

Minutes for the St. John's Episcopal Church Vestry Meeting of March 18, 2018

Rev. Jan Oller called our meeting to order at about 11:55 am. Present were the Reverend Jan Oller, vestry members Nancy Bennett, Jeff Burd, Sheila Evans, Sue Fain, Marc Hudson, Char Lingen, Jim Gary, Chris Short, and Alan White. Treasurer John Culley was also present.

Approval of Minutes: After our prayer, the minutes for the February vestry meeting were approved.

Financials: Treasurer John Culley gave a brief report, indicating that we are in good shape financially and on budget. His report was approved.

Wardens' Concerns: The wardens had no concerns to discuss.

Old Business

Crawfordsville Strawberry Festival: Nancy said she has not moved forward on looking into having a food booth at the festival. With her apologies, she suggests we delay planning a food booth until next year.

Audiovisual review project: Nancy has met briefly with Deb Swanson. They hope to find an objective consultant. Nancy hopes to talk with an I.T. person from Wabash. It was decided that we survey the St. John's community to determine what features our parish members would like in an a.v. system. Jim will help Nancy devise and conduct the survey. Jeff volunteered to help. Jim would like the survey to be as formal as possible. The desirable criteria for a system, he suggests, should be determined first before the survey is conducted. Nancy said an important survey question to ask would be, "If you or your group had occasion to use Whitlock, what equipment would you need?"

New Business

Columbarium Proposal: Jan summarized the reasoning of the Columbarium Committee to add a new bank of sixty four niches "on the east wall of the south transept so that it mirrors the current 64 Niche unit on the west wall of the south transept" (from the Columbarium Committee's proposal). Basically, it seemed reasonable to the Committee since our church continues to get a steady stream of requests for new niches that we add a new bank of them rather than add smaller numbers of them piecemeal. In the long haul, this is the less expensive, and more practical, option. A thoughtful discussion ensued about perhaps using another company that might be less expensive. But since we have been pleased with the Armento's (the Columbarium company's) work, the vestry thought it sensible to continue with Armento. There would also be a wood surround for the unit that would cost \$980 but which the Committee would install without labor costs. John said that the expense posed no difficulties to our budget. The funds for the new niches and their installation will be drawn from our St. John's checking account. The motion to install the new bank of niches according to the proposal by the Columbarium Committee passed unanimously.

Wheat House Future: Since the YSB is moving to new quarters come December, we need to begin to think about what the St. John's Community should do with that property.

Our late summer through Fall meetings will be focused on that question. There are basically three major options:

1. Demolish the building and decide what to do with that space.
2. Repair and rent.
3. Do nothing.

Jan noted that some have considered that, with remodeling, it could provide suitable retirement apartments. It is, according to both John and Jan, in “bad shape.” John reckoned that it was probably built in the 1870s and was a “run-of-the-mill house” from that time. It is also “much chopped up inside.” It was suggested that the building be razed and gardens planted in that space. Another person mentioned that it might be used as a space for the Athens Arts. Jan observed that we will be able to tour the building in the Fall and then have a better sense of what options we would prefer. We also talked a little about the history of the Palmer House and St. John’s relationship to it. In closing, Jan asked what more information do we need to deliberate about the fate of the house. Someone noted that with the renovation of the PNC building for the occupancy of non-profits there may be less demand for downtown rental space.

Gun Buy Back Proposal: This is an issue that the vestry had been discussing on-line for several days: John Van Nuys, minister of the Crawfordsville Presbyterian Church, had asked the St. Johns community if it would like to participate in a buy-back program of assault weapons in the wake of the shootings at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School resulting in 17 deaths and 17 wounded, most of the casualties being high school students: a \$100 Kroger gift card would be given for assault weapon turned in; if we agreed, we would pledge \$1200 to this program. A strenuous but respectful discussion followed. Some points against: it was more an emotional appeal than a practical action that would lessen the chances of more school shootings, the argument being that someone intent on slaughter would find the means to secure such a weapon. It was also noted that earlier attempts to change gun laws, or limit gun sales, in the aftermath of several previous mass shootings had not resulted in any effective change. For the proposal: fewer assault weapons circulating would mean it would be more difficult for a shooter to secure an assault rifle. And the proposal was as much a symbolic action as a practical action. In the context of the vitality of the gun control movement led by the young survivors of the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting, our action would foster this movement. A vote was called: 5 voted in support of the gun buyback program, 3 against, and one abstained. Following that vote, Jan said we also needed to vote to decide whether we would supply the monies to fund the program. We agreed that we would supply the funds—but one member moved that we split the dedicated money: \$600 to fund the buy back and \$600 to the YSB in support of its programs (with the idea that the YSB underwrites and helps troubled teens, among its other missions). This motion was voted on, and passed, 6-3.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:10.

Note: Our next vestry meeting is at noon on April 15th.

--Respectfully submitted by Marc Hudson, clerk to the St. John’s vestry, on 3/28/18