

# Minutes Vestry Meeting at Vestry Retreat

November 19, 2006

The Vestry met for an afternoon retreat at the Georgia Center on November 19, 2006. At the end of the retreat, the business meeting was called to order at 2:50 pm by Senior Warden Robin Bewley. Attending were John Ballard, Penny McLanahan, Allison Clements, Tom Odom, Dave Woodruff, Mother Mandy, Robin Bewley, Butch Bush, Brian Tison, Father Robert, Robin Krause, Katherine Byrne, Betsy Turner, Amrey Harden, and Lee Albright. Gillian Ball was absent.

Junior Warden Brian Tison presented a power point report about the status of the cottages. The appeal to the Clarke County Commission was unsuccessful, not because of the merits of the appeal, but because the law says that if the Historic Commission has made any part of its decision correctly, then the County Commission may not overturn the decision. Brian made the following points.

## A. Where we are

- a. Lost appeal
- b. Facilities need attention
- c. No plan at present

## B. Where to go from here

- a. Short Run
  - i. Cottages
  - ii. Other repairs
  - iii. Assignment of spaces for most effective use
- b. Long Run
  - i. Strategic plan
  - ii. Our mission – weighs heavily in any strategic plan
  - iii. Our needs – for Emmanuel and for outreach

## C. What is the plan

- a. What are we going to do about immediate facilities needs

b. Work days

c. Future – mission and use of space – new or renovated – cottages and Cobb House

Robert provided the Vestry with an article on conflicts between historic preservationists and church facilities nationwide. Tom said he had spoken that day with a parishioner who wants to continue the appeal process. Tom feels we need to move on: decide what to do and who will do it (Vestry or a committee). He suggested we either sell or renovate and decide if we need a capital campaign to accomplish this. We must look at future growth and what space will be used. We need to break issues into manageable steps. Butch and Dave listed the options as: sell, ignore, repair, or pursue legal options. Further discussion continued.

Robert would like an answer as to whether government can impede the decision of a church on what to do with its property. Robin K. asked if we decide to renovate, do we have to go back through the Historic Preservation Commission. Dave commented that renovations are very expensive and even then the space would still not be what Emmanuel needs. Robert said we should be able to build a church facility (chapel) legally. This should avoid any fines because of the state of the cottages. Tom said we must have a permit to board the windows unless they are repaired. We could be cited for not repairing the roof. Robin B. asked if we go through the steps to get answers through legal paths, are we willing to engage the parish in further discussions about the use of the property. Robert wants the Vestry to feel empowered to make the decision. It should not be based on his preferences or the suggestions in the articles he presented. Robin K. commented that we must look at long-term needs to be sure we can not use the property. Butch added that we do not have enough space for youth ministries. The best place to expand is on the Music Building/540 Prince site and the shopping center property.

Allison had to leave at this point and Robert gave a tribute to her for her service and all she has given to all of us by her expertise, her judgment, and just her presence.

As the discussion continued, John asked for a recap of repair costs. It is estimated at \$200,000 for each cottage and \$600,000 for the Cobb House. Tom said that in considering the proposal to sell the Cobb House, we must reassess our programs and see if we need the cottages. He does not recommend pursuing the legal route.

Robin B. reported that we have someone interested in buying the Cobb House. Butch asked if we would consider giving seed money to the Pope Street Association to relocate. Dave said he would like to determine how much we might make in the sale of the Cobb House before we decide on Butch's question.

John made a motion to eliminate the "Ignore" option as a way to proceed. Dave suggested the option be changed to "Table". Dave spoke against pursuing "Legal" because we will probably not act on it. A vote was taken on action for the Cobb House: legal (6), sell (4), repair (0), and ignore/table (9). Brian moved that in three months the Vestry will make a decision to restore or sell based on our long-range plans. John seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously. The Vestry agreed to table the discussion. The Vestry Retreat will be on our long-range plan. The decision will be made on February 28 to sell or repair. Dave said we need to use the surveys already done to determine the needs and desires of the parish.

Robin B. directed that when we are approached by parishioners about the cottage issue, we should say the Vestry is looking at our functions and trying to decide on our form. The Vestry will make a decision and the parish will be informed.

A vote was taken on what to do with the Cobb House. The vote was 13/0 for sell/repair. Robert said he believes we need to retire the debt with the sale of the cottages and the Cobb House before committing to a capital campaign. Robin B. pledged to bring before the Vestry the need to try to help the Cobb Street Association relocate.

Penny moved to sell the Cobb House; Dave seconded. The motion passed with John abstaining. Dave called for a plan of action for selling the Cobb House. Robert, Brian, and Robin will draft a proposal and send it to the Vestry electronically. Robert thanked the Vestry for taking leadership on this issue.

The next issue was a discussion of the endowment. Robert reported that the endowment began in 1944 with a small amount. At some point a disconnect began between the parish and the Endowment Board and it became a separate entity not controlled by the Vestry. The Vestry legally has control of funds or goods of the parish. Some trustees have been on the Board for up to 26 years. They are appointed for a four-year term. The rector nominates members and the Vestry approves. Robert said that no terms would be renewed for the next few years. The property of Emmanuel by rule of the Episcopal Church belongs to the Diocese of Atlanta. He wants to positively affect change. Changes in buildings, etc. now have to go through the AGM Committee. This is also against Episcopal Church policies.

Robert will nominate two new members to the Endowment Board. One is Judd Dougherty, an investment specialist and member of the parish, who decides on the investment mix and diversification of funds for the best interest of the client. The second is Brian Tison. A certain number of Vestry or former Vestry members must be on the Board. Brian knows the movement and desires of the Vestry in long-range planning.

Robert stated that the term of a Board member should not be longer than the term of a Vestry member. The terms are up this year for Amrey Harden and Bobby Gibson. Butch added that even though money may have come from someone with intentions contrary to the church, the current members of the Board do not have those beliefs. Betsy moved to accept Robert's nomination of Judd and Brian as Trustees for the Endowment Board for a term of 4 years. John seconded. Butch abstained and all other votes were affirmative.

For the Good of the Order, Robin announced that the retiring members of the Vestry would be recognized and thanked at the Annual Meeting.

Robert shared that Robin Krause's uncle had died, the third brother in his family in one year.

Robin B. closed the meeting with the poem, "Welcome Morning" by Ann Sexton.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Albright