

## St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church

### Parish Council Minutes

August 12, 2014

The meeting was brought to order at 7:45 by Audrey Rogers, Council President, with prayer.

**In attendance:** Fr. Richard Lawrence, *Pastor*; Audrey Rogers, *President, 9:30 Mass Rep*; Bethany Gregg, *Vice-President, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Joe Yingling, *9:30 Mass Rep*; John Kober, *7:15 Mass Rep*; Maureen Fitzsimmons, *Secretary, Finance Committee*; Laureen Brunelli, *Chair, Communications and Outreach Committee*; Matt Hill, *Vice-Chair, Liturgy Committee*; Peggy Shouse, *Chair, Education and Enrichment Committee*; Pat Ball, *Co-Chair, Facilities Committee*; Peggy Meyer, *Co-Chair, Social Action Committee*;

**Absent:** Chris McCullough, *Pastoral Associate*; Peter La Count, *Secretary, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Denise Hamilton, *11:45 Mass Rep*; Anne Freeburger, *Corporator*; Graham Yearley, *Corporator*.

The meeting was opened with a prayer. Audrey Rogers announced the appointment of Pat Ball as Acting Co-Chair of Facilities Committee until a new Co-Chair can be named to replace David Potts, the previous Co-Chair. The Council expressed gratitude to David for his excellent management of the committee's work.

#### Old Business

##### Status of Archdiocesan Audit

Father Lawrence states that St. Vincent's has sent a letter to the Archdiocese with the changes that we have made and has asked for a closure letter. No letter of response has been received at this time from the Archdiocese. Chris McCullough is recruiting "counters" (volunteers who will count the Sunday collection using a new method stipulated by the Archdiocese) who will be trained by Laureen Brunelli and begin the new procedures in September.

##### Proposed Policy on Parish Administration

This draft policy was presented at the July meeting for discussion and a month's discernment. Its purpose is to translate into established policy the recommendations of the 2010 Ad Hoc Committee on Organization and Growth to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the major structural parish constituencies. The Council agreed to approve the policy. It will be posted on the Parish Council webpage.

##### Strategic Planning Report

Audrey Rogers submitted a timeline for the plan's implementation that delineates activities for the first and second quarters of this fiscal year. She explained that the focus for these two quarters is an internal one: establishing and tightening our organizational procedures (budget and personnel), evaluating our children's program, self-examining our welcoming and engagement practices, reinvigorating our committees, and encouraging a parish-wide rejuvenation. As this

unfolds, specific strategies for outreach and evangelization in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters should develop. Activities include:

- This Sunday after the 9:30 am mass there will be a focus group regarding improving welcoming at St. Vincent's. Only one person has confirmed that they will be able to attend. Brenda Smith and Lee Krempel, two relatively new members of our parish, have recruited members for this focus group. They have both also joined the Communications and Outreach Committee.
- Next, Audrey noted that we are creating a memo for the committees asking them to be open to change and new ideas. This is intended to alert committees to be more open to changes before the Fall Stewardship Campaign. Then, we will be working on creating geographic clusters with the help of Rita McMullin and Jack Schmidt. 165 households are currently registered. The idea was presented to place a bulletin insert which states the group of people who live in a particular zip code and therefore those who are in that zip code but not registered will see that they are not included in that bulletin insert and hopefully then register at St. Vincent's.
- Pam Sanders is evaluating the Children's Program. She will interact with some families and observe some classrooms in the Fall. Ms. Sanders has not yet received all the information that she requested.
- The Family Life Subcommittee has continued to meet regularly. Two new members attended this past Sunday's meeting.
- In the Spring the Strategic Plan hopes to use new media for evangelization and programs. Vanessa Johnson is looking at online programs and how some evangelical churches are using their websites and technology to reach parishioners. Lauren expressed concern with St. Vincent's current wireless connection and the need for upgrades to the current computer system at St. Vincent's before being able to move forward with this aspect of the Strategic Plan. Audrey encouraged Lauren to contact Vanessa.

Audrey noted that the Strategic Planning Committee referred the status of our church park back to the Parish Council, recommending that an Ad Hoc Committee be established to identify and evaluate options for its management that are consistent with our mission. The plan has been to name this committee in the Fall. Audrey asked the Council to offer the names of parishioners who might be considered to serve on this committee. Fr. Lawrence noted that Catholic News Service was here to do filming regarding our various service projects with the homeless, including the park. Peggy Meyer brought to our attention that a sculpture of a homeless Jesus was created. Several churches did not want it, but the Pope loved the sculpture. It was suggested to have a similar sculpture placed at our park (by soliciting private donations of \$35,000 plus \$2,000 shipping) to call people's attention to the needs and dignity of the homeless. The proposed location of sculpture would be outside the fence of the park. A previous proposal had been to put it at the Basilica, but that seemed unlikely to occur. Father Lawrence suggested instead commissioning a local artist to create an original sculpture instead of purchasing a copy. Lauren suggested that the value of using that particular sculpture was that already has some "buzz" around it. John Kober expressed some concern that perhaps that money could be used in the park to help the people instead of for a sculpture. Peggy countered with although the money could be used in the park for the people there, that money would then quickly be gone, while a sculpture would be there for years. Audrey suggested that the issue could be referred to the Park Ad Hoc Committee to explore.

