

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
St. Vincent de Paul Church
September 10th, 2013**

The meeting was brought to order by the Council President, Audrey Rogers at 7:35 pm and started with a group prayer.

In attendance: Fr. Richard Lawrence, *Pastor*; Chris McCullough, *Pastoral Associate*; Audrey Rogers, *President, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Sara Kelley, *Vice President, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Rosie Graf, *Secretary, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Bethany Gregg, *9:30 Mass Rep.*; John Kober, Sr., *7:15 Mass Rep.*; Denise Hamilton, *11:45 Mass Rep.*; Laureen Brunelli, *Communications and Outreach Committee Chair*; Peggy Shouse, *Education and Enrichment Committee Chair*; Peggy Meyer, *Social Action Committee Chair*; John Helie, *Liturgy Committee Chair*, and Maureen Fitzsimmons, *Finance Committee Chair*

Absent: Anne Marie Freeburger and Graham Yearley, *Corporators*; David Potts and Dan Rolandelli, *Facility Committee Co-Chairs*.

Pastor's Report:

Father Richard Lawrence is now living at his new residence; he expects to move his remaining objects out of the rectory within the next six weeks. Larry Fenaroli is in the hospital. Update: Larry has since been released.

Status Report on Catholic Churches of Central City (CCCC):

The CCCC meeting occurs on the 2nd Thursday of the month; therefore the Council which meets two days prior receives updates from the previous month. The CCCC has been working on joint RCIA and will implement it this year for three of the five CCCC parishes (Sts. Vincent, Ignatius, and Corpus Christi). St. Alphonsus does not have any catechumens; and the Basilica will continue to conduct a long-standing RCIA program for parishes too small to conduct their own; they typically have 12-18 people per year. Anne Maura English is our representative. The meetings will rotate with one-third occurring at each of the participating parishes in sequential fashion. We expect to have confirmation at this year's Vigil, but no baptism. The joint RCIA program will be evaluated after this year's implementation.

At this upcoming Thursday meeting, the CCCC will discuss revising their previous plan using the new evangelization as recommended by Bishop Madden.

Finance Report:

Maureen Fitzsimmons gave the budget report.

Old Business:

Finances Presentation to Parish

In August, the Council formed an Ad Hoc Group to formulate a plan for presenting the parish's financial status to the parishioners. This group submitted a report that recommended:

- financial information be communicated by the Parish Council
- communication occur through a letter to be distributed after Communion on October 6 and 13
- letter distribution be followed by Town Hall Meeting between Masses on October 20 with Q&A sessions after 7:15 and 11:45 Masses for those who cannot attend the Town Hall
- information be provided on how to implement online electronic giving

The Ad Hoc Group also submitted a draft letter to Council which was slightly amended at the meeting and approved. Although the letter has some finance data tables incorporated, it was decided to provide the full FY14 budget in the Gathering Space for those who might be interested at the time of the letter distribution and at the Town Meeting (although the Town Meeting will not become a forum for discussing the budget line items). The FY14 budget will also be printed in the next issue of *Together Sharing Christ* and posted on the website.

In addition, the Finance Committee's recommendation last year to establish an endowment to fund operations and maintenance has moved forward with an initial donation. As with all endowments, the corpus will be protected and the interest generated will be available to the parish for the maintenance of the aging properties. This is a separate endowment from the one established as part of the Historic Trust Fund which can only be used for capital improvements in excess of \$10, 000 and expected to last over 10 years. Our campus has many smaller repairs and maintenance needs that do not meet the HTF criteria and have gone unattended for lack of funds. It is hoped the endowment corpus can grow so we can begin to take care of the many projects identified by the Facilities Committee. Currently we can expect about \$400 annually. Endowments are not subject to Archdiocesan tax.

Report 2013-14 Strategic Planning:

The Planning Process is moving forward although the timeline has needed a few adjustments. Registry data are incomplete (see new business below). Most committee evaluations have been received. Financial and attendance data are being collected. A parishioner-based evaluation of the health and culture of the parish is being prepared using the SWOT model from business (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). This will be widely distributed. Audrey asked representatives to submit names. Originally scheduled for September distribution, this will now be distributed after the Town Meeting. A pew survey is also being developed to determine what is needed by parishioners on their spiritual journey.

The entire process has been communicated to parishioners in a number of ways: a frequently-asked questions document is posted on the web and has been distributed via email. Portions of it are also published weekly in the bulletin. The entire process will also be presented at the Town Meeting.

