

**Parish Council Meeting
August 8, 2023**

In Attendance: Anne Freeburger, Mary Hennigan, Anne Maura English, Lindsay Dierkes, Geri Sicola, Catherine Mundy, Ray Heil, Aidan Helie, Mark Palmer, Colleen McCahill, Graham Yearley, Mary Catherine Bunting, Denny McMullin, John Gontrum, Leah Mank, Jill Huppert, Rita McMullin (representing the E&E committee), Kevin O'Reilly, Jim Casey, Kate Volpe

Absent: Fr. Ray Chase (traveling)

Meeting opened with prayer and a reading of the Mission and Vision statements.

The May meeting minutes were approved. Per Mary Catherine's observation, website upload of past council minutes needs to be confirmed.

Pastor and Pastoral Associate

Fr. Ray: Currently in NYC.

Colleen: Fr. Ray is away on an actual vacation, attending theater and eating shrimp scampi!

CHAP (Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation) approved our plan to replace the bell tower louvers with aluminum, contingent on the shop drawings. All window openings have been measured for shop drawings, but there is a 17 week lead on louvers (which puts us into winter). However, things are moving along. Ray H. asked whether we should reinstate the Art and Architecture and Facilities committees. Denny Mc. clarified that the Facilities committee does exist and to address Ray's question about our roof, he explained that Tony, our superintendent, is active with the issue and the facility, but they do not meet monthly. Geri S. clarified that indeed, most facilities updates do come from our pastor and pastoral associate, but perhaps our Facilities representative should do more of the reporting. Colleen Mc. added that the Art and Architecture committee became the Facilities committee; the two did not exist simultaneously.

We will unfortunately not have a Jesuit volunteer this upcoming year. Volunteerism is down across all national programs; the JV Baltimore house itself will be down to just 3 members this cycle. There will be a call for parish volunteers to fill some of the duties which JVs traditionally fulfilled.

Expectations/Desire for Parish Council Meetings:

Kate V. suggested that, at least initially, committee chairs identify themselves for new members or attendees state their reason for joining voluntarily.

Jill H. would appreciate knowing when something is for discussion versus decision-making (as this month's agenda delineated).

Mary H. also appreciates when the agenda denotes whether something is for discussion or decision; she suggested we move “parishioner concerns” to the top of the agenda as both a value statement and in case they influence said decisions.

Catherine M. admitted she misses the personal, in-person touch of meetings. Lindsay D. concurred with Catherine M. and brainstormed that allowing everyone to give thought/input before approaching decision-making could allow for each person to be heard and for greater intimacy even in a Zoom meeting.

Rita Mc. agreed that committee representatives should share their names/roles and perhaps give a brief report/update from their committees. Geri stated that we have had an expectation that committees raise important issues or happenings at meetings and that hasn't been happening. We still need to figure out the best way for committees to engage with the Council. How best can committee reps share (besides their submitted written minutes)?

Anne Maura E. continued that the role of committee reps is also confusing in terms of bringing PC issues back to their individual committees. She remains unclear about why the same representative needs to be present each time, as well as their role at council meetings. Colleen responded that at present, committee chairs are considered to be members of the parish council—differentiated from elected reps, but council members nonetheless. Jim also agreed that for continuity, it should be the same person from each committee who attends regularly. Geri S. also clarified that for more voices to be heard, no elected official can also share the role of designated committee representative; it also avoids any conflict of interest. She agreed with Jim, that it should be a consistent member who attends, but that some flexibility can be afforded if the chair is unable to attend council meetings.

Proposal from Anne Maura about engaging a facilitator for PC meetings:

Anne Maura first explained the role of a facilitator as follows:

In connection with religious women in this country, most organizations have someone who facilitates the meeting. Different from a retreat facilitator—an outside person who designs activities—this person does not participate in any of the discussions or belong to the group. Their function is to focus her attention on what is happening in the group, who is/is not speaking, or whose comments are off-target. Their focus is how people are listening/sharing and what's happening in the group. It goes hand-in-hand with dialogue, discernment, and purpose. This requires stopping the group periodically, checking in with people who haven't spoken, and a synthesis of what's been said. This is particularly helpful during a heated discussion in order to keep thoughts straight. The facilitator asks for different perspectives, goes around the group, and does not give their own opinion. This ideally cuts down on repetition and confusion and keeps track of the main issues.

If the council decides to do this, she suggested we try it once or twice before officially deciding.

A facilitator (specifically, Anne Maura) is present at each meeting to facilitate discussion items.

Anne Maura has volunteered to be the PC facilitator.

