

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church Parish Council Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2015

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; Denise Hamilton, 11:45 Mass Rep; Joe Yingling, 9:30 Mass Rep; John Kober, 7:15 Mass Rep; Peggy Meyer, *Co-Chair, Social Action Committee*; Mark Palmer, *Chair, Finance Committee*, Peggy Shouse, *Chair, Education and Enrichment Committee*, Graham Yearley, *Corporator*; Kieran Ruppert,; Bob Betta, *Chair, Facilities Committee*, Anne Freeburger, *Corporator*; Kieran Ruppert, *Jesuit Volunteer Corps*; Joe Cronyn, *Chair, Ad Hoc Park Committee*; Dan McCarthy *Ad Hoc Park Committee*; Mary Ann O'Donnell *Ad Hoc Park Committee*

Absent. Matt Hill, *Vice-Chair Liturgy Committee*, Dan Rolandelli, *Co-chair, Facilities Committee*.

The meeting began with a prayer at 7:30 pm.

Pastor Report

Fr. Dick reported nothing major to report other than the information later in the meeting agenda.

Pastor Associate's Report

Chris reported that the façade restoration has been completed and that we can thank the Historical Preservation for funding this work.

Chris also noted that Hirsch Electric has donated pro bono work to the church and this has been used to upgrade the electrical at an estimated value of \$75,000. This upgrade was not part of the church renovation in 1997 (when the uppercroft was upgraded) because we lacked the funds. There will be periodic shut downs of electricity to do the work. Hirsch Electric staff noted that to be within code, all electrical must be able to be shut down from one central location inside of the church/rectory campus one physical plant in case of fire.

Chris met with Fr. Dick to explore ideas for improving the middle school religious education at St. V. We have budgetary concerns so we need to be creative in our thinking. Chris has explored communications with other churches to decide feasibility of sharing one person to help coordinate and build a middle school program at both churches. Chris will continue to follow up on this idea.

Financial Report

Copies of financial reports were distributed to the meeting members.

Financial statement summary:

Offertory and attendance report – there has been a shortfall in average attendance (down by 8%) during the first 6 months of this fiscal year. It was noted that this shortfall has been mostly due to reduced attendance at Masses other than the 9:30 Mass. The offertory is, however, above last year's budget by 2% with a 10% increase per capita.

There were no further questions for the Finance chair. He stated we were in reasonably good financial shape. However, it was noted that we are entering into the heavier utilities use season wherein further expenditures will be seen.

Report of Ad Hoc Committee on park

The following Ad Hoc Committee members presented the proposal: Joe Cronyn, Dan McCarthy, Episcopal Director of Housing, Mary Anne O'Donnell, VP Catholic Charities, and Fr. Dick. Matt Hill (ill), Mike Kelly (ill), and Sara Kelley could not attend.

The Ad Hoc Committee's charge was to complete their report by January of 2015, which was accomplished.

The purpose of their presentation was not to have the Parish Council make any decision; however, only to gain a full understanding of both the majority and dissenting opinions. The next step will be to present both opinions to an open Town Meeting that will be held at 11:00 am on February 8, 2015 (after the 9:30 Mass).

There was agreement in that the Ad Hoc Committee wanted to both serve the homeless and to serve the St. Vincent parish. The process involved many consultants who presented information to the committee. There were five (5) formal meetings of the Ad Hoc Committee with numerous conference calls.

Consensus of the committee was:

1. What do we have to do with the park in order to pull it together and be less chaotic?
2. Concurrently, while the committee wanted to improve the park for the homeless – it was noted that it is one of the relatively safe places for the

homeless to stay overnight due to the proximity of the police station and the openness of the corner.

The majority recommended feasibility study of creating housing on the park site – Fayette street frontage – and serve homeless by delivering housing. This permanent supportive housing for the homeless would both keep a sanctuary available in the park so people can still stay overnight. The majority would like a feasibility study of a private developer to lease the land from St. Vincent's to build a facility while a non-profit group specializing in homeless services would administer the facility once built. The recommendation also was that there be public bathrooms available for the homeless as few exist in the City. They also recommended an education component that would point out how volunteers can offer the most help. The majority pointed out that there is precedent for such a model. This facility would cater to the most fragile homeless and make them first priority for housing. They need the most help and have the greatest cost to society while on the street. Housing First has a similar model with a 20-30 efficiency model with a private bathroom and community spaces on the first floor. The committee also noted there are 3,000-4,000 homeless in Baltimore City at any given time with 60% of these with mental health problems. Ten (10) to 20% of these people are considered temporarily homeless.

The dissenting opinion was presented by Fr. Dick as Michael Kelly was too ill to attend the meeting. Fr. Dick stated that he disagreed with constructing housing on the church site. The dissenting opinion stated that there are other organizations that do this on both a large and small scale. The park is a unique resource because it is visible and its proximity to the police station makes it a relatively safe 'sanctuary.' If housing is placed on the church property, 50% of the church park will be taken up and that does not count space for parking, trash, etc. The dissenting opinion stated that this would leave no room for those who wish to use the park to stay overnight.

