



SAINT MARK'S
EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

**May Vestry Meeting
Minutes**

Tuesday, May 28, 2024 6 p.m.
Leffler House
Dinner hosts: Alexandra & Phil

Saint Mark's Cathedral acknowledges that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People, who are still here, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of all the Coast Salish tribes.

Vestry Members Present

Tina Blondino, Diocesan Member (Zoom)
Christopher Breunig
Martha Craig
Wayne Duncan
Phil Haas, Junior Warden for Finance
Greg Hamm, Senior Warden
Scott Hulet
Becky Kacel, Diocesan Member (Zoom)
Kristen Kelly
Julia Logan, Junior Warden for Facilities
Justin Mills
Canon Valerie Reinke, Bishop's Representative (Zoom)
Peter Snyder, Junior Warden for Stewardship
The Very Rev. Steve Thomason, Dean
Alexandra Thompson
Doug Thorpe (Zoom)
The Rev. Gail Wheatley, Diocesan Member

Officers Present

Barbara Erickson, Clerk
Re Knack, Chancellor

Officers Absent

Lynne Cobb, Treasurer

Staff Members Present

Erik Donner, Cathedral Administrator
Emily Meeks, Co-Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee

Guest

John Hoerster, Co-Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee (Zoom)

Dean Thomason opened the meeting with the Land Acknowledgement and a prayer at 6:00 p.m. The Bishop's Representative, Canon Valerie Reinke, and the members attending via Zoom were welcomed. A thank you was extended to Alexandra Thompson and Phil Haas for providing the meal.

Approval of Vestry Meeting Minutes

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to adopt the April 23, 2024 minutes as recorded.

OLD BUSINESS

Audit Process Update

The preliminary draft of the audit arrived as Lynne Cobb, Treasurer, was preparing for her trip abroad. It will be reviewed with guidance from the Finance Committee, and brought before the Vestry at its June meeting before it is sent to the Diocese of Olympia.

Tenant Updates—St. Nicholas

Dean Thomason gave an update on the current situation with the tenants at the St. Nicholas Building. Seattle Amistad School has a 10-year lease with a 18 month termination option for Saint Mark's to execute if it chooses to do so. Gage Academy of Art is leaving at the end of July, and Chase Silver, Property Manager, has been working to find a new tenant. Two things have added to the difficulty – 1) the St. Nicholas Building is not ADA accessible and 2) the stipulation with our LLC that we lease space to non-profits whose mission align with ours.

An alternative consideration would be to rent to for-profit organizations where they would incur the taxes on the square footage they lease. The expenses related to having St. Nicholas sit empty were also discussed. The Vestry was asked to consider renting to for-profits organizations whose missions align with ours. The Vestry was in agreement that renting to a for-profit would be an interim approach, and Chase Silver should pursue this option.

Mutual Ministry Goals Rollout

Greg Hamm, Senior Warden, reminded all that the Mutual Ministry Goals are tactical and a way to track how we are doing and the advantage of having robust a Strategic Plan allows the ministries to use them to track their success. Discussion moved to how to introduce the Goals to the congregation; a video was among the many ideas that were suggested, and Greg will work on this.

Thomsen Chapel Door Restoration Update

Dean Thomason shared a photo of the chapel doors and noted that the restored doors should be rehung within the next couple weeks.

Staffing Updates

Dean Thomason announced:

1. Interim Operational Improvement Coordinator Marc Aubertin, effective July 1, will be the Subdean.
2. A part-time position for a Climate-Justice Coordinator and Cathedral Grant writer has been posted. This is a grant-funded position made possible by a five-year commitment by the donor.
3. There were several applicants for the cathedral clergy position. Two of the three candidates have visited onsite, with the third person scheduled to also visit. Discernment will follow with an announcement within the next couple of weeks.
4. Our newly elected bishop, Phil LaBelle, is the rector at St. Mark's in Southbury MA, which is the namesake for our Saint Mark's, so named by the Burnett brothers, who came from that church and helped found our church.
5. The Rev. Dr. Hillary D. Raining, as part of our Wisdom School, will be our guest preacher in the first quarter of 2025, date TBD.
6. Emily Meeks will be leaving for Virginia Theological Seminary, her last day with us will be July 7th.

Dean Thomason changed the order of business.

NEW BUSINESS

Draft Procurement for FEMA Grant

Dean Thomason reported that a second FEMA grant application of \$150,000 was submitted for additional security upgrades. As an FYI: A new requirement in their application process requires a procurement policy that is more robust than the one we follow and with Marc Aubertin's help, a policy was produced.

Capital Campaign Consultant and Timeline

Dean Thomason and the wardens met with Marc Rieke, Senior Consultant with The Enrichment Group, who guided Saint Mark's through our Living Stones project. The Executive Committee recommends retaining The Enrichment Group for our upcoming Capital Campaign.

The Vestry accepted the recommendation from the Executive Committee to retain the services of The Enrichment Group.

OLD BUSINESS, continued

Affordable Housing Update

John Hoerster and Emily Meeks, co-chairs of the Affordable Housing Committee, provided the update with John reporting that no developers submitted written expressions of interest. Tory Laughlin Taylor, our affordable housing consultant, followed up with the developers receiving initial invitations and met with the City of Seattle and the Washington State Housing Finance Commission (WSHFC). She learned that a constellation of challenges has created a "perfect storm" in the current affordable housing development environment that prevents developers from taking on new projects. John reiterated that this short-term saturated pipeline and the financial challenges the developers are facing does not signal the need for affordable housing has been met nor that it is going away.

