

Minutes of the Meeting
of the Parish Council
of St. Vincent de Paul Church
March 8th, 2011

The meeting was brought to order by the Council President, Jim Casey, at 7:31pm and prayer was offered by Jim Lochner.

In attendance: Fr. Richard Lawrence (Pastor) Jim Casey (President), Audrey Rogers (Vice-President), Teresa Payne (7:15 Mass Rep.), Graham Yearley (Corporator and 12:15 Mass Rep.), Jack Bonner (9:30 Mass Rep.), Kevin O'Reilly (9:30 Mass Rep.), Jim Lochner (9:30 Mass Rep.), Dennis Flynn (Finance Committee Vice Chair), Colleen McCahill (Education Committee Chair), Bill McNamara (Liturgy Committee Vice Chair), Pat Ball (Facilities Committee Chair), Raymond Heil (Social Action Committee Chair), Peggy Meyer (Social Action Committee Vice Chair), and Joe Yingling, Jamie St.Onge, and Jerome Bird from the Communications and Outreach Committee.

Absent: Pete McDowell (11:45 Mass rep), Nancy O'Neill (7:15 Mass Rep), and Anne Marie Freeberger (Corporator).

New Website Presentation

Joe Yingling showed the Parish Council the newly developed website and introduced its features. The Home Page will have seven tabs (Council and Committees, Worship, Community, Justice and Service, Children and Youth, Young Adults/Young Professionals, and About Us). These tabs are designed to present the three major parts of our mission: sacrament, word, and service. Under Council and Committees, each of the six committees (three mission-driven and three mission-support) is listed with drop-down menus for every subcommittee, group, and ministry related to that committee. Other Home Page features include a highlighted "News and Events" section to publicize current offerings at St. Vincent's as well as a "Quick Links" section that will give immediate information to visitors (Mass times and staff) and to parishioners (for example, a master calendar and all the assignment sheets for lectors, altar dressers, coffee set-up, park cleaning, etc.) Jerome will continue to post Fr. Lawrence's homilies.

The Communications and Outreach Committee is requesting one 'editor' (knowledgeable about the committee's mission) for each committee's content and related groups to manage the sub-calendar, photos, and content. Training in website access and ongoing technical support will be provided. In this way, the website will stay up-to-date and relevant. Ideally, the website can be an ever-evolving meeting place for the parish. Graham suggested that the mass schedule be put on the home page as that information is as basic as our address. Jim Lochner asked for an evaluation plan to ensure that the site is 'user-friendly.' Audrey, the acting Chair of C+O, agreed to develop the plan. It is hoped that editors can be identified and trained in time for a website launch by Easter.

Pastor's Report

1. The pastor has been busy preparing the report of Priests' Personnel Board's recommendations for future deployment of the ever shrinking pool of priests and alternate visions of parish leadership for the Archbishop to review.
2. He commented that attendance at mass seemed slightly up and our finances were satisfactory. The Sermon on the Mount series was also a success.

Ad Hoc Committee for Selection of Candidates for our future Parish Life Director

Jim Casey, a member of this ad hoc committee, gave a report. There were seventeen applications for the position. From that total, there have been nine conference call interviews and a further weeding out of candidates will reduce the list to four or five who will have in-person interviews. These finalists will visit the parish, preferably during weekends, to attend our different masses and interview with selected people. July 1st remains the target starting date but this can be adjusted to meet the nominee's moving needs.

Finance Committee Report

Dennis Flynn reported that the offertories were running ahead of the budgeted amounts. Other revenue sources are down, but some are expected to be corrected before the end of the financial year.

Social Action Committee Presentation

The Social Action Committee was formed in 2006 as a result of the Listening Project to support the parish in fulfilling its mission of promoting social justice. The major functions of the Social Action Committee are to serve as an umbrella organization representing parish social justice efforts to Council; and to recommend and organize new ministries to address identified gaps, needs, and opportunities in the parish and the larger community. Ray Heil listed all of the projects for which Social Action Committee has primary responsibility; among these is a particular commitment to projects intended to serve our neighborhood of Jonestown. Ray also presented a long list of projects belonging to the Peace and Justice Subcommittee. This St Vincent Group with a long history and commitment to our sister parishes, Habitat, ecology, death penalty abolition, and interfaith dialogue, became a sub-committee after the other options of merging the committees or existing as a special interest group were explored.

Social Action Committee Challenges:

- The geographic dispersion of parishioners makes organizing for the Jonestown community difficult.
- Recruiting new committee members with parishioners often engaged in social justice issues elsewhere.
- Difficulty with organizing style of BRIDGE, a major ally.
- Progress on social issues is slow and incremental.

Major Issues Facing our Parish Seen by the Social Action Committee:

- Attracting young and/or new parishioners.
- Adapting to change, especially lay leadership.
- Establishing an equitable way of funding ministries under lay leadership responding effectively and creatively to the social injustice and poverty in Baltimore and our Jonestown neighborhood.

The Social Action Committee outlined its goals for the upcoming year and asked for assistance from

- Facilities in coordinating the volunteer efforts of Helping Up Mission and Christopher Place residents in working at St Vincent's.
- Communication and Outreach in publicizing activities and legislative efforts
- Education and Enrichment in coordinating programs on Catholic social teaching and social justice issues
- Parish Council in determining financial support for social justice activities.

Job Descriptions of Parish Staff Members

Fr. Lawrence gave copies of the five staff job descriptions to the members of the Parish Council. These documents represented a list of duties unilaterally generated by each of the staff persons without indication of time commitments. Fr. Lawrence noted that some attention to the amount of time devoted to each task would make their job descriptions more meaningful and stated he intended to ask the staff to do that. Each list of duties was reviewed and discussed by the Council. Not all duties are directly matched to job titles and it is clear that staff persons have picked up the pieces of parish work that needed to be done. Jim Casey noted that the purpose of this job description review is not to reconfigure current positions, but to better define the assigned tasks so that Fr. Lawrence can implement the staff goals and evaluation procedures that the Council approved in October. Fr. Lawrence will bring the next iteration of the job descriptions to the April Council meeting.

Committee Reports

As the meeting had gone longer than planned the reports were tabled except for two brief reports.

Education and Enrichment Committee: The Fr. John Donohue lectures on Wednesdays in Lent will proceed as planned.

Liturgy Committee: The Lent and Holy Week liturgies are planned and ready to go.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 PM with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Minutes submitted by Graham Yearley and Audrey Rogers
For Pete McDowell, Secretary