

St. Vincent de Paul Parish Council Meeting Minutes

November 11, 2014

In attendance. Fr. Richard Lawrence, *Pastor*; Chris McCullough, *Pastoral Associate*, Audrey Rogers, *President, 9:30 Mass Rep*; Bethany Gregg, *Vice President 9:30 Mass Rep*, Peter La Count, *Secretary, 9:30 Mass Rep*; Joe Yingling, *9:30 Mass Rep*; Denise Hamilton, *11:45 Mass Rep*; John Kober, *7:15 Mass Rep*; Peggy Meyer, *Co-Chair, Social Action Committee*, Laureen Brunelli, *Chair, Communications and Outreach Committee*; Mark Palmer, *Chair, Finance Committee*, Peggy Shouse, *Chair, Education and Enrichment Committee*; Bob Betta, *Co-chair, Facilities Committee*, Matt Hill, *Vice-Chair Liturgy Committee*, Graham Yearly *Corporator* Anne Freeburger, *Corporator*; Kieran Ruppert, *Jesuit Volunteer Corps; Parishioners.* Stephen McDaniel; Pam Sanders.

The meeting began in prayer at 7:30 pm

Pastor's Report

Fr. Dick referenced an e mail from the chancellor regarding a restart of the Archdiocesan parish planning process to reexamine the parish cluster organization in light of evangelization efforts. Fr. Dick recommended either posting the letter on the St. V web site or as a letter to all parishioners.

Pastoral Associates Report

A new church property superintendent has been hired. James Dimmer will begin on November 24th. Mr. Dimmer has over 20 yrs. experience working in parishes. We all look forward to working with him and getting to know him. This is a 40 hr/wk position. He will soon be developing a maintenance schedule.

Chris also mentioned that the restoration of the west-side facade of the church should be finished sometime in December. He noted the need for these repairs in both pictures and descriptions of the repair process.

Financial Report

Finance Committee met on October 23. Reviewed the financial statements as of September 30, 2014. YTD offertory below budget due to budget spread. Operating expenses below budget and net operating position is better than budget for first 3 months. Noted that major maintenance expenses will be starting in October - tree trimming and West façade repair.

Offertory and attendance statistics discussed. Average attendance is down 11% compared to prior year, while average offertory is up by 12%. Attendance drop is sharpest in two smaller masses, which are now averaging about 20 attendees each. It was suggested that the downtown hotel information be updated and that the new downtown hotel that is opening be also sent information on mass times when it is opened. Committee discussed plans for exterior renovations. Also discussed providing information to parish on the opportunity and benefit in charitable donation of securities. This should be done in advance of the December 31 deadline for the 2014 tax year. Next Committee meeting planned for Thursday, January 15.

Old Business

Strategic Plan

The focus this month was on the evaluation of the Children's Education Program which has been conducted over the past five months by Pam Sanders who is a former principal of St. Ambrose School. Pam noted the commitment and passion of the parishioners who teach in our programs and she offered specific recommendations in these key areas: need mission clarity and specific program goals, need formal evaluation of program effectiveness, need certification of teachers, need a distinct and coordinated middle school program, and need a dedicated youth leader. Council members discussed these recommendations at length with Pam. Audrey noted that the Council has no role in design or management of the education programs for children which are the sole responsibility of the minister of religious education for children supervised by the pastor and pastoral associate. Fr. Dick concurred but noted that the Council could offer recommendations. Audrey noted that this will be on the December agenda. After the meeting, she circulated a table to assess the degree of support for each of Pam's recommendations and solicit other ideas in preparation for this discussion.

Town Meeting

Cluster groups are convening; however, the feedback Audrey is getting is that many parishioners are unaware of the cluster group process. For the November 23 Town Hall meeting, Audrey will report on the status of the Strategic Plan implementation and Fr. Dick and will address our strengths and needs.

