

St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church Minutes

May 12, 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*; Joe Yingling, *9:30 Mass Rep*; John Kober, *7:15 Mass Rep*; Denise Hamilton, *11:45 Mass Rep*; Peggy Meyer, *Co-Chair, Social Action Committee*, Peggy Shouse, *Chair, Education and Enrichment Committee*, Matt Hill, *Chair, Liturgy Committee*, Bob Betta, Dan Rolandelli, *Co-chair, Facilities Committee*, Anne Freeburger, *Corporator*; Kieran Ruppert, *Jesuit Volunteer Corps*; Al Reichelt, *Election Teller*.

Absent. Michael Keating, *Chair, Outreach and Engagement Committee*; Mark Palmer, *Chair, Finance Committee*; Graham Yearley, *Corporator*.

Meeting began in prayer at 7:35 pm

Audrey call on Al Reichert for the Parish Council election results who stated that 155 votes by paper and 26 by electronic were received for a total of 181 total votes. The 9:30 Mass reps replacing Audrey and Bethany are Mike Jacko and Coleen McCahill. Denise Hamilton Fwas affirmed for another 2 years for the 11:45 Mass.

Pastor's Report

Fr. Lawrence spoke on his opinion of the recent civil disturbance in Baltimore. He stated that the disturbances did not affect St. V. property or members. Fr. Dick emphasized that what needs to be taken in context is that the disturbance was not just a racial issue. He stated that the police are seen by some as an army of occupation. Automation has taken so many of these jobs. For top economic classes, this is not so much of a problem. However, for the middle class and the lower economic classes jobs are constantly at risk. He also stated that he thought that those who have police records are disadvantaged economically or otherwise are even more at risk for permanent unemployment or underemployment.

Pastor Associate's Report

Chris reported back to the council regarding the job description for the part time youth minister which had been reviewed and affirmed by the family life committee. The job description is posted . He also noted that the family life committee will work with Anne Gibson to develop a mission statement for children's education. The family life committee expects to complete the mission statement and plan at their June meeting and submit to the Council in July of this year. He also

noted that there is currently no interest in the 10 hour/week position. However, he would like to have more than one candidate. Chris will also explore putting an ad in the EI Bulletin, archdiocese web site, send to other parishes, Craig's List, Idealists.org.

Chris reported that the water abatement project has turned into a rat abatement project as well. Apparently the floor was poured up to baseboard of the wall leaving a gap of 4-6 inches of dirt where rats can tunnel easily and nest. The plaster and wood posts have rotted out from the water exposure which gives them even more space. We will be getting a steel door downstairs to help with the 'rat security.' Peggy notes that she has seen no bugs or roaches in the kitchen for some time.

Finance Report

Fr. Dick reported for Mark Palmer who was out of town

No finance committee comments were provided for the meeting. Major donation received this month budget budgeted last month. Although we are 23K ahead in donations and 32K ahead on total income; $\frac{1}{2}$ of this money is committed to charity and is not available as discretionary funds. In addition, the offertory collection last month fell below estimates and is negative 1100.

For the year St. V is still under-budget in many line items.

Lenten appeal grant money will be transferred to Sts. James and John in June. . This transfer to Sts. James and John is from parish assets not the operating budget. The parish still owes them about \$3,000 from operating budget.

How is the school doing now? School is doing well, according to Fr. Dick. St. James and John has been inspected and he reports that the school is in good shape. They are creating a maintenance schedule. The building needs attention for certain things. There are some water leakage issues that are causing some damage.

Attendance at the parish

Attendance has been lower every month this fiscal year except November compared by month to last year. Perception is that attendance is lower from the other Mass times, but not the 9:30 Mass. The question was asked is there a tracking method for different masses? Those figures will give us where these losses are. Attendance cards are retained. Fr. Dick volunteered to do a spreadsheet and see how numbers trend as this information is not electronically checked. A committee member mentioned that it is troubling to notice many familiar faces are no longer attending. We should find out who these people are and why they have left. We should develop a strategy for collecting and acting on this information.