After her synopsis, Geri S. opened council for questions:

Denny Mc. queried how having a facilitator affects the role of the president, to which Anne Maura said it is more technical and has nothing to do with leadership. The president continues to decide the agenda, etc.

Catherine M. had the same question as Denny but also queried how we can make the meeting more accessible for people to participate.

Mary H. asked how, if facilitators are typically external, how does Anne Maura justify acting as facilitator herself. Anne Maura responded that it's about self-discipline, which she has practiced before. She shared that, personally, PC meetings make her exhausted and she sees this as a solution.

Rita Mc. said Anne Maura has valuable things to say and should therefore not be a facilitator. Anne Maura immediately responded that she cannot continue at these meetings unless she is facilitator; their current structure hassles her too much.

Jim C. commented that he's not sure we can hear from everybody each meeting in a group this large; Kevin O'R. concurred.

Geri S. concluded the question session; discussion and decision on this matter will take place at the next PC meeting.

Planning for our Futures (Strategic Plan):

Council reviewed and reflected on Audrey's presentation from our last meeting, specifically her critical questions related to a strategic plan in 2023. The questions raised in her presentation are as follows:

Is the story we tell ourselves about who we are still valid?

Do we need a plan? Who is the plan for?

How has the culture changed?

What draws newcomers?

Can St V still rely on its committee structure to fulfill mission? Can it afford not to?

Jill H. asked if we have a method for tracking new parish members; Colleen responded that when a new member registers, they do enter the database, but we do not track visitors. Jill wondered if perhaps visitors should be allowed to stand and introduce themselves or sign a visitor log (à la the Lutheran Church). She also asked when do visitors become members?

Mary H. asked for clarification about what is expected of the committee in light of Audrey's questions as some are quite specific and will be addressed over time. John G. also expressed confusion over the context and usefulness of these questions. Lindsay said they are to spur dialogue and do not need to be individually answered right now; however, as council never had time to reflect on Audrey's slides, council wanted to provide some opportunity now.

Mark P. asked, “Do we (long term parishioners) feel that the planning processes we have undertaken have substantially and materially impacted the trajectory of the parish, or not?” If yes, they were constructive and did what they should have and that we should perhaps do them again. If not, our focus should be on doing something else. What should we be doing next?

Colleen concurred with Mark. She noted that the last time we had a SP was many years ago now. Do we need to institute a cycle for doing something like this? In response to John, she added that we have a good amount of material from parishioners about the current life of the parish—through the recent synodal and Finding Our Why processes—and that it should inform what we do.

Jill H. expressed confusion between a Parish Plan and a Strategic Plan—something that Audrey had touched upon briefly.

Mary H. shared that the point of a parish plan or strategic plan is to unify people and therefore a plan is needed to do that. However, “Seek the City” demands that our plan makes sure we stay viable and that we prioritize how we contribute to the archdiocese in general.

Geri S. said what’s important—rather than what we call it—is getting to where we want to go. She agreed that we need to seriously consider what’s going on with “Seek the City”. She answered Mark’s point, that we do know why the last SP didn’t work, but it could take some more unpacking. In response to Jill, she also thinks there is some middle ground between a PP and a SP.

Mark added again that whatever we want to undertake needs to be realistic and practical, and that real effort needs to be put behind it.

Lindsay explained that we need to look at what the Parish Council is good at and capable of doing. Because of its changing nature, perhaps we are better at doing small projects with end dates. Mary added that we need to be careful about calling it a Parish Council plan or a Parish Plan, to which Lindsay responded that Council does oversee it and that anything now needs to be very specific about who is responsible for what.

Catherine M. agreed that PC can set the plan but that parish members need to implement the working plans. She said that we could update the prior SP to reflect current reality. Jill agreed and said that we need measurable endpoints.

Geri thinks we should look at the old SP but that just updating it would be inaccurate because the world has changed. She countered that some action was taken on the last SP (outreach and social action) but that there was no one to oversee the implementation because it was not officially approved.

Kate V. expressed concern that we were getting stuck with planning, rather than getting to producing. Her understanding was that the council was already prepared to appoint someone to

lead the SP into actionable items. Rita Mc. was in agreement and Jill explained it as having buckets (end goals) that we begin to fill (action items).

Colleen shared that we should not get stuck on any false dichotomy that Audrey's slides might have created. We can use them or not.

Mary made a motion to find a half-Saturday (having come prepared) and create those buckets Jill talked about and make some decisions that way. Lindsay added that we did hope to meet in September. John G. seconded the motion and thinks that this is a strong suggestion to further and deepen discussion.

Anne Maura noticed that several council members have not said anything and that opportunity should be given to them. She suggests people who have made substantive statements should get it into one sentence so that it does not get lost before the next meeting.

