

Episcopal Church of St. Martin, Davis
Vestry Special Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2025,
4:02 PM - 6:00 PM, Room 6/7

Present: the Very Rev. Pamela Dolan (Rector), Maria Acuna-Feldman (Sr. Warden), Beth Capell (Jr. Warden), Stan Forbes, Jim Jordan, Elise Keddie, Tony Miller, Tom Young, Susan Stone

Guests: Gabe Avila (Clerk), Jessie Ann Owens, Ven. Margaret Grayden,

Absent: Eric Jordan, George Kuodza

1. Opening Prayer and Introductions

- a. Pamela began with an opening prayer.

2. Review of Report from Capital Needs Discernment Committee

- a. Pamela gave an overview of the Capital Needs Discernment Committee's work. She noted that the committee discussed the implementation of a social enterprise, analyzed space use, and identified three priorities: improving climate resiliency and sustainability, enhancing welcome and hospitality both internally and to the larger community, and supporting current ministries.
- b. Pamela pointed out that the committee did not think starting a new social enterprise was necessary and instead focused on supporting current ministries by improving climate resiliency and welcome. These priorities coincide with the priorities identified at the recent vestry retreat.
- c. The committee has also had conversations with ministry leaders and staff and next steps include how to engage the broader parish but how to do so is still a question.

3. Stephen Hasset's Comments

- a. Stephen shared that what allowed previous campaigns he's been involved in is to have a plan. Having a plan allowed implementation to weather change.
- b. Stephen noted the main keys to the successful campaigns he has run. His campaigns had many ideas but without organization combined with a strongly developed clarity and commitment among leadership, the campaigns would not have succeeded. It was necessary to have buy-in from leadership to provide stability in articulation of the plans. This allowed the plan to endure the questions about why this item and not that item. Something else is always available as an idea. The way forward is not so much about ideas as commitments to each other and commitment to the future of the community.
- c. Stephen introduced a thought exercise about church ownership which led to a discussion about whether the church is owned by the diocese, parish, or mission, ultimately concluding that the mission guides decision-making. Being faithful to your mission is a way to take ownership of your mission.

Though ownership isn't necessarily based on the buildings, the continuity and stability of the community depends upon the buildings. Things we hold in common as a community are both our property and our mission.

- d. If you have more than five goals, you have none.
- e. Paul's letter to the Romans
 - i. Stephen suggested that the three tenets described in Paul's Letter to the Romans is a good guiding principle when considering a capital campaign. They are:
 1. Contribute to the needs of the saints (i.e., people of the church)
 2. Extend hospitality to the strangers (which you're more able to do if you have your own house in order)
 3. Reconcile with enemies or where there are places of strife in your community
- f. Be willing to embrace that the church has a valuable mission in the world and not just because you address the social ills of the world, but also as a campus of prayer or a house of prayer even if you did nothing else.

4. Hiring Experts

- a. Stephen emphasized the importance of hiring experts to inspect the buildings and evaluate use, which was essential to his own example campaign. In the example, what was originally the plan had to be changed due to the discovery of recalled electrical panels and black mold. Priority may become safety in such a case and without experts you will not know what you do not know.
- b. Additionally, it is important to be able to let an expert go if they are not doing a good job but if you keep the work internal (i.e., hire parishioners) you cannot let a parishioner go.

5. Points of Difficulty

- a. Stephen noted some people had difficulty changing items that were connected to the past. He suggested the people must be willing to let things go, but it requires leadership to push back against the desire to stay with what is familiar or comfortable.
- b. To be faithful to the mission, you can't sit still.
- c. Stephen said one of the most important parts in a campaign is curating the long list of ideas. It's easy to make a long list, but much harder to narrow it down. He said that to do that there must be a decision-making process that authorizes a leadership team to cull the list or otherwise make decisions such as hiring architects or real estate experts. He suggested culling the list down to the five items that you can make a commitment to.
- d. Leadership buy-in is critical before bringing anything to the parish. Stephen said that he held a series of seven small gatherings in people's homes to engage with people AFTER having a plan in place. He and his team first refined the plan down to specific items. He had the plan, priorities, how much each item on his list cost, etc. and then sat down with

his executive committee and asked if they could support 100%, then steering committee, then vestry. Once all the leadership was onboard, they brought it to the parish in small gatherings.

- e. Stephen discussed whether the church should grow before a campaign. He said he focused on the mission of his parish and allotted resources to that mission to grow the community and make it our “place.” It’s easier to invite commitment about capital improvement than spiritual life or discipleship. A concrete expression of commitment to the future of a parish is to have a plan in place to steward the parish into the future.
- f. Business leadership is primarily concerned with problems but if you focus on cultivating the good things you have instead, it concentrates energy on things that are going well and what you want more of to tell you what would be better.
- g. It took approximately 4 years. Some of it was attachment to the past.

6. Check-In

- a. Pamela checked in with the vestry members who are not on the Capital Needs Discernment Committee to see if there were questions or thoughts.
- b. Comments included the desire for a smaller group to review a list of ideas, making sure any items on a list are things that would make the average parishioner excited to participate in a campaign, and concerns about volunteer engagement and space sharing.

7. Next Steps

- a. The Vestry will discuss and debrief Stephen’s presentation at Wednesday’s meeting.
- b. Pamela will send out guidance for Vestry members to structure their talking points for Wednesday’s meeting.

8. Closing Prayer

- a. Pamela led a closing prayer.

MEETING ADJOURNED at **6:00 PM**.

Next Vestry meeting: June 18, 2025, at 7pm