Emily Meeks provided the next steps as the Committee recommends revising the project timeline – now moving developer selection into the summer of 2026. Trinity Church Wall Street reaffirmed their commitment as a partner and indicated they will adapt to our new period of performance for the grant. Key work ahead will be deepening community engagement and simplifying the land transaction model.

The Vestry is asked to watch [A Cathedral's Complicity in Redlining and Restrictive Covenants](#) and to attend the Affordable Housing Update meeting on Wednesday, June 5, 2024 from 7-8 p.m. via Zoom.

The Affordable Housing Committee asked for Vestry support for:

- 1. A motion was made, seconded, and passed for the continued exploring of affordable housing on the St. Nicholas site despite the likelihood that selection of a development partner may be delayed for two to three years by focusing on key areas of readiness including transaction modeling and community engagement.**
- 2. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to explore potential alternatives for long-term missional use of the St. Nicholas building and site.**
- 3. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to explore potential interim uses of the St. Nicholas building in the short-term.**

NEW BUSINESS, continued

Affordable Housing Relational Inventory/Community Development

Scott Hulet referenced the Community Engagement document that he had emailed to the Vestry. Completing the Relationship Inventory provides an opportunity, within the categories listed, to identify connections within your own relationships or within your extended community life. This exercise allows one to see a practical way of sharing resources mutually. Completing the inventory emphasized existing relationships or opportunities to build new relationships in considering the Saint Mark's affordable housing project and focus on a BIPOC population.

Women's Emergency Shelter in St. Nicholas

Dean Thomason introduced the possibility of an interim short-term use for the Gage space for emergency housing for Operation Nightwatch. The Dean visited Deacon Frank DiGirolamo, Executive Director of Operation Nightwatch, where he learned that the City of Seattle's funding for emergency housing is being focused into treatment programs to help people get off the streets and into secure housing. Operation Nightwatch is one of the few emergency housing shelters left.

The first floor of Gage has four rooms, two rooms best suited for a women-only shelter housing up to 20 women and the other two rooms could be meeting rooms for Saint Mark's. Operation Nightwatch would be able to finance the addition of a shower and a bathroom update. The operational hours would be from 8 or 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. and would not conflict with Amistad's hours.

Discussion took place and as no further concerns were expressed by the Vestry, Dean Thomason will continue providing reports on the progress.

Annual Investment Distribution Resolution

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve Resolution #24-FI-03: the annual distribution from the Investment Portfolio to be authorized by the Cathedral Treasurer.

Follow-up to Vestry Conversation in April

All vestry members are asked to reflect on if we are who we say we are and if we are to walk the talk, do our actions reflect that and how do we make amends? At our April meeting, the discussion about a location for an alternate site for our vestry meetings weighed heavily on Julia who shared tonight what it is like to live with a disability that may not be visible and how hurtful this has been. Social Justice includes disabilities – what are we doing for disabled people? She then excused herself from the meeting.

Acknowledging that there was no malice intended, yet the persistent reference to meeting in a location that felt visually and physically unsafe to one of our members was not the model of who we are. Greg Hamm, Senior Warden, continued the conversation about the impact of not really listening to or recognizing the reality of Julia's distress – navigating the stairs she knew were not safe for her.

Dean Thomason asked each person on the vestry to consider if they:

- were part of the insensitive conversation, consider how you own that.
- heard others being insensitive, and didn't intervene, reflect on why you didn't call that out.
- heard the comment "what's the big deal about walking up two flights of stairs" and you did not call that out, consider how to make amends.
- How do make amends to Julia in the instance; how do we make amends as leaders in the community.

The second part of hurt resulted when only three people reached out to Julia after the Dean sent the email message to the Vestry. Self-reflection on your part whether spoken or not and how do you make amends as we are approaching trying to become a Beloved Community?

One of the things Julia and the Dean have discussed over the past year is to put flashing walk cross guards across our exit drive. The vestry wants this to be a serious priority and charges the cathedral staff to identify what this would entail to make our crosswalk safer for pedestrians.

LEADERSHIP REPORTS

Senior Warden

- Recovered from COVID.
- Grateful for the opportunity to listen and make amends.

Dean

- The Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple experienced an arson fire, and a donation was given.
- The visit of the four nominees for Bishop of the Diocese of Olympia.
- Bishop-elect Phil LaBelle
- Previously adopted a revised sabbatical policy to include the middle level managers. Cathedral Sacristan & Head Verger Michael Seewer will be taking a sabbatical.
- Ordination Saturday June 15 for six priests including Robert Stevens and Phillip Lienau
- June 5 Zoom forum providing updates on Affordable Housing
 - Files of Note—
 - TY note St. Luke's, Buddhist Temple
 - Photos—Erin Jean Warde, Garden
 - Grant tracker
 - Operation Nightwatch Lunch & Learn

MINISTRY/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reports can be found in Dropbox.

CHECK OUT & CLOSING PRAYER

Checkouts were given, and the closing prayer was given by Christopher Breunig. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara J. Erickson
Clerk

Erik Donner
Cathedral Administrator

Dates/Events of note

5/29	Solar at the Cathedral (Zoom)
6/5	Affordable Housing Parish Forum (Zoom)
6/15	Ordinations to the Priesthood