Geri concluded that there was a lot of good food for thought already.

A date for the in-person will be decided later—perhaps a working dinner evening during regular PC meeting time.

Meeting closed with prayer from Colleen.

Action Items:

- Website upload of past council minutes needs to be confirmed.
- Schedule date for in-person meeting

APPENDIX

Minutes for the Social Action Committee Meeting July 17, 2023

Attendees on zoom: Joe and Peggy Cronyn, Chuck and Pat Frascati, Ray Heil, Marcia Metzler, Peggy Meyer, Jack Schmidt, and Kathy Younkin.

The meeting started at 9:35am. Peggy M facilitated. Next meeting date: Monday August 28, 2023, 9:30am

Feast of St. Vincent de Paul: The feast day of St. Vincent de Paul is September 27. In the past, the Social Action Committee (SAC) has at times been responsible for the liturgy (Scripture readings, call to worship and prayers of the faithful) on the Sunday prior to the feast day (September 24, this year). Peggy M asked us to come up with ideas for the mass and, in the meantime, she will check with the Liturgy Committee to see if they are planning anything and will get back to us. Peggy M thinks it is a good idea that we keep our responsibility for this feast day.

Breaking Bread with the Hungry: Jack reported that the dinners are going well. He said that the picnics in the park started on June 2. The last 3 Fridays were held indoors due to the threat of rain or very hot weather. We have been serving between 110 and 130 guests each Friday.

City Springs Elementary/Middle School: Joe said that the date for the volunteers to return to school has not yet been set. All St. Vincent's volunteers are returning, and Mary Jane Daley is joining the group. Joe said he will work with Ms. Tolson on assignments. Most volunteers wanted to stay with their teachers or with the class they were assigned to last year. Joe mentioned that the new school that is to be built is part of the Perkins Redevelopment Plan. He thought there were some continuing discussions about the source of funds for the construction. Demolition on the east side of Caroline Street has not yet begun. He stated that principal Richetta was happy that the construction was being handled by the school system which is very familiar with school requirements and not by another general contractor.

Monday Food Program: Peggy M said that the program continues to run smoothly. However, Casey contracted Covid and Hurlie Waldman had another commitment for today, so Andi Chapman and Jack Bonner were acting as alternatives in serving the clients today.

Green Team: Kathy stated the team has not met recently but that an in-person meeting was scheduled for Thursday, July 20, at 7:00pm. Peggy M stated that team members were asked to bring some positive ideas to the meeting. Pat asked that the team think of ideas for the craft fair. For example, things that could be recycled into crafts rather than thrown away.

Men's Clothing Program: Jack said that there were about 30 clients for the single distribution days (second Tuesdays) in June and July. Next distribution will be August 8. Jack said that none of the clients expressed disappointment with having only one day per month during the summer. He does not know if the single day resulted in more requests at the rectory door.

Marcia said that the amount spent per person is about \$25 if we give them everything. Peggy asked what sizes of jeans are most in demand and what is an acceptable price. Marcia thought that anything under \$10 was acceptable and Jack stated 34-inch and 36-inch waist and any inner seam lengths. Peggy M said that the balance in the Emergency Services account was \$7,300.66.

Peace and Justice Subcommittee: We will attach next Monday's (July 24) Peace and Justice minutes. Chuck said that he has been handing out flyers after he and Father Ray met with a group against nuclear weapons and for peace in the Ukraine. As far as the inclusionary housing bill is concerned, nothing has been done since the city council has been busy with budgets. Chuck thought that the bill had 11 supporters but is no longer sure of that. He is hoping for a vote in August. He said that there was supposed to be a meeting of supporters at city hall this afternoon.

The Resource Exchange (TRE): Peggy C stated that we are doing 3 move-in dates in August and that there are not many on the waiting list. Peggy M stated that the TRE balance in the checking account was \$43,458.59. A number of donations were sent in honor of Pat Bahr after the obituary published in the May 19 edition of the Baltimore Sun and after the May 26 memorial service. Peggy C sent a thank you letter for the \$25,000 donation from the Kenneth S. Battye Charitable Trust over her signature and Father Ray's. In general, things are going well with some "ups and downs." Peggy C said that Kathy had a rough time last week when she did the move-in by herself. Marcia noted that she is available most of the time and to give her a call. Both Peggy's stressed that, in such a situation, she should always ask the Hoffberger's movers to stay with her. Peggy C also said that because of the recent changes in contact personnel at Health Care for the Homeless, there is not very much institutional memory. The new contact person is Jasmine and Peggy M suggested that she, Peggy C, and Kathy meet with her. There has been some duplication in serving the same clients which needs to be corrected. Peggy C noted that she has all the information on move-ins for the last 10 years. Kathy said the units are pretty full. Joe is expecting to pick up 3 sofas tomorrow and is also looking for help with the pick-ups. Ray and Joe plan to talk about tomorrow's pick-ups after today's meeting. The furniture sale at Charlestown is July 29 and the date for August pick-ups is August 22. Peggy C said she intends to ask for more volunteers to help on Thursdays' move-ins.