Addendum to the Finance Report:

Committee chairs had been asked at the February Council meeting to submit funding requests for the fiscal year 2016 budget, categorized as what each needs, wishes for and can

do without. This was to be a task of prioritization. All committees were asked to think how they can include evangelization as part of their overall task.

The Social Action Committee submitted their funding request in hardcopy to Fr. Dick at this May meeting. The requests include \$5,000 for The Resources Exchange; \$ 2400 for San Juan de Limay; \$2500 for BRIDGE; \$1,000 for Habitat; \$1500 for SAHEF, and \$1500 to send someone to San Juan for a total of \$13,500. The committee has removed the Holy Land funding from their request; and added solar panels for Sts. James and John to a "wish list."

Response and Proposal Building PSH in Park

It has recently been determined that Baltimore City's proposed zoning changes that have been developing over the past few years will be finalized and in effect as soon as late summer, 2015. The park is currently zoned M1 (*light industrial*) but several years ago the city had proposed rezoning it to TOD-2 (*lower density Transit-Oriented Development up to 60' high*) to align it to the city plan to centralize housing around metro stations. Fr. Lawrence had then successfully petitioned to re-zone the park as *open space* in the new plan.

TransForm Baltimore is still in draft pending approval by the City Council. When it is approved and implemented, it is the practice to forego any revision for a period of time. Further, if and when proposed zoning revisions would be permitted, they would only be considered if there were agreement and support from the affected constituents. In our case, this would require the full support of the pastor and the parish community: neither of which appear to be achievable. This makes launching a feasibility study impracticable at this time.

Given this new information, the Ad Hoc committee recommends adopting the minority opinion to ~~and~~ table the feasibility study. opened this up for discussion. There was no discussion.

Motion to have recommendation for committee to table the feasibility study passes and to archive the Ad Hoc Committee's proposal and the Council's feasibility criteria document.

The second park recommendation

The Ad Hoc Committee also recommended that the Parish Council ~~to~~ provide some oversight of the park with specific outcome measures. These should be generated ~~t~~ in dialogue with the Friends of St Vincent Park Group and in consultation with Kieran Ruppert who has spent the time in the park and has a feel for outcome measures. The group's charter specifies five principal activities. These lend themselves to outcome measures. Michael Kelly and group is trying to get control of the park and crowd control is measurably different. They have ~~id~~ identified the donors and made contact about preferable donation times; however, there do appear to be more campers. Since Joe Yingling is on the parish council, Audrey asked him to liaison between the committee and the council. Michael Kelly will work with group to come up with outcomes for the park.

Report on Archdiocese Meeting parish Clusters and Planning Process

Fr. Dick commented on the Inter parish planning process. Four years ago formed a group creating a plan. A number of meetings for everybody in the city to be told we are working on this plan and will get back to parishes regarding a parish self-study. The Eastern half of Baltimore City yesterday met and spoke of need to plan this with evangelization as the primary objective to bring good news to archdiocese. That will begin with a parish self-study. Our current inter-parish cluster plan may be no longer operative. The parish will receive goals, objectives and criteria and we will need to respond to these as a parish community. Then there will be a re-look at clusters and after that review on inter-parish planning. However, criteria will be based on evangelization.

Other Business

Audry mentioned it would be nice to celebrate those who have helped upkeep the cemetery to a Mass celebration. A number of organizations have been key in keeping the cemetery looking so nice. The cemetery is in Clifton Park Golf course. Matt Hill will take this to the Liturgy Committee.

Fr. Dick states that the Archbishop will be here in December of this year and again in November of next year for the 175th celebration.

Matt Hill and the Liturgy Committee report they need 6 volunteers for Pentecost on May 24 from the Parish Council for the mission anointing of parishioners. Matt asked for and got volunteers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education & Enrichment Committee (Peggy Shouse, Chair)

The E & E committee has not met since the last parish council.

Plans for Parish Retreat May 29-31 are mostly finalized. At present about 60 people are registered to attend.

Liturgy Committee (Matt Hill, Chair)

The Committee discussed and evaluated Lent and Easter services. Generally satisfied with progress on services and attendance. Need to focus attention on preparing readers for major feast day services and obtaining greater help and support for those parishioners who perform herculean tasks each year without adequate support. We need these folks to mentor other parishioners to assist and possibly take primary responsibility for services in future.