Fr. Dick still intends to hand deliver a letter to those giving out food and asking that they come after 1:00 pm on Sundays.

Audrey asked if there were any further questions. There were none and the committee was thanked for its tremendous work and efforts on this matter.

The full recommendations, both majority and dissenting, can be viewed on the St. web site. All interested parties are encouraged to attend the February 8, 2015 Town Meeting at 11:00 am.

Update on Strategic Planning

Personnel and Management

Chris also hopes to finish job evaluation this month.

Chris stated that there are still ideas going on out there on how to get the Middle school program a more solid program. He is exploring researching the cost of what it would be to bring someone on full or part time to take this on; however, this is just in the rumination stage at this point. A suggestion was made that this be started by a 'college age' person who could commit a few hours a week to start to get things rolling. Bethany will look into this possibility. However, the budgetary implication of this need to be explored.

Marketing Plan

Audrey reinforced the St. Vincent marketing plan. Outreach and Engagement Committee (the old Communications and Outreach; see below) will act as the Evangelizing Team. Some highlights of this plan are:

- communicate our existence to the cosmopolitan area
- take advantage of a location banner stating: Be Open and Surprised by God
- In time the banner would have a graphic attached and be changed regularly to reflect characteristics of our community
- Publicize service programs
- Collaborate with other groups

Church Restoration Plan

Fr, Dick stated it would be possible to repair South side and East side of church beginning when weather breaks. He recommended staying within the limits of the trust fund. He also recommended that the trust fund rebalance investments to have more income. They can get two sides done this year. The North side has not been looked at.

No questions were posed by the parish council. Fr. Dick asked the council for approval for the funding measure. Approval was given.

Amended Charter and Renaming of the Communications and Outreach Committee

After three years' experience with the scope of the Communications and Outreach Committee, those on the committee have concluded that all the communication functions previously assumed by this committee are not only more appropriately central functions that need to be vetted and performed by parish staff, but that functionally that is precisely what is happening. Having this responsibility as a parish staff duty ensures that our face to the public (website, bulletin, Facebook) is vetted in light of our mission and in compliance with parish and Archdiocesan privacy provisions. Therefore the committee members are proposing a new charter (outlining its scope and mission) and a new name: Outreach and Engagement. This new O&E Committee will serve as our 'evangelizing team' to coordinate our outreach efforts in addition to improving the engagement of visitors, newcomers,

and parishioners fully into parish life. The committee will now be responsible for establishing a strategic marketing plan and recruiting groups and parishioners to collaborate and plan outreach programs, in effect becoming the parish's Evangelizing Team. Parishioners with media experience are welcome to come forward with ideas. The Parish Council accepted the proposals.

Facilities Committee addendum

The bell tower is completely finished and the three automated bells are playing at regular times. Both wedding and funeral chimes are available. There are fourteen bells in the tower and now with the expense of installing the automation capacity completed, additional bells may be automated at lesser expense.

This automation was implemented with funds privately donated in honor of Larry Fenaroli. After the plaque noting this is installed, this dedication will be announced at the 9:30 Mass on February 22.

There was no new business to report.

Committee Reports

Report to Parish Council Education & Enrichment Committee January 13, 2015

The E & E committee last met on January 8, 2015.

1. Day of Reflection: An opportunity for spiritual reflection near the beginning of Lent. St. Vincent's parish will offer a morning of reflection (9 am to 1 pm) at the St. Anthony Shrine in Ellicott City, with Dr. Robert Wicks as speaker, on the theme of managing secondary stress and promoting spiritual growth. Dr. Wicks most recent book, *Riding the Dragon*, will be given to each participant. The fee for the session is \$25. Register as soon as possible. If there are spaces unclaimed by St. V's parishioners, they will be made available to cluster parishes.
2. Dinner for 8 is resuming. Registration is currently underway.
3. *Reading Mark for the First Time* has been purchased for the LOW leaders, with some additional copies for other interested parishioners. One discussion group which has been meeting together for several years will be using the book.
4. After considering a number of options, the committee chose *Life on Mission*, by Tim Harlow, as a book on evangelization for our discussions during Lent. Although we will disagree with some of the theology of the author, he offers

- many useful stories and examples of faith sharing. The other titles examined were either handbooks for parish administrators and/or scholarly histories that did not lend themselves to group discussions.
5. There was brief discussion of the report from the Cluster meetings.
 6. Everyone was reminded to log in to Shield the Vulnerable if they have not already done so.
 7. We chose some tentative dates for the Cape May weekend sponsored by the E & E committee. It is a weekend of enrichment—not a retreat, not an official E & E meeting. E & E members will have priority, FLS next, then available to any parishioner.
 8. Our next meeting will be March 19 at 7 pm.

Social Action Committee Report

The Resource Exchange: We supplied 9 Health Care for the Homeless clients with furniture and starter kits in December and after increasing the number of clients per move day, our waiting list has shortened. We continue to pay for a third storage unit. We received a check for about \$4000 from HCH who had agreed to pay for the 15 beds and accessories for our bed days.

Emergency Services: The food program gave groceries to families in December and spent \$390. The men's program gave clothing in December to 58 men and spent \$680.

