry experienced a similar response.

Rita applauded Alex Allardt's suggestion that we also establish a maintenance endowment to help with future upkeep.

John said that some folks had asked him if spending money on the building will take money away from the church's other programs? It will not, and we need to make this clear.

Rita asked "Who and what is our community?" Maybe we need a bigger idea of what our community is made up of.

Jennifer asked us to think about the other questions she had posed:

"Do we hear God's call at this moment?"

"What story do we want the future generations to tell about our leadership?"

Moving Forward – What is needed?

- 1) Work on the construction / contract issues
- 2) Work on communication, funding, and decision making.

Jennifer has established a Vestry Action Planning Group consisting of Marlo, John C., and Peter. One more person will be joining this group. They will begin working on these issues.

Ron will begin talking to banks.

The Vestry members need to figure out their own giving for this project. Members should be 100% committed.

Jennifer also reminded us that there are benefits to completing this project soon that are not monetary – this is not a case of pure economics. People are ready to reclaim their church and in this time of uncertainty, reclaiming what is so important to lots of people, would be spiritually beneficial.

John reminded us that there are so many people “out there” that are looking to be a part of a dynamic, positive community.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Mattie Gustafson, Clerk