St. Vincent Park Status Discussion

Steve McDaniel wrote a letter to Council about the state of the park on Sunday mornings and the Council chose to address it. As background, Sara Kelley submitted an update on the park:

-It has been approximately 1 year and 2 months since I have taken over the responsibility of managing volunteers for the weekend clean-up of the park. In that time only a handful of parishioners have signed up to assist with the clean-up (approximately

8-10 volunteers). We are lucky to have several organizations that work with us to clean the park 3 Saturdays of the month (Helping Up Mission, and Christopher's Place).

Unfortunately, Christopher's Place has fallen off of the rotation in the past few months.

-There are 3 volunteers who clean regularly in the park, and 1 who takes as many Sundays as he can.

-This was after a campaign last year to get people's interest up again. The announcement ran in the bulletin for months, went on the email listserv, and announcements were made.

-In my opinion, the volunteer support that is needed to keep the park clean on weekends is not there. I think this is a mixture of the timing (very early on a weekend morning) and the nature of the work.

-There were several lists submitted to the facilities committee in the past year, regarding repairs/improvements that are needed in the park. Only a few have been addressed, I believe because of the overwhelmingly long list that the facilities committee is expected to complete throughout the whole church.

-There was an effort to reach out to those who come to hand out food and other items in the park, to set some ground rules and get a better handle on who is there each week. Michael Kelly has been my partner in this effort, but the amount of people traveling to our park on a weekly basis is vast, and one would need to be there somewhat full-time to get a real idea of who is traveling down to the park. An effort neither Michael nor myself are able to commit to.

Laureen Brunelli brought a proposal that had been vetted in the staff meeting to stop donations on Sunday mornings before 1:00 pm. Donations on Sunday morning attract very large crowds and this situation has impacted our ability to conduct services in a reasonable fashion by impeding access on Front Street. Fr. Dick will author a letter asking the donors (many of whom are from churches themselves) to honor our worship experience and refrain from donating food or clothing during the services' time. Laureen said she would recruit parishioners, including Council members, to distribute the letters personally on subsequent Sundays leading up to the date the ban starts. The ban date will be posted in the park as well to deter the crowds who gather for the handouts. It is hoped that donors will comply in good faith; but it seemed to be the sense of the Council that this restriction is important enough to take further action if the ban is not honored.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the status of the park continues to meet.

New Business

No New Business was reported.

Committee Reports

Education and Enrichment Committee (Peggy Shouse)

The Education & Enrichment committee has nothing to report at this time. Our next meeting is Thursday, November 13, at 7 pm.

Liturgy Committee (Valerie Rolandelli)

The next meeting is Saturday, November 15, 2014, from 10 am to noon to finalize Advent and Christmas planning as well as finalize a theme for Lent.

Social Action Committee (Peggy Meyer and Ray Heil)

The Resource Exchange: We supplied 7 Healthcare for the Homeless clients with furniture and starter kits in October and delivered beds to 2 additional clients. After advertising, our furniture donations increased and we are now renting a third storage unit. If anyone has storage space available for us, please let me know.

Peace & Justice Committee: We worked with Pax Christi MD to host a dinner here tonight for

Bishops from numerous diocese followed by a discussion on "From Just War to Just Peace" framed by Eli McCarthy. We attended the International Pax Christi meeting with the Director from El Salvador and Chairman of the Board, a Catholic priest. Remember to mark your calendar for our gleaning day with Gather Baltimore on November 22, 9 a.m. - noon. We invited the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to join us on the gleaning day. We accepted a \$30,000 check for BRIDGE from the National Office of Catholic Campaign for Human Development. We marched in New York as part of the Climate Change demonstration and attended Call to Action.

A delegation from Limay will be here next week.

Friday Dinner: The last two weeks in October we had 354 and 356 guests respectively, for Friday's dinner. We have had students with their parents from Our Lady of Perpetual Help and Ave Maria volunteer, in addition to our "regulars".

Emergency Services: The food program gave groceries to families in October and spent \$100.

The men's program gave clothing in October to 56 men and spent \$1050. We are collecting men's socks, underwear, hats and gloves for Thanksgiving.

