

# THE PARISH OF THE ADVENT

## MINUTES OF THE VESTRY

**Type:** Regular Meeting

**Date:** June 18, 2020

***Via Remote Communication***

A regular meeting of the Vestry of the Parish of the Advent was held on the eighteenth day of June, *anno Domini nostri Iesu Christi 2020*, via remote communication through Zoom, the Rector presiding.

The following fifteen members of the Vestry were present, fourteen of whom were present at the meeting's commencement, thus constituting a quorum:

The Rev'd Douglas E. Anderson (Rector)  
Mr. C. Thomas Brown (Rector's Warden)  
Mr. Paul J. Roberts (People's Warden)  
Mr. Adam C. Rutledge (Treasurer)  
Mr. Frederick A. Ou (Clerk)  
Miss Lynda J. Blair  
Mr. John M. Boyd  
Miss Amanda W. Daley  
Mr. Thatcher L. Gearhart  
Mr. Dustin E. Henderson  
Dr. David E. Lapin  
Dr. Philip W. Le Quesne  
Mrs. Carolyn P. McDermott  
Dr. Brent D. Nelson  
Mr. Francesco M. Piscitelli

The Rector, after ensuring that all those participating could hear each other and be heard by one another at the same time, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and offered an opening prayer.

### **I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Rector presented the minutes of the last regular meeting of the Vestry, held on May 19, 2020. After review, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the minutes of the Vestry's May 19, 2020 meeting be approved as submitted.<sup>1</sup>

## II. RECTOR'S REMARKS

**2.1 Update on "COVID-tide."** The Rector provided a general update on the Parish's current status during "COVID-tide."

**2.2 Interment of Lillian Ott in the Memorial Garden.** The Rector read a request from the Rev'd Jay C. James, Associate Rector, regarding an application to inter the ashes of Ms. Lillian L. Ott, a late Parish member, in the Parish's Memorial Garden. Ms. Ott had previously purchased niche no. EE2 in the Parish's columbarium, but later desired to exchange her purchased niche for a space in the Parish's Memorial Garden instead. This intent and an additional donation for said Memorial Garden space was documented by correspondence between Ms. Ott and Mr. Vance A. Hosford, a late Parish member and chairman of the Keepers of All Souls' Chapel at the relevant time, which was circulated among the Vestry. This exchange had not been completed at the time of Ms. Ott's death, however, because procedures and rules for the Memorial Garden had not yet been finalized at such time.

After discussion, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the application to inter the ashes of Ms. Lillian L. Ott in the Parish's Memorial Garden be approved, subject to the payment of any outstanding internment-license fees;

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the monies previously paid by Ms. Ott to purchase niche no. EE2 in the Parish's columbarium, amounting to \$750, together with the donation made by Ms. Ott towards the Parish's Memorial Garden dated September 6, 2009, in the amount of \$200, be applied to the \$2,500 total cost of Ms. Ott's internment license; and

**FURTHER RESOLVED**, that niche no. EE2 in the Parish's columbarium be relinquished back to the Parish.

## III. REPORT OF THE TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ou was not present for, and thus did not vote on, this resolution.

**3.1 General.** The Treasurer reported that the Parish financial numbers for the year to date appeared to be in line with reasonable expectations.

**3.2 Parish Budgeting for the Remainder of 2020.** Mr. Gearhart, Chairman of the Finance Committee, reported that the Rector had discussed with the Committee his priorities as they relate to the Parish's budget for the remainder of 2020, and that these priorities included three main proposals. First, the Rector had determined that the Parish will need the services of the equivalent of three full-time clerics. Second, the Rector had decided that it was advisable for the Parish to eliminate the position of Senior Sexton for budgetary reasons. Third, the Rector, in consultation with Mrs. Meg W. Nelson, the current Coordinator for Ministry to Children, had decided that once the Parish has been fully staffed with clerics, the responsibilities of the Coordinator for Ministry to Children position would be transferred so as to become responsibilities of the clergy instead. The Vestry's authorization was requested in connection with the first two proposals.

After discussion, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Rector be authorized to hire clerical help in accordance with the aggregate budget set forth for clerical help in the Parish's 2020 budget.

**RESOLVED**, that the Rector be authorized to eliminate the position of Senior Sexton at his discretion, but not later than August 1, 2020.

Additionally, Mr. Gearhart briefly discussed the Committee's general budgetary expectations for the remainder of 2020. Because of the exceptional circumstances that have occurred so far this year due to COVID-19 and lingering uncertainty regarding related effects moving forward, the Committee's estimates for the remainder of the year were subject to significant variance. Therefore, the Committee recommended that the Vestry maintain the Parish's current budget unchanged at this point and instead make any necessary budgetary adjustments month to month on an *ad hoc* basis, with any surplus funds remaining at the end of the year net of forgiveness of the Parish's Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loan, to be allocated to the Parish's revolving capital account.

Upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that any residual remaining after all of the Parish's operating expenses have been paid from income for 2020 be designated for the Parish's revolving capital account.

