

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

December 13, 2011

The meeting was brought to order by Council President, Jim Casey, at 7:30 PM and a prayer was offered by Audrey Rodgers. In attendance: Fr. Richard Lawrence, Pastor, Jim Casey, President, Chris McCullough, Pastoral Associate, Pat Ball, Facilities Committee Chair, Jack Bonner, 9:30 Mass Rep., Maureen Fitzsimmons, Finance Committee Chair, Jim Lochner, 9:30 mass Rep., Peter McDowell, 11:45 Mass Rep., Peggy Meyer, Social Action Committee Chair, Kathi Jeffra, E &E Committee Chair, Teresa Payne, 7:15 Mass Rep., Audrey Rodgers, Acting Chair Communications and Outreach Committee, Barbara Bachur, Dennis Moore, Kevin O'Reilly.

PASTOR'S REPORT

Advent is going well. The new liturgical changes are going well thanks to the Liturgical Committee. Changes are a bit awkward. The Pastor is confident that we will get used to it. The Pastor indicated that he is also struggling with the new changes, but "it is happening."

Zoning ordinance was communicated to the City Council. However, no comment on it has been received as yet. One can visit the website for Baltimore City Department of Planning for any comments. The comments will close in 4-6 weeks. The bill will be introduced to the City Council after that. Councilman Stokes indicated that he would introduce the bill. Father Lawrence indicated that if necessary we would hold a prayer service here then the parishioners would then pack the City Council meeting.

Archbishop O'Brien leaves January 6, 2012, for Rome. At that time he will become a resident in Rome and be a visitor here. Father encourages us to keep praying.

FINANCE

Maureen Fitzsimmons presented the financial statements. The offertory is ahead of what was budgeted but church maintenance has increased because of unforeseeable events such as lightning strikes and earthquakes that have caused expenses to be over budget.

AD HOC SIGN COMMITTEE

Ideas for a sign were put forth by Chris McCullough and he is awaiting more feedback. He has gotten some divergent opinions so far, but nothing is resolved.

DOWNTOWN PARISHES INTERIM REPORT

Attached are the minutes from the CCCC meeting dated December 1, 2011. Father Lawrence reviewed the minutes with the Parish Council and indicated that he did not know when the Archdiocese plan would commence. However, rather than wait for the Archdiocese, Father Lawrence would prefer to have a plan to present to the Archdiocese. The goal is to have a plan by Easter. Father Lawrence addressed the difference between a shrine and a parish. He indicated there was a meeting this Thursday to discuss clergy and staffing. He elaborated that in the foreseeable future the downtown parishes would have two diocesan priests instead of four.

When he retires Father Lawrence will move from the rectory so that his replacement will have complete responsibility. The midnight Mass will probably cease. Currently, often fewer than ten people attend.

Eventually the time might come when the 11:45 a.m. mass might cease. As long as his health holds out, Father will continue to say the Mass. However, there may come a time when the Parish of Corpus Christi, which is similar to our parish, combines the Mass schedules with our parish. Father indicated there would be a need for a town meeting on this subject and need a final report to the Archbishop in April. The Council reached a consensus on this.

EXPENSE REPORT:

Chris McCullough provided an expense report. A review of the report generated four questions:

1. What expenses should we address now?
2. What issues will we address later?
3. What issues will we not address?
4. How do we as a parish wish to fund any of those expenses?

Some council members expressed a desire to approach the parishioners and seek donations to pay for specific expense items. The council did not reach consensus on that proposal. It was decided that what set us apart as a parish was not constantly going to the flock and asking for money. While it was recognized that there are times when the parish would be requested for special donations, the consensus was that such requests should be used sparingly.

It was conceded that some of the expenses currently facing the church were rare, such as the lighting strikes. The Parish Council was also cognizant that the Diocesan Capital campaign starts in January 2012. It was decided to do the Capital campaign first and then revisit the idea of a specific request for stewardship later. It was noted that it is possible that the expenses may fall in line with the budget with time given the fact that some of the expenses incurred were extraordinary and not usual.

Audrey Rogers advocated for addressing the needs listed on the Proposed Expenses on the Expense Report and indicated that in her opinion these were not "wish list." She also indicated that she believed there was a need for more transparency in the budget.

Chris McCullough indicated that some of the Proposed Expenses need to be addressed immediately on a fix now basis. For instance, repairing the leak for approximately \$625.00 was a "finger in the dike, the kind of expense that needed to be done before the damage would create a far bigger expense down the road." He indicated that the carpet on the balcony and the speakers in the balcony could probably be addressed at a later time.

The Council entered into a debate as to what Proposed Expenses in fact needed to be taken care of immediately versus those that might be able to be put off. The Council President then surveyed all members present at the meeting as to their position with regard to deferring certain expenses until later, addressing certain expenses immediately, the question of a dedicated second collection and providing a report to the parish concerning what our Proposed Expenses were and what money was available to address the expenses currently. A consensus was reached that the parish should address the most urgent matters, such as the leak, immediately.

The consensus was reached that we would not ask for a fundraiser from the Parish concerning this matter. It was agreed that a document would be prepared to be sent to the Parish to let the parish at large know that certain Proposed Expenses were currently not funded and that if any Parish members felt like donating money for a specific Proposed Expense, they were free to do so. There was a consensus to pay for the daycare/nursery worker and the office and cleaning personnel.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 Pm with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter McDowell