Jonestown Planning Council: We have a meeting tomorrow and will discuss problems in Jonestown. City Council President Jack Young and other elected representatives in addition to members from the Police Department will join us in finding positive solutions. We will meet in the undercroft instead of the classroom.

Helping Up Mission: HUM men are cleaning the park the first and third Saturdays of each month.

Facilities Committee (Bob Betta and Dan Rolandelli)

The following issues were discussed as part of old business:

- Prior to the beginning of the meeting four candidates for the position of building superintendent were interviewed. Discussion of the qualifications of these candidates was the first item on the agenda of the meeting. Two candidates were eliminated from consideration. There was one clear favorite for the position, a candidate who has had twenty years' experience working for several Catholic parishes as building superintendent. The only question was whether the salary would be acceptable to him. It was decided that, assuming his references were okay, the position would be offered to him and we would attempt to meet his salary requirements, if our original offer was unsatisfactory to him. We felt his personal style and extensive experience would make him the perfect fit for the position. If we were unable to agree on compensation that was acceptable to him, we would consider offering the position to the other candidate. While he has much less direct experience, he does meet the minimum qualifications and we felt he would work hard to fulfill our expectations.
- Chris reported that Stansbury did the trimming of the trees satisfactorily for only \$6000. That job is now complete. There was discussion regarding the trimming of the ivy and it was decided that we would investigate renting a bucket vehicle and trimming the critical areas where the ivy is compromising the integrity of the roof, which will likely lead to leaks and other deterioration.
- After brief discussion, it was decided that we would contact some roofing companies to get estimates on cleaning/replacing/guarding our gutters as the company originally contracted to do the job was unable to complete it.
- Chris reported that the scaffolding was going up for the west side refurbishment, but BTG was awaiting permits and approval from MHT before commencing the work. The work will likely begin on Wednesday, November 5. They will also repair/replace the beam in the uppercroft during this project at a cost of \$5000, as opposed to a previous estimate we had gotten for \$20,000. The total cost for this project will be \$56,000 and take about 4 weeks to complete.
- Bob Ball and Danny Rolandelli have been providing the security at the entrance to the rectory from the church during 9:30 Mass and felt that was working satisfactorily. We will pursue the installation of security cameras once the new superintendent is hired. However, this will not eliminate the need for someone to actually monitor these entrances during Mass.
- We were reminded that the relining of the parking lot has been tabled until the next fiscal year.
- Refinishing of the floor between the bathroom and maintenance closet in the church will be tabled until the new superintendent starts.
- Chris reported that the accessibility project in the rectory will likely begin in early November. The repair of Father Chuck's bathroom will be scheduled to coincide with the beginning of this project.

- Chris gave an update on the status of the kitchen project and Mary Laukatis has since provided a detailed report, which is attached to these minutes.
- Regarding the noise suppression project in the undercroft, we will likely install ceiling tiles, but an assessment of cost needs to be done and then get put in the budget for next year.
- Chris reported that there is a parishioner who has seen the effective use of signage in a church gathering space in another church and that parishioner has agreed to investigate it and report back to us.

The following items were discussed as part of new business:

- Bob Betta distributed information on the new archdiocesan STAND requirements, with which we are all required to comply.
- There was further discussion regarding the feasibility of expediting the restoration of the church exterior. This is still being investigated and evaluated by the finance committee. Since we are approaching winter, nothing but the west side (already underway) will be able to be completed at this time. It will be spring before we can proceed with any other restoration, should we decide to proceed.
- There was discussion about the report from Steve McDaniel and other concerned about the activities in and around the park on Sunday mornings. There will need to be more discussion regarding ways to deal with this as the activities have recently been limiting access to the street and entrance to the church. There are also more people actually making encampments in the park and efforts to keep the park neat and clean have lately been less than satisfactory.

Communications and Outreach (Laureen Brunelli)

There is no report. Next meeting is Thursday, December 4 at 7:00 pm.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Peter La Count