

Parish Council Meeting
April 18, 2023

Attendance: Geri Sicola, Catherine Mundy, Joan Fulton, Anne Maura English, Lindsay Dierkes, Anne Freeburger, Pat Ball, Ray Heil, Jim Casey, Fr. Ray Chase, Aidan Helie, Jeri Delambo, Peggy Shouse, Colleen McCahill, Mary Catherine Bunting

Absences: Mark Palmer, Mary Hennigan

March Parish Council meeting minutes were approved.

Pastor & Pastoral Associate:

Fr. Ray Chase:

Preparation for the budget for next year has begun in earnest.

A year ago, we received notification of the dissolution of the (Irene) McAllister estate (from FL) and we received partial disbursement over \$90,000. Another approximate \$252,000 will be coming within this year. Very little is known about this person; any further knowledge would be appreciated.

Colleen:

Process for the bell tower/louver repair is underway. Although council approved aluminum, because we are part of the NHR and MD Historic Trust, we need approval from CHAP—the local Historic Preservation. That process is underway: Tony Lassiter has been making phone calls and filling out paperwork as well as speaking to contractors.

Katharina Acosta, our cantor, has had a baby boy—Benito!

Colleen would have asked for council approval to have a Jesuit Volunteer, but she forgot! The application is in, and we have been approved as an agency. By consensus, the Council agrees that we should apply, and that the question should be asked yearly.

Dan McCarthy, President of Episcopal Housing Corporation (new construction and renovation of buildings used for social upbuilding organizations) shared with Colleen that the Family Recovery Project—to foster and facilitate family reunification due to child separation resulting from addiction—needs new office space and is looking to use property in the neighborhood. St. V's has offered support that this is a worthwhile endeavor.

Committee Updates:

Liturgy Committee: No meeting until May. Anne Maura shares that they will discuss the Summer Series in conjunction with Vision & Mission momentum.

Education and Enrichment: No new updates.

Peace and Justice: See attached minutes.

Social Action: No new updates.

Committee on Church Reform: Meeting tomorrow, April 19, 2023; Committee will develop a plan to be presented to council as a response to the Attorney General's Report.

Holy Week Feedback:

Catherine M. shared how a visitor came for every service and was impressed with each one, as well as the welcome she received from both pastor and parishioners.

Pat B. was impressed with the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday and Brian's reading at the Easter Vigil. Recommendation for Seder is, if it is not to be catered, have everyone bring something to make it easier.

Lindsay seconded that washing of the feet was particularly meaningful.

Jeri D. added that the extinguishing of candles one by one was very moving.

Many more added that they had received very positive feedback.

Council discussed the need for a community reminder(s) about receiving/not receiving the Blood of Christ.

Elections:

Geri wrote up the role of representatives and asked for comments.

Colleen suggested we include a note that not all meetings should be by zoom and reps should be ready to attend in-person meetings.

Anne Maura posed the question on how many meetings can be missed. As it stands, the constitution says a rep may miss 3 consecutive meetings; Geri therefore made the stipulation that reps are expected to attend at least 9 of the 12 meetings. Colleen says this could be made even stronger by saying that reps will try to attend *all* meetings (but at least 9).

Geri asked for feedback on whether reps should be required to participate as a member, or at least attend, other committee meetings. Council spent some time discussing why this may have been drafted as a necessity—that reps should have a flavor of the parish before serving that constituency—and why it may be unnecessary—usually reps are already on committees, and if not, perhaps they make the effort to attend a meeting or two. Discussion ended unresolved enough that Geri made the decision to remove that requirement altogether.

A Chief Teller needs to be appointed to tally votes with the help of ushers (both paper and online).

The Secretary is responsible for compiling biographies, taking nominations, and making copies of ballots.

Joan Fulton and Jim Casey announced that they will not be running again. Lindsay and Geri will both be running again. Peggy Shouse is ineligible to run again, as is Craig Thornton. 6 slots are open, with 2 current reps running again.

Constitution Working Group:

Meeting tomorrow and much progress during the first meeting. Need to brainstorm how to grapple issues that have not been resolved, i.e. committee positions and roles.

Strategic Planning Process:

Anne Maura asked whether the manager of this project will be a paid position. She wonders whether this is too much for one person and should be done by a team.

Fr. Ray asks whether this will take place in a comprehensive short period of time or over a long period—how it unfolds as a process may determine what kind of person we may need.

Jim Casey thinks we may have a hard time finding a volunteer, otherwise it may need to be a team.

Catherine agrees, and says we're talking about a manager and a working group—and that working group will have a consultant.

Geri requests feedback on the SOW—Is this what we want that person to do?

Fr. Ray requests that we continue to be synodal outside of the synodal process—that that type of process is incorporated in what we do.

Meeting ended with the Our Father.

Minutes for Peace and Justice Committee Meeting March 27, 2023

A video meeting using Zoom began at 7:22pm. Attending: Barbara Bowles, Mary Catherine Bunting, Peggy Meyer, Dennis Moore, Bob Reuter, and Jack Schmidt. The meeting started late because another group was using St. Vincent's zoom link and we had to switch to Peggy's individual link. Mary Catherine facilitated, skipped the acknowledgement of the land's previous ownership by the Piscataway tribe and said a short prayer.