Peace & Justice Committee: We have not met since last Parish Council meeting
Friday Dinner: We had another special meal the day after Christmas and served the guests instead of having them stand in line for a buffet. We also decorated the tables. One Friday we also offered flu shots though not many guests took advantage of them. We continue to serve between 150 and 360 each week. Helping Up Mission continues to give us back packs and suitcases that they collect and we distribute on Friday nights. We frequently get requests for blankets and also received some from HUM to help fill that need. Our Lady of the Fields also brings clothing that we give out.

Jonestown Planning Council: We have not met since last Parish Council meeting. For Christmas we adopted a couple of Jonestown families so that single Mothers could get coats and clothing for their children.

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

Mitten Tree: We collected many hats, scarves and mittens and gave them to St.

James & John School for the children right before Christmas. We received additional items that we will give them next week.

Liturgy Committee

The Liturgy Committee has no significant report for the Council. Our last meeting was November 15, 2014. Notes from that meeting were forwarded to the Council in December. Our next meeting is 10am to 12pm on January 24, 2015, at which time the Committee will discuss, among other things, feedback from Advent/Christmas liturgies, planning for Lent/Easter, and planning for the Summer Series.

Facilities Committee

We have not had a meeting since our last Parish Council meeting so there is not much to report. Hirsch Electric is proceeding with the electrical system upgrade that they have offered to complete at no cost to the church. Also, the bell automation project to honor Larry's memory was completed last week. Next meeting: January 27.

Outreach and Engagement

I. BENEFITS OF PARISH-WIDE EVANGELIZATION

DeSiano and Boyack note that viewing growth as the exclusive metric is short-sighted. They point out that parishes that start reaching beyond themselves start noticing some real differences:

- A greater sense of purpose about the parish, in its preaching and worship
- A greater spirit of enthusiasm among Catholics to serve others, both inside and outside the parish
- A recognition of the parish as a center of renewal and Christian formation
- A continuous stream of people involved in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
- A continuous stream of formerly inactive Catholics participating in groups that address their needs and help them reconcile with the Church
- An ecumenical awareness and involvement, resulting from the parish being perceived as focused on God's word, worship, and service
- A recognition of the parish by its wider neighborhood.

II. BASIC STRATEGIES FOR PARISH ORGANIZATION

Pastoral Administration: *The pastor needs to give clear leadership in evangelization..*

Parish Council: *The Parish Council is the structure through which pastoral administrators address, lead and involve the people of the parish. This board provides the pastor with allies- people who can share the work and the responsibility of carrying out the parish's vision and mission direction.*

Textbook Strategy	Date	St. V Activity	Progress
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1. Develop a vision statement of the parish's mission / 2. Help the whole parish accept the vision statement	2010	Conducted focus groups and town meetings to review and revise mission	New statement adopted May, 2010
3. Re-order the parish structures according to the vision statement	2010	Council Standing Committees: Established an Ad Hoc Group to examine organization in light of mission	New organization adopted September 2010
4. Develop a Pastoral Plan based on the vision statement	2014	Established a Strategic Plan; Conducted three Town Meetings prior to Council action	Plan approved by Council April, 2014
5. Design objectives and strategies to involve the whole parish	2014	Council accepted the proposed activities and timeline May 2014	
		Align Parish Budget	Due: June 2014 Completed September
		Align Parish Staff	Due: June 2014 Incomplete Sept 2014 Due: January 2015
		Evaluate Children's Program	Due: July 2014 Completed October Report due April 2015
		Welcoming Focus Groups	Due: August 2014 Completed September
		Committee Self-Exams	Due: September 2014 Completed September
		Geographic Clusters	Due: October 2014 Completed December
		Evangelizing Stewardship / Discipleship	Due: February 2015
6. Review objectives and strategies regularly and examine vision statement every few years			

Forming Evangelization Teams

Why have a team if evangelization is the work of the entire community? Very few parishes and parishioners can even accept evangelization's basic ideas and fewer still are evangelizing. For most parishioners, faith is a totally self-centered activity. Most parishes are designed to take care of their own members. Teams might well be the simplest way to keep a parish honest about its full mission. Their function is to make it possible for the whole parish to evangelize effectively.

The newly chartered O&E Committee will serve this function.

III. OUTREACH PLAN

A. COMMUNICATING OUR PRESENCE TO THE METROPOLITAN AREA

1. Taking Advantage of Our Location
2. Publicizing Our Service Programs
3. Collaborating On Jonestown Events

B. IDENTIFIED TARGET GROUPS

1. NOMINAL GROUPS

- a. Young Adults
- b. Families with Children
- c. Empty Nesters Returning To the City
- d. Disaffected Former Catholics

2. NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods would include the area south and southeast of St Vincent (Albemarle Square, Harbor East, Federal Hill, Fells Point, Butchers' Hill, and Canton) and Charles Village to the north.

3. NETWORKS

Networks would include the GLBT groups, volunteer service corps like JVC, the arts community, student unions at nearby universities, medical/hospital communities, and other social and support groups.

The meeting ended in prayer at 9:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Peter La Count