Afghan family: Peggy C said that helping the Afghan family of six continues to be a work in progress. Things would be better if the mother and father spoke more English. The mother speaks some English, but the father does not want to learn it. Joe and Peggy C have tried to convince him that he will only get a better paying job by learning English. Now, he earns \$31,000 a year for a family of six. The two oldest boys will attend Dulaney Valley High School and the oldest boy has been awarded a summer job with the county. There were 2,000 applicants for 400 jobs, and he was awarded one. The two-year-old child is non-verbal and quite spoiled.

We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism: Peggy M said that 21 participants were at the June 21 meeting when we discussed A Community Conversation with Dr. Greer Gordon:

“Journey to Social Justice: A Call to Action,” which quite a few parishioners viewed at Nativity Church and at a church in South Baltimore. We are taking July off and the next meeting is August 16 when Marianne Reichelt is planning to do something during part of the meeting. Casey’s Party: Pat mentioned that about 30 people have said they plan to attend the going away party for Casey on July 25. The plan is for pizza and salad from Isabella’s. Mary Laukaitis and Jack will get the cake.

New Business

New JVC? Apparently, there is a slight possibility of a JVC for this coming year, but we will not know for sure until July 25. Peggy C asked what would happen to our programs if we did not have a JVC for the next year. Peggy M speculated that the hours when the rectory is open may be limited as they are at certain times now. Jack speculated that we could use another volunteer for men’s program especially since Sue Woodman is going to be away for a while. TRE could also use additional help on move-in days as Peggy C already asked for.

The meeting ended at 10:40am.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Schmidt

Education and Enrichment Committee
Minutes: July 9, 2023

- Attendance: John, Jack, Rita, Denny, Barbara, Lindsay, Liz, Anne Maura, Fr. Ray

- Anne Gibson Report: Last month we wrapped up our 2023 session of VBS. The sessions were spread out over the entire month. The students learned about the parables of Jesus and where to find them in the Gospel. Our picnic at Cylburn was most enjoyable. Luckily the weather cooperated and we got to enjoy the beauty of God's creation. Our field trip to City Hall was both enjoyable and educational. Thank you Councilperson Odette Ramos. At our family liturgy, the children dramatized the Gospel which included three of the parables that we studied. They also did a beautiful job on the readings.

In September, I will have a parent meeting and set up a schedule for Reconciliation classes and choose a date for the reception of the sacrament.

I continue to send out monthly packets with age appropriate lessons and activities for the children. The packets include things such as liturgy, faith formation, Scripture, special feasts and holidays, the liturgical year, sacraments, etc.

Volunteers both with and without substantial contact with children continue to go on VIRTUS to register. Thanks to all of those who have already completed this task.

Thank you for allowing me to continue with this important ministry at St. Vincent de Paul.

- Dinner for Eight: On Going. Will have sign ups in September.

- Retreat Discussion: The 2024 Spring Retreat will be on May 31-June 2. The leader will be Fr. Francis Gargani. Topic to be determined. It will be held at Nawakwa. We will explore other sites for 2025.

- Brain Storm

A. Liz on Faith Sharing: Proposed a discussion after Mass on scripture and the Homily: Will be explored in conjunction with B. below.

B. John's Half-Baked Idea: We invite all to meet after Mass (and perhaps via Zoom at a later date). Small groups will discuss a question, or share a story, or share a feeling regarding an endless variety of topics. Two or more discussions could be held. Between discussions, one of the Parish Ministries will give a brief description of what they do, why they do it, and ask if anyone wants to join. John will write a "Script" for the first session, for review and further discussion.

C. Committee Leadership: Rita McMullin will co-chair the Committee. She will represent us at the Parish Council Meetings.

D. Instrumentum Laboris: Anne Maura will prepare a Zoom presentation on the document and present it on September 13 at 7:15 PM. It will be called, "Anne Maura's Kliff Notes Version of Instrumentum Laboris." This will be just before the Meetings begin in Rome. The session will be recorded for those who can't attend live.

E. Recommendations: Rita will continue to find and present Book recommendations to be included in This Week.

- Date of next meeting: August 27, After Mass.