Report on Issues in the Park:

The rules for the church's park are being ignored and conditions in the park are slowly deteriorating to where they were when the city threatened legal action against us. Denise Hamilton noted that there are more violent individuals, drug use and alcoholic partying now in the park. This is confirmed by others.

Sara Kelley explained the need to reboot Park Working Group and proposed that its functions be divided into four areas: scheduling volunteers, interacting with donors, assessing the conditions in the park and enforcing rules, and coordinating with the Facilities Committee for necessary repairs. Sara will schedule volunteers; other functions need coordinators. Sara will advertise via bulletin, e-mail tree and website for these volunteer coordinators.

A major component of effective enforcement of park rules relied on the assistance of the Downtown Partnership of Baltimore. Initially this arrangement worked well and was to have been continued through funding by the neighborhood hotels. Fr. Lawrence has no information on whether this funding has ever been received by the DPOB. We have reports that DPOB do stop by the park but 'cleaning' is being done by some people staying in the park. The more important 'clearing' of accumulated belongings and donations is not occurring and tarps and tents are starting to appear.

Audrey asked Fr. Lawrence to call Kirby Fowler of the DPOB to determine what we can expect and what we cannot from them and she also asked Fr. Lawrence to address the parish about the purpose and need for volunteers in the park since so much time has elapsed since this was a crisis issue for us. Sara will need and deserves this level of support to re-launch all the efforts that are needed.

New Business:

Registry Data:

Lauren Miles Brunelli shared that last Fall's re-registration process was not comprehensive. Approximately 153 families filled it out but many more did not. As it exists, it will not be useful in the parish planning process. The old database is filled with many older entries that may not be active parishioners but who wish to remain on our mailing list, perhaps with the new designation as "Friends of St. Vincent". Ultimately we will have a merged database for general communication with a subset of active parishioners for planning purposes. This is a big process that requires careful attention to

the best software (appropriate, affordable, user-friendly) and should not be rushed. Yet we need data to inform the Strategic Planning.

Consequently, there will be a major push to register or re-register all currently active parishioners who are not in the new registry database. (Many long-time parishioners misunderstood the need to re-register last year and some new people have started to attend.) Chris McCullough will lead this effort at September masses.

World Youth Day Presentation:

Lauren Carpenter and Sara Kelley hope to do a presentation on their World Youth Day trip to Rio for the parish. Council members recommended setting up slides and interacting with parishioners during the Sunday morning after-Mass coffee in the undercroft. Sara will consider this and identify dates.

Committee Reports

Liturgy Committee (*John Helie, Chair*)

The Liturgy Committee held its annual retreat day on Saturday, August 24, 2013. We were pleased to introduce a new member to the committee, Matt Hill, who has been attending St. Vincent's for the past two years. He was deeply affected by the Liturgy celebrating Fr. Dick's 40th Anniversary and wanted to participate more fully in the development of Liturgy at St. Vincent's. The retreat began with a sharing of a personal experience of Liturgy remembered and cherished by each committee member. Through the telling of our stories, we were drawn to the genuine meaning that is rooted in "liturgical celebration". It was then time to "roll up our sleeves" and get to this year's agenda. Lively discussion ensued, especially regarding the reconstruction of the Lenten and Triduum services. By the end of the retreat, we had agreed to the following committee objectives for 2013-2014:

1. Complete the training of lectors and planners in the use of the ambo and microphone. This was a two-part training. The first part has been completed, but may need to be repeated for some people. The second part needs to be completed.
2. Act on the participation of the parishioners in the Lenten and Triduum Services by reconstructing those liturgies that were evaluated as the least meaningful (Good Friday, Stations, and the All Night Easter Vigil).
3. Recruit and mentor new liturgy planners.
4. Explore ways to reach out without intrusion to the other liturgies, regarding bread baking, liturgy planning and lay preaching.
5. Enhance the website and bulletin with more information about liturgies and

liturgical practices at St. Vincent's.

We will begin to engage in the work of these objectives at our next meeting in October.

Education and Enrichment Committee (*Peggy Shouse, Chair*)

There were 22 students participating in *Vacation Bible School*. So far, 23 have registered for the coming year of *Faith Fun & Fellowship*.

The Family Life Subcommittee has assigned responsibility for specific tasks to the following people.

Fred Jorgensen: Coordinate communication regarding events, programs, etc. through the web-page, email tree, and bulletin

Bethany Gregg: Coordinate and arrange social events

Chris McCollough: Coordinate education and enrichment programs for parents

Caroline Umana: Coordinate and plan service projects

Joe Hamilton: Coordinate the provision of materials on spiritual dimension of family life

Several potential leaders for the parish retreat have been contacted to determine their interest and availability. Sister Rosemary Dougherty has declined.

