

## PARISH MEETING – ST. ANDREW’S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, APRIL 15, 2018

### Call to Order and Quorum:

- Rector Elizabeth Randall called the parish meeting to order at 12:52 pm. According to governing rules, a quorum for a parish meeting is 20% of its active members. For St. Andrew’s, 52 is a quorum; there were 56 at 12:48. She said that a count would be brought by the end of the meeting. When the count was presented, there were 126 parishioners present.

### Purpose of the meeting:

- Elizabeth recounted the history of the partnership with MHCD leading to the parish meeting: “St. Andrew’s has been working in partnership with the Mental Health Center of Denver (MHCD) on a proposed permanent supportive housing project and expanded space for the parish to be developed on our parking lots at 2061/2071 Glenarm Place. This partnership is governed by a Memorandum of Understanding which was approved by the vestry and the diocese. The vestry seeks the mind of the parish before making a decision on whether to proceed with this project or to terminate our agreement with MHCD.” She then turned the meeting over to Senior Warden Matt Bentley.

### Sacred Conversation -- preparation:

- Matt introduced the topic, and suggested that the first thing to do is to reflect on a series of questions that the Vestry has reflected on – coming from an idea of discernment, to speak to the good present in two good choices. He asked that participants write down their thoughts on the questions because writing often brings clarity.
  - Where do you see good, and God, in going forward with the project?
  - Where do you see good, and God, in not going forward with the project?
  - Where do you see hope in the project?
  - What are your concerns about the project?

After about five minutes Matt said that this would be part of the conversation to come later in the meeting, and turned it over to Roger Kilgore, Chair of the Building Our Vision (BOV) committee.

### History of the project:

- Roger began by saying that he looks forward to many years in this community no matter what decision is made. He noted that St. Andrew’s has been working toward and planning a development like this for a long time.
  - In 2008 St. Andrew’s bought both parking lots in partnership with the Urban Land Conservancy. The basis for the partnership included the goal of having housing as part of whatever was built.
  - In October 2013 the parish addressed planning for development when George Hoover (co-manager with Roger of St. Andrew’s side of the partnership with ULC) invited us to imagine the future, and used one of the statements in our mission statement: We are called to grow in God’s love. Results of a parish survey taken at that time included expanding our outreach and

our music program; being a positive presence in our neighborhood; and supporting families with children.

- The current project (called Glenarm Commons): Roger commented that the plan he showed was out of date already; it is continuing to evolve, but it's as far as we've come in our vision to develop the parking lots since we purchased them with ULC.
- History of our partnership with MHCD: we invited them into partnership because their proposal was more exciting than any other. We entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a project with them one year ago. In that year they have led and funded exploration – contractors, engineers, architects, liaisons with city officials and elected officials. So part of the question is whether it is time for us to break off this partnership.
- How does this partnership support what we value? It supports music and worship and children by allowing us to move some of those things from the Undercroft to the new building. With the current plans, there will be new space, shared with MHCD, for a nursery and Godly Play in that new building. There will also be a large social space – bigger than now – which we will share with MHCD. The project supports our outreach by providing 47 apartments of permanent supportive housing (PSH) for people currently homeless.
- Summary of parking situation:
  - We would go from 68 to 10 parking spots but we would have a \$300,000 fund to defray parking – coming from the developer fee accruing to MHCD. Roger showed a map of parking lots nearby. There are 11 parking facilities within a block and a half of where we are. Those will change of course; we are already seeing development on some. – Some will be developed, some not.
  - If we lived in the neighborhood and didn't have to drive we wouldn't think twice about a 1.5 block distance. For instance – One Lincoln is a block away. All of the parking lots are just as close as that.
- Concerns: Roger said that he had heard that people will leave the church – He asked, will people leave without ever trying it out? Without seeing how the shared spaces work? If so it may indicate a deeper problem we need to look at. Others say we are in a period of decline, but Roger thinks that overlooks our agency in the matter; we have smart, committed people. Another: The parish is stressed financially. He is a fiscal conservative – we've always been stretched trying to do something. Does the risk outweigh the opportunity?
- Recent St. Andrew's history:
  - 2008: purchased parking lots – took on partner and took on debt
  - 2009: expansion – the parish worshipped somewhere else and took on more debt
  - The parish took on a children's minister
  - The parish took on an associate priest
  - The parish hosted Icons in Transformation

Roger said that he hadn't been a fan of all of them, but looking back he wouldn't give any of them up. He has had the privilege of working with versions of BOV and with MHCD He has gotten to look at what they (MHCD) do to make the homeless more self-sufficient. He knows there are risks and knows we

have compromised on the project and for some it's come down too far. But for him they don't outweigh the value of this project.

**Sacred Conversation:**

- Elizabeth thanked Roger for his years of work; he got a standing ovation. Matt outlined the process for the parish meeting conversation. He offered four options and asked each person to choose which they preferred, and to think about the reasons for the choice. The framework was for each speaker to be heard respectfully without response from the parish. Options:
  1. I believe this project is aligned with our mission and vision and I support going forward.
  2. I believe this project is aligned with our mission and vision; I recognized that the risks and opportunities are great. I support proceeding assuming the vestry can come to an arrangement about nearby parking and a firm commitment stating how the space will be shared.
  3. Though I believe this project is aligned with our mission and vision, the risk and the sacrifice are too great. I cannot support this project.
  4. I believe we are called to live into our vision and mission in some other way. I do not support this project.

**Preliminary questions:**

- Karen Mayes asked: do we owe MHCD anything for the expense they've incurred? Roger answered that we do not.
- Brian Hyde: why haven't we tried some of the alternatives? Matt answered that we have.
- David Tweed: how many spaces does MHCD need? Roger: Six. That's on top of the 10 we have.

Conversation framework: Matt asked that we begin by hearing from someone choosing option 1 or 2, then hear from someone choosing 3 or 4. Elizabeth said that we want to enter into a faith sharing conversation, and reminded the parish that a 1 or 2 is a yes and 3 or 4 is a no. What we want to make sure happens is for people to say what's on their hearts without getting into a debate. What happens in sacred conversation or faith sharing is that people speak into a prayerful silence – not to respond to the person you just heard. Matt reminded the congregation of the Vestry's norm of assuming good intent.

**Parish vote:** Matt and Elizabeth explained that the three recently retired Vestry members would distribute ballots and count votes. Elizabeth asked that if people know they are not members of record, they aren't permitted to vote. The plan was for the congregation to sing hymns while the votes were counted. She mentioned that we still had a double quorum.

The congregation sang and prayed while the vote was taken. Elizabeth said the Vestry would hold a special meeting on Tuesday, April 17, and would inform the parish of its decision as soon as possible after that. No

**Commented [RK1]:** I'm not sure that it is appropriate for the official record of the meeting to try to list people and what they said by name.

matter what there will be questions, people who will be disappointed, people affirmed. We will all together be seeking a way forward no matter what. So the question is how we preserve the bond of unity going forward? How should people reach out to each other across difference? Who will need care and attention and how will the community respond to that? We will not solve that now – we will be asking of each other how we go forward from this time – Elizabeth thanked all of us.

The vote:

Option 1: 32

Option 2: 39

Option 3: 33

Option 4: 13

In sum, there were 71 votes for option 1 or 2 (overall yes); and 49 votes for option 3 or 4 (overall no).

Led by Matt, the congregation thanked Elizabeth with a standing ovation. The meeting closed with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Brown, Clerk

**Commented [RK2]:** Is this the verified final total. I recall there were some adjustments.

**Commented [SB3R2]:** I remember a discussion but I believe it was at the retreat, and I did not take notes there.