## **New Business**

### FY15 Budget

Father Lawrence guided the Council in a detailed look at the FY 15 proposed budget and projected income. He presented the annual budget by reviewing the new formatting and then discussing the allocation of funds in each line item. There has been considerable work on the part of staff to change the reporting format in order to present a more transparent picture of our financial status to the Council and the parish. In FY 14, the increased and sustained level of offertory donations following the October Town Meeting produced an end-of-year surplus. With the expectation that the observed level of giving will be continued into FY 15, much effort was expended to align the budget with the provisions of the Strategic Plan. Specifics include increasing the position of superintendent from part-time to a fulltime, increased funding to address a number of long-deferred maintenance projects, increased funding for staff development, new funding for the *Godly Play* Children's program, evangelization efforts, the support of the JVC volunteer, and the upgrading of computer technology. In addition, there is a strategic reserve to support the strategies for program, outreach and evangelization initiatives expected to grow out of the Strategic Plan. Finally, the *Endowment for Operations* is now fully established. This endowment is earmarked for maintenance projects that do not meet the Historic Trust Fund support criteria (viz. costing \$10,000 or more and expected to last 10 years or more). The Archdiocese has encouraged endowments like this to manage local church maintenance needs by exempting them from the Archdiocesan tax.

After Father Lawrence presentation, some questions/concerns by Council were presented and discussed: It was noted that the "Religious Ed Fee" income and the "Family Ministry Inc" income need to be checked again for duplication. Peggy Meyer expressed concern that St. Vincent's donation to Habitat for Humanity and BRIDGE may not be included in the FY 14 actual expenses, leading to a decrease in the FY 15 Peace & Justice budget. Audrey indicated that the budget is simply an estimate and that the money could likely be made available for both Habitat for Humanity and BRIDGE if the requests for those donations are presented. Peggy will look into the donations to those two organizations at this point and bring it to Council next month.

Consensus (with some reservations regarding the decrease in the Peace and Justice Committee's FY15 budgeted amount) was achieved by the Council and the budget was approved. Fr. Lawrence will provide a summary version of the annual budget for posting on the Council webpage.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Social Action Committee Report submitted by Peggy Meyer**

**The Resource Exchange:** We supplied 8 individuals, whom Healthcare for the Homeless placed in apartments, with furniture and starter kits in July. We received the \$7800 grant from Johns Hopkins. Costs for our storage units continue to go up. It costs us \$324 per month so if anyone has a warehouse handy, please let us know!

**Jonestown Planning Council:** The JPC met at the Jewish synagogue to hear feedback from a consultant giving us a bid on reinvigorating Jonestown.

**Peace & Justice Committee:** We joined other faith communities and walked through the city streets for the PRIDE parade. We participated at the Beyond the Boundaries meeting at the Catholic Center to continue to work for affordable housing. Habitat for Humanity of the Chesapeake and Sandtown Habitat for Humanity merged into the former. We will advise the Council on procedures for our United Churches' builds when they reply to our requests. Maureen Daly was named treasurer of BRIDGE. A \$30,000 grant was received for BRIDGE from the National Office for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

**Emergency Services:** The food program gave groceries to families in July and didn't spend anything. We paid Maryland Food Bank over \$1000 in June for food for the Christmas meal. The men's program doesn't give clothing in July and August.

**Friday Dinner:** We had 316 guests on the last Friday of July and continue to range between 150 - 320 each week. We also distributed clothing and luggage.

**Helping Up Mission:** HUM are cleaning the park the first and third Saturdays of each Peggy also noted that Our Daily Bread has not received the amount of vegetables as previous years so there is less of a need for volunteers to chop veggies.

### **Facilities Committee Report submitted by Pat Ball**

The committee last met on July 14, 2014. The following issues were raised in the recap of church area responsibilities:

- water coming in under doors to undercroft on the park side
- need for better security on doors to undercroft on rectory side
- need for repair on book holders in pews in church
- need for recovering of kneelers in church
- need for plan for securing rectory, while allowing parishioner access during 9:30 Mass
- need for permanent fix of locks on storage shed
- Jerome reported that he had made contact with someone regarding the refinishing of the church floor between the maintenance closet and the bathroom. This area has deteriorated as a result of the leaks that have occurred over the past several years.