Summer series will be July 12, 19 and August 2 and focus on environmental justice and Elizabeth Johnson's book, *Ask the Beasts*. The Women in Ministry are planning two Sundays. Peggy and Joe Organ/SAC will plan last Sunday.

Announcements: After much reflection, committee decided to split the proverbial baby: everyone makes own announcements in Ordinary time, and have only one announcer (usually Chris) during extraordinary time (Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter-to-Pentecost). Will announce email account for folks to email announcements in advance. Either Chris or whoever is making announcements will have access to email account.

Liturgy Retreat: August 22 from 9:30am to 1:00pm at St. V's education room. Agenda items: Revisit Mass times; Christmas midnight mass; Non-Easter baptisms; Teaching masses

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

Peace & Justice Committee: We are saddened to announce that David Casey of BRIDGE died. This is a huge loss. The regional *Pax Christi* meeting was here at St. V's on Saturday and we are planning the 30th year anniversary celebration of *Pax Christi* Maryland on 5/24 at St. Matthews. Several attended the Maryland United for P&J conference and heard excellent speakers, including Phyllis Bennis, Institute for Policy Studies, who talked about "The Mess in the Middle East: What can we do?". *Beyond the Boundaries* is meeting tonight.

Immigration: We had 7 parishioners work with Esperanza Center on 5/2 helping immigrants prepare for when they need to submit Deferred Action for Parental Accountability (DAPA) applications so they may stay here, with proper immigration status so they can work, if the injunction against Expanded DACA and DAPA is lifted.

Emergency Services: The food program gave groceries to 83 families in April and didn't spend anything. The men's program gave clothing in April to 50 men and spent \$620.

Friday Dinner: We had 1010 guests in April and have now added Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parishioners as donors for the 5th Friday meals.

The Resource Exchange: We supplied 8 Health Care for the Homeless clients with furniture and starter kits in April. We moved from our third floor units at Eastern Ave. Extra Space Storage to 2400 N. Howard St. so that we have ground floor units to save time loading the truck on move days and storing the furniture on pick-up days. We continue to be blessed with many furniture donations and committed volunteers!

Jonestown Planning Council: Two High Street town homes are under construction and construction for 21 market rate rental units on 921-23 E. Baltimore Street will begin in the Fall. Rabbi Mintz presented their vision for a mixed use commercial building including a pre-school at Lloyd and Lombard. They are waiting for the HABC, the city Housing Authority, to establish clear title and offer the parcels so they can submit a proposal. Marvin Pinkert reported that the Community Vision planning process has been fully funded. We expect the Planning Department and City to accept the master plan as guidance for the remaining City-owned parcels in the neighborhood. City Springs Elementary/Middle School, may use part of the Freedom Academy Building in lieu of plans for expansion. We sent a letter of support for PUD/zoning changes allowing the Baltimore Collegiate School for Boys to locate at 1200 E. Fayette Street (former GBMC building). Councilman Stokes reported that there might now be another use (City health center?) for the building contemplated.

Facilities Committee (Bob Betta, Chair)

We have not had a **Facilities Committee** meeting since our last Parish Council meeting so there is not much to report. The accessibility project on the 2nd floor of the rectory is close to completion.

Scaffolding will be going up on May 25 to begin the restoration of the south side of the church exterior. Interior work on the undercroft needs to address areas where rats are getting into the building. We are having floors in the elevator vestibules and in hyphen (area between the church and rectory) looked at to repair damaged floors.