Next meeting: May 22, 2023, 7:00pm. Maureen Daly will facilitate.

Welcome: The committee welcomed Bob Reuter and hopes he will continue as an active member of the committee.

We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism: Peggy said that Dr. Meleny Thomas gave an excellent update about South Baltimore Community Land Trust's (SBCLT's) current activities at the February 15 meeting. The meeting scheduled for March 15 was skipped in order to accommodate Pat Ball's presentation on "Enlarge the Space of Your Tent," the working document for the Continental Stage of Synod 2021-2024. For the April meeting, Peggy noted that she and Skipp are considering an activity at SBCLT. She also mentioned that she is encouraging committee members, members of We Have a Dream and others to watch A Community Conversation with Dr. Greer Gordon: "Journey to Social Justice: A Call to Action," on April 20 from 6:00 to 8:00pm. Peggy said that advocacy for this program is being led by Catholic Charities and is available at Nativity and live streamed to multiple other locations including one in federal hill. She intends to send out an email with information for April. For the May 17 meeting, Peggy stated that Matthew Taylor will be the guest speaker. He is a scholar at the Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies and has written an article on Christian Nationalism in Religious Dispatches. Peggy pointed out that Audrey Rogers recommended him after reading the article. Peggy also mentioned that a check for \$40,000 was given to SBCLT from our Racial Equity Fund for the deconstruction of 5 properties. SBCLT was very happy to receive it.

In working with the Racial Justice Circle, Mary Catherine heard that Catholics are among the most racist of church attendees. This matches the findings of Robert Jones in his book *White Too Long*. Bob stated that there was a program on WYPR that found that the Christian Right has taken over approximately 116 radio stations. Perhaps this is a reference to Salem Media Group, a conservative media company that owns 116 stations in 39 markets.

Immigration: No Report. Peggy said that Jules is working and not able to join us tonight.

Showing Up for Racial Justice Baltimore (SURJ): Under this topic, Mary Catherine mentioned that committee members and others that she knew about, had been contacted to register support for quite a few bills by individual organizations. She said that she had supported quite a few bills and thought perhaps others had also.

Peace Walk: Jack stated that the next peace walk was this evening at Our Lady of Fatima Church. Peggy thought about changing the date of the meeting so that some of us could attend but it was too late in the day to try.

Beyond the Boundaries (BtB): Mary Catherine stated that Bob Rueter has volunteered to represent St. Vincent's on the 2023 Transit Equity Act directly and through BridgeMD. He mentioned that the proposed bills (HB0009/SB0019) have passed both the House and the Senate. Bob provided background to the petition campaign that was being led by the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC). The petition sought to adopt an amendment to the Baltimore City Charter that would allow for the creation of a Baltimore Regional Transportation Authority. In order for the Board of Elections to place this amendment on the ballot, BTEC had to obtain 10,000 signatures advocating the amendment. BTEC actually obtained more than that number, but due to the disqualification of a number of signatures, BTEC came up 322 votes short. Many of the disqualifications were for the absence of middle name or initial. Bob said that the signature has to be exactly as it is on one's voter card. BTEC is planning a retreat on April 14 and 15 to get ready to start another petition drive with emphasis on the use of middle name or initial as on one's voter card. Its goal is to obtain 20,000 signatures in order to have a sufficient margin should some disqualifications occur for some other reason. Bob said he will definitely be at St. Vincent's to solicit support. Bob also said that he received the Moore-Miller Transition Report which contains some support for regional transportation authorities but also seems to advocate for the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA). He thought the message was not clear.

Mary Catherine said that she and Chuck attended an NAACP press conference at city hall on Thursday March 23 in support of the inclusionary housing bill (22-0195) before the city council.

San Juan de Limay: Mary Catherine noted that Maureen was not here to give an update on Limay. However, she said there are some mixed messages from there depending on whom you talk to. It is known that the Catholic Universities have been closed and the bishop, after refusing to leave, has been sent to prison. Bob suggested that the main problems seem to be in the urban areas rather than in the rural areas such as Limay. Mary Catherine said that Nicaraguan leadership does not want any help from CASA Baltimore or other non-governmental organizations which help with health projects and education in small local schools. Bob said that a group he is associated with was helping with disability issues in Managua but now they cannot get disability equipment through customs.

Maryland Catholic Labor Network: Maureen and Mary Catherine are involved with this organization. Mary Catherine said that the executive director has left for another job because his salary was dependent upon a grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) whose fundraising has been negatively impacted by COVID and other issues. She mentioned that Nancy Conrad and Father Ty Hullinger would probably take on some of the responsibilities.

New Business

Bob stated that February was Black History month and March was Women's History month. April is Disability Awareness month. Peggy asked Bob if he had posters for disability issues that could be used in the gathering space and Bob said he would check on it.

Mary Catherine ended the meeting with a beautiful prayer on non-violence from a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration.

The meeting ended at 8:00pm. Respectfully submitted, Jack Schmidt