The following issues were discussed as part of old business:

- Chris reported that a contract had been signed with Gutter Helmet and a deposit of \$800 paid. However, they had not shown up to do the work when scheduled. When they did show up, they reported that they could not do the work as planned because of the height and the fact that we would have to remove the old gutters. Chris will pursue a refund of our deposit. We decided to pursue other proposals from roofing companies that we may find through Angie's List.
- With Larry's passing, we have not gotten estimates on the tree trimming from his contacts. Chris will contact his sister, Rita, to see if he can get the name of the contact person. In the meantime, Denny and Rita also agreed to provide some possible contacts, making sure they are bonded and insured
- Bob Betta submitted a diagram of the possible reconfiguration of the parking spaces, which he developed with Bob Reuter. The committee had some suggestions for moving the handicapped spaces to the rectory side of the parking lot and investigating whether we could gain some space by making the spaces next to the handicapped spaces smaller.

- It was decided that the issues of weather stripping and replacement of the door stop holders for the front doors of the church would be tabled until the hiring of a new superintendent
- Chris reported that we have recovered all of Larry's keys except the master key and there have been some occasions when the door to the food pantry have been found to be open in recent weeks. It was recommended that we have Roberts' Lock Service re-key all the locks.

The following issues were discussed as part of new business:

- Chris submitted the proposed FY15 budget analysis and there were several changes suggested and questions raised. It was reported that service contracts and security represent recurring fixed costs totaling \$9300 and would be charged to their own category and will not impact the maintenance budget.
- In terms of capital projects, the accessibility project in the rectory is scheduled to start in August and will cost \$40,000
- The West Church façade restoration, funded through the Historic Trust and increased offertory collection, should cost \$50,000
- The other capital project, the repair of the structural beam in the uppercroft should cost \$20,000
- The primary discussion as part of new business was a review of the proposed job description for the new building superintendent. Below is a summary of the discussion:

In general we agreed with the scope of duties although we thought that it was not reasonable to expect anyone to be here until 9pm to close up after meetings, especially if their job is primarily during daylight. The big problem was the proposal that this superintendent position be a 20 hour-per-week job at \$15.00 per hour. We strongly disagreed with this proposal. The proposed hourly rate would not allow the recruitment of someone with the necessary skills to accomplish many of the responsibilities that are in the job description. This would mean continuing to bring in multiple small contractors that would have to be overseen by Chris (who in our opinion is spending too much of his time on the facility). This will not allow him to spend the necessary time on more pastoral duties, including the growing of the parish. We recommend an hourly rate between \$22-24 per hour. Further, we felt that this is a full-time position. Some of the other suggestions to be considered in revising the job description were:

\*Not necessary to have the super attend or close up after the Friday night dinners. That program is very well organized and runs very smoothly.

\* The park clean up people on Saturdays and Sundays could also clean up the church steps.

\* Keeping a file of all contracts, etc. should be done by office personnel, not maintenance, but the maintenance person will provide and track those documents.

\* There should be NO days that an employee is required to come in for only 1.5 hours. This was convenient for Larry, as he lived so close, but is unlikely to be convenient or desirable for anyone else.

\* The new volunteer gardeners could also trim the hedges and cut the little grass we have.

\* Health insurance should definitely be included and is probably mandatory if working more than 20 hours per week.

The committee members agreed to advocate for these revisions in the job description with the Finance Committee, Parish Council, and Father Lawrence.

### **Liturgy Committee Report submitted by Matt Hill**

The Liturgy Committee met last on August 9, 2014 for its annual retreat.

At the retreat the Committee focused on the Easter Vigil. The committee reviewed significant, diverse comments from parishioners, clergy, vigil participants, vigil planners, and Committee members. The Committee explored various alternatives to the current Saturday, all-night model both in terms of liturgical meaning and increasing meaningful participation in the vigil. The Committee also explored various means of revamping the current all-night practice in order to increase meaningful participation. The Committee is asking for further input from the Family Life Subcommittee and will issue a report for Council's review at the September or October Council meeting.

The next committee meeting is tentatively set for September 27 from 10 am to 12pm. The meeting will focus on planning for All Souls/Saints and Advent, with some initial planning for Lent, Easter, and the Summer Series.

### **Education and Enrichment Report submitted by Peggy Shouse**

The Education & Enrichment Committee has not met since the last Parish Council. The only new item to report is that there are currently 13 adults booked for the weekend at Cape May.

### **Communications and Outreach Report submitted by Laureen Brunelli**

The C&O Committee has not met since the last Parish Council meeting. We plan to meet in early September.

#### *Letters to Parents of Potential Faith Fun Fellowship Enrollees*

This initiative, proposed by the C&O Committee, has been completed by staff. Two different letters were sent to the parents of children, either baptized in or registered in the parish. One was aimed at those eligible to enroll in FFF for Pre-K-1<sup>st</sup> grade, which will feature the Montessori-base curriculum Godly Play, and one to potential First Communicants.

Also an ad for our *Godly Play* program ran in Baltimore child magazine in August.

**Finance Committee** has announced that Mark Palmer is the new chair. Maureen Fitzsimmons will continue as part of the committee as the secretary. The Council thanked Maureen for her long years of service on the Finance Committee.

The meeting adjourned at 9:28 with a prayer.

**Submitted by Bethany Gregg, Vice President  
for Peter La Count, Secretary**