Friends of St. Vincent Park

1. The group voted unanimously to request that the Parish Council approve **changing the name of Park Working Group to “Friends of St. Vincent’s Park,”** a more inviting name in terms of broadening the activities of the group and expansion of people interested in the park.
2. Dan McC prepared a draft **guiding principles and norms** for individuals or groups who wish to donate food, clothing or support to the residents of the park. He passed it out to all and Mike Kelly asked that comments and clarifications be sent to him for future discussion.
3. Kieran has prepared draft of response to calls (presumably in the form of guidelines) that are received in St. Vincent’s Rectory by **individuals who want to have an event at the park**. He will send the draft to Mike for review by the group. He will add a list of groups he knows of who donate food and clothing to residents in the park.
In connection with this discussion, the group talked about Bonnie Lane’s plan to hold a barbeque for 1000 homeless in the park on Saturday, May 30th. The group thought a party of this magnitude was too much for the park, the parish, and the Jonestown community to handle. Chris asked that Mike convey our reactions to him in writing so that he could respond to Bonnie Lane. *[Chris McCullough, who is acting as liaison on this event, has spoken to Bonnie Lane who has assured him that they can handle an event of this scale. including cleanup]*
4. Mike agreed to send everyone in the group the list of **names and contact** information on members the group. Mike distributed a letter signed by Father Lawrence asking people to cooperate with efforts to control the congestion and circus-like atmosphere around the park on Sunday mornings. People from River Christian Fellowship and others, including our own parishioners can use these as they approach others to cooperate.
5. In our ongoing effort **to define who donates to the park and when**. David Smock, Pastor of River Christian Fellowship, reported that the post office prepares a cookout during Thanksgiving for the residents. He also said holidays are busier times for donations. He also stated that four volunteers from Peabody Conservatory wish to present a concert for the homeless in the park. Kieran Ruppert will contribute a list of groups he knows who donate food and closing to residents in the park. Mike K will circulate and add groups he knows of as part of compiling a master list of donors. *[Kieran and Mike K are currently exchanging lists and will combine them.]*
6. David S. asked the group to **address and rectify physical safety issues** in the park. Metal posts protrude 3-4 inches from the ground and have caused individuals to fall. They need to be sawed off and removed to prevent further injuries and possible future law suits. *[This issue has been passed on to Chris for Jim Dimmer. The assumption of the group is that all that is required is nothing ore elaborate than the speedy use of sledge hammer on the protruding rebars.]*

7. Mike K. passed around an example of a **composite** to be used **to replace deteriorating wooden benches**. The parish facilities committee will be helpful to doing the work. Dave Myers has donated 18 plastic/composite boards that can serve as a test run (of two benches) to assess the issues of using plastic boards to replace wooden benches. This needs to be scheduled, and appropriate tools and fastening hardware (hex head lag screws, either galvanized or stainless steel) identified and selected. Several people are exploring prices for plastic boards that are significantly more expensive (and long lasting) than wooden lumber. [*This issue will be on the agenda of the facilities committee of the parish council on May 20th*]
8. Mike K. stated that **Sara Hoffman** is the **Bon Secours Hospital social worker** who does homeless outreach to the park for the city homeless services. He suggested she meet with our group and possibly present a talk about how to bridge the gap between the homeless individuals in the park and members of St. V's church who may be uncomfortable with, or have little experience with homeless individuals. This needs to be planned and publicized to draw interested people in the parish.
9. Mike K. reported that Fr. Dick once said that the **restrooms** that are accessible along the outside undercroft walkway may need to be assessed for possible upgrading ("shored up") and a **shower** might be able to be added in future. (Management would be needed and a lot of study, planning and analysis would be required to take this step.)
10. Mike K talked about how important it is for everyone associated with the park in any way, whether employed by St. Vincent's or volunteering at the park, **share information** about their work at the park. We have run across park residents who claim somehow to be employed by St. Vs whom we don't know and whose responsibilities are unclear to volunteers.[*One individual has been identified and is now in hospital dealing with mental health issues*]. We know that some of the best resident helpers in cleaning up the park are also the largest hoarders, and we don't have weekdays manned with volunteers from 7AM to 9 AM to be able to enforce consistently (other than on weekends) our prohibition of storage in or around the park and church.
11. Carolyn said Ms. Amy, 443-862-4358, volunteered her son and his **environmental design class** to create a new sign for the park. Mike K will forward to the group a copy of the text of the permanent sign in the park announcing its rules.
12. Mike distributed an e-mail from Audrey Rogers with an **assessment of park trees** and work that could be done to keep them healthy. The group discussed planters, greenery, and aesthetics of park. No conclusion--just open discussion.

Outreach and Engagement (Michael Keating, Chair)

No report.

The meeting ended in prayer at 8:58.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter La Count, Secretary