

St. Mark's Episcopal Church
Vestry Meeting Minutes
May 6, 2020

Present: Fr. Gaston, Derek Gordon, Sr. Warden; Rhonda Warren, Jr. Warden; Beth Crawl, Linda Deuble, Grace Giammarco, Bruce Hixon, Bob Kennedy, Marcia Kiesling, Beck Rand, Caroline Willoughby, John Wise

Guest: Charlie Kiesling, Treasurer

The Vestry met virtually via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting was called to order at 5:35pm. Beck led the opening devotions.

Caroline **motioned** to accept the minutes of the March 4, 2020 meeting. Linda seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting scheduled for April 1, 2020 was cancelled due to the state prohibition of gatherings of more than 10 people because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finance Committee

- **Quarterly Report**
 - The first quarter is all good news financially. Parishioners are mailing in their donations. Donations, prepaid pledges, and rental income exceeded operating expenses by more than \$16,000.
 - Operating funds continue to grow because of the present interim rector arrangement. Utility costs for half of March, April, and May will be less than expected because of the closing of Weaver due to the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Weaver Contribution**
 - Our building has been closed because of COVID-19 and we have realized significant savings in our gas, electric, and water bills. It would be a nice gesture to pass some of the savings on to Weaver School, which can be done in the form of a contribution.
 - Bob made a **motion** that, based on operation cost reductions from March 13, 2020 through the end of May 2020, a one-time contribution of up to \$600.00 is authorized to Weaver Child Development. Rhonda seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.
- **Paycheck Protection Program**
 - St. Mark's, along with many churches in the diocese, applied for a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan under the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Loan amounts will be forgiven if at least 75% the proceeds are used for payroll costs and not more than 25% are used for utility payments within 8 weeks of funding. The amount of the loan is a little more than \$18,000.
 - A Vestry motion is needed to authorize Charlie to sign and complete the SBA PPP loan documents.
 - John made a **motion** that Charlie Kiesling as St. Mark's Treasurer is authorized to sign and complete the necessary documents to finalize the SBA PPP loan. Bruce seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a 10-1 vote. The opposing vote was in question of the necessity of the loan.

Senior Warden's Report

- **St. Mark's Policy for Protection of Children and Youth**
 - Emily Gordon and Mandy Pelger have completed the review our Policy.
 - Linda **motioned** to approve the St. Mark's Policy for Protection of Children and Youth. Rhonda seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.
- **Building and Grounds Recommendations**
 - The Finance Committee reviewed funding possibilities for the much-needed repair and resurfacing of the parking lot, and the older of our two boilers. The newer boiler was replaced in 2013.
 - Based on the availability of Capital Reserve Funds, the Committee supports moving forward with these improvements. The Committee also supports applying for a Capital Improvement Grant from the Diocese of Ohio.
 - Bob **motioned** to approve the allocation of capital improvement funds in the amount not to exceed \$76,713 for the purchase and installation of a new boiler and full parking lot repaving. Beth seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.
 - John **motioned** to approve the application of a capital grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio for replacing a boiler and the repair and refinishing of the church parking lot. Bob seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously approved.
 - There was discussion about the proposal to include a new north exit when repaving the parking lot. The main concern was the level of acceptance by the neighbors on Yale Ave. Approval of the new exit does not necessarily mean it will be done.
 - Bob **motioned** to approve the re-installation of a Northern entryway to the St. Mark's parking lot contingent upon the following:
 - Successful application and receipt of a capital grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio.
 - Completion of all necessary city approvals.
 - Request of financial considerations from Weaver Childhood Development.Caroline seconded the motion and the motion was approved by a 9-2 vote.
- **Stark County Fair Participation**
 - We received a Grant from the Diocese to support the Fair outreach.
- **Restoration Fundraiser Event Approval**
 - The Restoration Campaign fundraiser that was scheduled for May 30, 2020 has been postponed due to COVID-19.
- **Weaver Agreement Update**
 - Rhonda and Derek are working on a 5-year extension to Weaver's lease with a 5-year option to renew.
- **Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank Donation**
 - Fr. Gaston, in consideration of being an interim minister, has turned over decisions about the use of the Rector's Discretionary Fund to the Wardens. A \$500 contribution will be made to the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank on behalf of St. Mark's. The funds for the contribution will come from the Rector's Discretionary Fund. Vestry approval is not needed for the use of the Rector's Discretionary Fund.
 - A group will be formed to consider requests for donations from our outreach budget. We have budgeted \$1,500 for outreach and mission. This money has been used for the Fair, but because we have gotten grants for Fair expenses, we are able to use it for other purposes. A new rector may decide to establish a different process.

Transition Update

- **Search Process**
 - Due to COVID-19 all activity has been put on hold.

Rector's Report

- **Pastoral Office Hours**
 - A limited resumption of pastoral office hours will begin Saturday, May 16, 2020. Hours will be from 11 AM to 1 PM and continue every Saturday thereafter (for the present) with the following conditions:
 - 30-minute or 1-hour appointments must be made by noon on Friday
 - Visits will be limited to two persons at one time
 - Everyone must wear a mask
 - No one will enter the office, but Katie will be there in compliance with diocesan guidelines
 - Consultations will be scheduled for the library with the door remaining open
 - The library space will be cleaned following each appointment
 - Appointments may reserve private time in the sanctuary, rather than a consultation
 - Reminder that Fr. Gaston is always available through his published mobile phone number
 - Scheduling will be expanded, and restrictions will be relaxed as conditions and diocesan and state policies permit
- **Sunday Services**
 - Fr. Gaston has streamed services on YouTube since March 8, along with a .pdf bulletin, both from the St. Mark's nave and from the "Aurora Chapel" in his home.
- **Palm Saturday**
 - The "Palm Saturday" drive-up distribution of prayers and palms was well attended by 43+ cars, most with two or more people in them.
- **Parish Communication**
 - Fr. Gaston met the goal to "Communicate Every Day" with special *Lion's Pause* issues through Holy Week.
- **Planning for Reopening**
 - Fr. Gaston assisted with assessing all the considerations and planning needed for reopening the church, including a detailed proposal to Bishop Hollingsworth with regard to a possible outdoor celebration of Pentecost – now under consideration.

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 6:45pm.

The next meeting is Wednesday June 3, 2020 at 5:30pm. Grace will provide the devotions.

Respectfully submitted,



Karen Violand
Clerk