There was discussion regarding updating our currently static webpage.

The next meeting is October 5 in Cape May; followed by regular evening meetings of the committee.

Social Action Committee (*Peggy Meyer and Ray Heil, Co-Chairs*)

Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition: We invite you to join us Monday, September 16 from 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the Enoch Pratt Free Library to hear a discussion about the National Housing Trust Fund and if it could end homelessness. The keynote speaker is Congressman Elijah E. Cummings.

Celebrate Repeal of Maryland's Death Penalty: All are welcome Wednesday, September 25 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Camillus Catholic Church, 1600 St. Camillus Dr., Silver Spring, Md 20903 or Wednesday, October 16 at 7:00 p.m. at NAACP National Headquarters, 4805 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore, Md 21215, to celebrate with music, food and festivities. Both are free.

Green grants: We attended a press conference for BGE Green Grant recipients. St. Vincent's is to receive \$10,000 for solar panels.

Jonestown Planning Council: We had a large crowd this month and heard from the Hendler Building developers hoping to break ground next year. They discussed improving the park and putting a Ronald McDonald House on the

property. (**Note:** This is not our church park.) *Helping Up Mission* Director discussed plans for a building for women. The high tech center proposed for Central is on ice. Exeter Garden is built! Jonestown CityLab will begin projects using Johns Hopkins' students and neighborhood children to improve the neighborhood.

Our Daily Bread: We have been cleaning and chopping vegetables on Sundays from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. The Peace & Justice committee is going September 15 and the Social Action committee on October 13. Would Parish Council like to go as a group? **Note:** Sara has set up a Doodle account to plan a date.

The Resource Exchange: We supplied 5 individuals, whom Healthcare for the Homeless placed in apartments, with furniture and starter kits in August. We need small couches or love seats!

Friday Dinner: We continue to serve 150-250 guests each Friday evening.

Peace & Justice Committee: We did not meet since last Parish Council.

Emergency Services: The men's program took off August. The food program spent about \$1500 in August.

St. Vincent de Paul Feast Day: We began planning the liturgy for September 29.

Facilities Committee (*Dave Potts and Dan Rolandelli, Co-Chairs*)

The committee has not met since the last council meeting. The following are updates.

- 1.) Chris met with Sam Mirabile and his assessment of the structure under Fr. Chuck's tub was that the crack in the truss, was not dangerous ("it is not uncommon for old trusses to have cracks like that") and also not a cause of the sinking tub. He said the underlayment and the flooring was the problem. If that is the case, then we are in for a major savings there.
- 2.) Dan Rolandelli will be meeting with someone about a gutter guard for the south side church gutter on Monday 9/16/13.
- 3.) Chris met with representatives from Baltimore Trades Guild, Maryland Historic Trust and Baltimore Heritage Foundation to further the discussion and investigation on how to raise money for the preservation of the Church's exterior.
- 4.) Chris is still gathering information on security systems. He did get the information from Grace UMC, but thought the first place to start would be with the companies that we have doing our fire alarms. So he has scheduled meetings with each (there are different companies for church and rectory) to gather information.
- 5.) Committee members evaluated the park benches to see the repair needs.

- 6.) Sara Kelley is working on revamping the park working group and bringing new eyes and energy to that area and ministry.
- 7.) The committee needs to have decisions made on re-purposing the rectory rooms; then need to discuss a cleaning schedule with Fr. Dick for the possible re-purposing the front parlor for the nursery kids.
- 8.) The Rectory Dining Room was cleaned by volunteers and the carpet cleaned and re-laid.
- 9.) The next facility committee meeting is scheduled for September 18, at 7 P.M.

Communications and Outreach Committee (*Laureen Miles Brunelli, Chair*)

Directory

We received the directory proofs back from *LifeTouch* on 9/6. We are currently proofreading it. We expect we should have it available for distribution by the end of September or early October.

Registration

Staff is formatting the registration data collected last year in our re-registration drive for use in the Strategic Planning data collection phase. Since there are many active families that did not participate in the registration drive, more registration forms will be distributed at the Masses. Those will be added to the registrations collected that last fall to create a database for strategic planning purposes. At a later date, staff will design a new database that includes all our parishioners by folding together the newly collected information with our old database.

Meeting Evaluation and Closing Prayer at 9:15 pm.

Reminders: The Next Parish Council Meeting is October 8th at 7:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by
Rosie Graf, Secretary to the Council