**3.3 Approval of the Parochial Report.** A copy of the Parish's proposed 2019 Report of Episcopal Congregations and Missions According to Canons I.6, I.7, and I.17 (i.e., the Parochial Report) was circulated among the Vestry for its approval. It was noted that the Finance Committee had carefully re-reviewed the relevant instructions this year in order to ensure that the Parish's 2019 Parochial Report was completed correctly. After review, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Parish's 2019 Parochial Report be approved as presented.

#### **IV. REPORT OF THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE**

Mr. Piscitelli, Co-Chairman of the Stewardship Committee, reported that communications were previously sent to those 2019 pledgors that had yet to make a pledge for 2020, and so far, the Parish had received five additional pledges in response, totaling \$8,730 pledged. The Committee will go back and revisit the remaining non-pledgors for 2020 in the future.

#### **V. REPORT OF THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

Mrs. McDermott, Co-Chairperson of the Property Committee, reported that the previous tentative agreement to rent the Parish's condominium at 140 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Massachusetts, had fallen through, meaning that said condo remained on the market. In regard to the Rectory, she reported that the interior was essentially complete and the front door had been repainted, but a few items on the Rectory's exterior remained to be done, such as the upper windows. The Rectory's rain gutters also still needed to be tied in to the City of Boston's general storm-drain system, but this work cannot commence until the City has issued a permit therefor.

In addition, Mrs. McDermott relayed the Rector's request that a seating area be added in the Rectory's backyard. In connection therewith, the Committee had obtained a quote from M. Holland & Sons Construction, Inc., the Rectory's current building contractor, of \$5,500 to build a low platform deck in said backyard, and requested the Vestry's approval of this proposal. Therefore, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the amount of \$5,500 be approved for the construction of a low platform deck in the Rectory's backyard in accordance with the proposal therefor provided to the Parish by M. Holland & Sons Construction, Inc.

## **VI. REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE**

Dr. Lapin, Chairman of the Administration Committee, reported that the Committee's major, remaining, unaddressed issue was the completion of the Parish's staff handbook. The plan was to complete this item once Mr. James D. Singletary, Parish Administrator, has returned to work at the Parish office on a regular basis.

## **VII. REPORT FROM THE WARDENS**

**7.1 Macmillan Estate.** The Rector's Warden reported that all paperwork related to settling the Parish's dispute with the estate of Mrs. Nancy E. Macmillan, a late member of the Parish, had been completed. The net proceeds of the agreed-upon settlement amount were expected to be approximately \$45,000, which would be deposited in the Parish's capital account in accordance with standing Parish policy.

**7.2 Opening Up of the Parish for In-Person, Public Worship.** A letter from the Rt. Rev'd Alan M. Gates, Sixteenth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, dated June 15, 2020, addressing Diocesan guidance for parishes that are considering reopening for in-person, public worship, was circulated among the Vestry and discussed by the Rector's Warden. The Rector's Warden commented in particular that, while the Diocesan reopening guidelines present themselves as binding in all respects, he was aware of no basis in the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church for the Diocese to assert such authority. Moreover, the Rector's Warden also could find no basis for the Diocese's claim that the reopening of a parish may be conditioned on obtaining the Diocese's prior consent or permission, as said guidelines suggest. Nonetheless, the Rector's Warden concluded that the Diocesan guidelines obviously reflected much useful advice, and had been prepared in good faith as an aid to parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts. For that reason, the Rector's Warden advised that the Parish follow the procedures outlined in the Diocesan guidelines and avail itself of the guidance offered by the Diocese. It was also noted that the Parish enjoys certain advantages vis-à-vis resuming public worship, including the large amount of available space in the Nave.

The Rector announced that he would appoint the Wardens, the Chairman of the Administration Committee, and himself to the Parish's "regathering team" in accordance with Diocesan guidance. The initial plan for Sundays was for Morning Prayer at 9:00 a.m., and a single non-communicating Low Mass with sung minor propers in accordance with Diocesan guidelines at 9:30 a.m., to be followed immediately by Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Given the time of year, it was not expected that there would be overwhelming demand for in-person attendance early on, but preparations would be made in the event excess demand arises. Suggestions were also made that the "regathering team" consult with a health-care professional at the Parish regarding practical implementation of safety-related measures to be made in preparation of the Parish's reopening.

After discussion, upon motion, duly made and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**, that the Vestry of the Parish of the Advent

- (a) believes that the resumption of regular, in-person, public worship at the Parish should proceed as soon as is practical; and
- (b) has advised on and unanimously supports the Rector's decision to prepare for the resumption of in-person, public worship at the Parish consistent with the relevant guidance provided by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

### **VIII. NEW BUSINESS**

The Rector announced that he had received a formal letter of resignation as Associate Rector from Fr. James effective June 30, 2020. The Rector will accept Fr. James's resignation with all due thanks, and an appropriate send-off in recognition of Fr. James's service to the Parish would be scheduled in the future when circumstances allow.

### **IX. ADJOURNMENT AND BENEDICTION**

There being no other business to consider, upon motion, duly made and seconded, the Vestry voted to adjourn the meeting.

The Rector offered a benediction, whereupon the meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

I attest that the above is a true record of the Vestry meeting held on Thursday, June 18, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,

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Frederick A. Ou,  
Clerk