

“Divine Intervention” To Launch Saturday, Without a Sail

May 29, 2019



Rev. Karen Campbell, left, with her sister Teri Hackett in front of "Jib Net" at the Christ Episcopal Church in Sag Harbor. Gavin Menu photo

When artists Lisa Hein and Bob Seng visited Sag Harbor’s Christ Episcopal Church on Hampton Street, a vision for a site-specific piece of art, tying the village’s maritime history to a building built in 1883 and a congregation that has gathered in Sag Harbor for nearly 175 years, was born.

“When we visited the church, we noticed the steeple looked like a mast and we thought if we put a job on the front of the steeple, the rest of it would look

like a mainsail,” explained Ms. Hein during a meeting of the Sag Harbor Village Historic Preservation and Architectural Review Board on Thursday, May 23.

“Jib Net,” a triangular, mesh net, was proposed to stretch from the bell tower to the colonnade roof at the entrance of the church on Hampton Street, a centerpiece to the art show, “Divine Intervention,” which will open this Saturday, June 1, and run through September 2 when “Jib Net” would have been removed, according to Reverend Karen Campbell.

However, during Thursday’s meeting of the ARB, members of the board and its attorney, Elizabeth Vail, told Rev. Campbell, Ms. Hein and Mr. Seng that they would need to go back to village building inspector Tom Priato for a determination on whether the board could even consider the application.

“This board is only allowed to approve things that comply with the zoning code,” said Ms. Vail.

Members of the ARB said they were not opposed to the aesthetic of the “Jib Net,” just that it had to go through Mr. Priato first.

On Wednesday, Mr. Priato said the sail would be subject to zoning and the code does not allow for temporary structures. An application would need to be made to the Sag Harbor Village Zoning Board of Appeals.

Rev. Campbell on Wednesday said “Jib Net” would be erected inside of the church for the time being. “I don’t know what we are going to do – we may have to apply for another permit, or we may just keep it inside,” she said. “I think it would have been a beautiful addition to the village and people would have really enjoyed it.”

In the meantime, she is looking forward to the weekend opening, which will bring more 30 artists from the East End and New York together for the first contemporary visual art project in the church’s sanctuary space. The show is

curated by Teri Hackett, Rev. Campbell's sister, and will include an installation by artists Bastienne Schmidt and Almond Zigmund in the church's bell tower and vestibule. The church's 1917 Tiffany window is flanked by artwork by April Gornik, Carole Seborovski and Drew Shiflet, with many other artists' pieces decorating the sanctuary space.

"Divine Intervention" is not just an art show — it is also a fundraiser for the church's Community Café, an initiative dreamt up by Rev. Campbell that would serve both the hungry and the lonely by offering a meal for those facing food insecurity and a gathering place for those in need of companionship. Fifty percent of the sales from the show will support the construction of the Community Café at the church.

"Our desire is to hold a free dinner, served with dignity, restaurant style, once a week for the community," says Rev. Campbell.

Rev. Campbell said the church was recently approved for a Community Development Block Grant from the Town of East Hampton for \$20,000 to make its bathroom ADA accessible. The diocese has also granted the church \$25,000 toward the completion of the café. Other gifts have found their way to the church, including an eight-burner Wolf stove that used to belong to B. Smith, which the longtime restaurateur first used to get her catering business off the ground.

"The Community Café has really been like the story of 'Stone Soup'," said Rev. Campbell. "Someone has thrown in a potato here, a carrot there and we welcome any more additions to the pot."

Comments