

**Minutes of the Parish Council
of St. Vincent de Paul Church
January 12, 2010**

The meeting was brought to order by the president of the Council, Jim Casey, at 7:35pm and a prayer was offered by Graham Yearley. In attendance were: Fr. Richard Lawrence, Jim Casey, Audrey Rogers, Joan Campbell, Anne Marie Freeberger, Peggy Meyer, J. Edmond Guy, Kevin O'Reilly, Jack Bonner, Pete McDowell, Pat Ball, Bob Ball, Barbara Bowles, Maureen Daly, Larry Fenaroli and Graham Yearley.

Nancy O'Neill asked to be excused for illness.

Pastor's Report

1. Christmas season went well. The decoration of the church was the most beautiful the pastor could remember. On the 4th Sunday of Advent, a total of 43 people attended all four masses due to the snow storm. Larry Fenaroli kindly dug out the sidewalks and steps. The snow removal crew plowed only the parking lots; the cost was exorbitant and it may be necessary to find someone else to do the job.

Finance Report

1. The parish should be receiving the second payment for the loan given to St. Vincent's for the restoration of the park. The hotels who have committed to helping us with this expense had only recently sent in their second payment.

2. St. Vincent's ends the first half of the fiscal year \$15,000 short of the budgeted amount, but the pastor feels confident we can make up this shortfall in the next six months. There was a break-in last Saturday night and expenses have been incurred reinforcing doors and windows from break-ins in November and December.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of last month's meeting were approved by the Council. Audrey proposed that we not continue the current system where minutes of one month are not approved or corrected until the next meeting. Instead, the secretary will try to have the minutes transcribed and emailed to the Council within a week. In turn corrections or amendments should be given to the secretary in timely manner. No response will be considered an approval of the minutes as drafted. This strategy permits a more timely distribution of the Council minutes to the parish community.

Committee Structure Evaluation

1. Audrey reviewed the collected minutes and main proposals of the 2002 strategic planning meeting and of the Listening Project. One proposal was the formation of a

standing committee on organizational development; another proposed developing a mentoring process for the chairs of committees to lessen the stress of taking over positions of leadership.

2. The committees have been sent the forms for self-evaluation and are working on them. They are due by February 25, so they can be reviewed and presented at the March Parish council meeting. One purpose of the evaluation is to discern where there are gaps in the ministries the church offers and where there is duplication of efforts by two or more committees. One gap in the present structure, Audrey mentioned, was a ministry focused on Family Life. Each committee, working group, or special interest group was asked to state which kind of group they felt they were, to describe a way of attracting new members to the church, to state the group's strengths and weaknesses, and how the Council might help in enhancing the group's effectiveness.

3. There followed an extended conversation on what role the Parish Council should take *vis á vis* the committees, working groups, and special interest groups. Maureen Daly described one model is for the Parish Council to offer strategic planning proposals for the various groups to fulfill as a way of encouraging creativity and offering leadership. The other model that Graham described was that the Parish Council function as it does now as a place to hear what the various committees are doing, to offer support and guidance when there is a problem, and to disseminate to a wider audience what has been reported to the Council. No decision was made which model should be undertaken. Certainly, as Jim Casey said, if the first model was adopted, it would mean a major alteration in the way the Council does its business.

Mission Statement Revisioning

Barbara Bowles reported on the work of this sub-committee. The members have been working on the revisioning of our mission statement in face-to-face meetings and by email. They have asked for a timeline extension to March which is a deadline they are confident to meet. Their draft will be ready for review by February and to Council at the March meeting. There are already fifteen to twenty volunteers to review the draft mission statement of the group.

Queen of Peace Schools Appeal

1. Fr. Lawrence reported that he had met with a member of the Archdiocese's Blue Ribbon Commission on Catholic education. While no specifics of school closings were given, the member of the commission did assent that Catholic education in East Baltimore must be preserved. Fr. Lawrence believes that, at least, one of the two Queen of Peace schools will be retained.

2. So far, there have been 110 donors of this year's campaign for the schools with gifts totaling \$47,000. Fr. Lawrence said he expected to raise eighty to one hundred thousand dollars by the end of the campaign. St. Ignatius has committed twenty six thousand towards the campaign.

Day Care Center

The payroll of the center is being met. The water heater is dying, but it is believed that a residential water heater would serve the center's needs and is much more affordable. The funds for that would be raised from private donations. 37 children are currently enrolled; Fr. Lawrence thinks an enrollment of fifty children would make the center financially more stable. Fr. Lawrence will contact Our Daily Bread Employment Center to explore a collaboration on voucher use for new daycare enrollments.

New Business

Maureen Daly suggested two projects designed to increase our membership: a) Eight to twelve people doing a phone-a-thon to those who have left the parish to show that we care and to ask what we could do to bring them back, b) a walk-around of the Jonestown community to remind local residents that we are "the church down the street". Audrey thanked Maureen and asked her to submit these ideas in writing to the Council when it discusses growth proposals next month.

Committee Reports

Peace and Justice: a meeting is set for January 25th. The BRIDGE leadership is convening a workshop on how legislation gets passed in Maryland, a kind of "Maryland Politics 101" on January 26th and February 23 at the Episcopal Cathedral of the Incarnation from 7pm to 9pm. On January 18th, there will be a parade for the Census kickoff at noon at MLK and Eutaw.

Social Action: is working preparing a list of volunteer opportunities in our neighborhood of Jonestown. We are still investigating housing for homeless people in proximity to St. V's but that is a long term project. The Social Action Committee meets next Tuesday, January 19th.

Liturgy: met last Saturday and continues to work at completing their goals for this year. Planning for Lent was the major task of the meeting. Colleen McCahill is planning the Easter Vigil service and any volunteers for the remaining vigil hours (some are taken) would be welcome. The committee is asking that there be no announcements at the 9:30 mass outside of the greeting of visitors and Lenten activities. The 20 and 30s Group (started through the Liturgy Committee) is active, but it still lacks a leader.

Education: will meet on January 15th at the home of Lorna Patterson at 7pm. They will be planning the parish retreat and for a speaker sometime in May.

Park Working Group: had a meeting last Sunday to introduce volunteers to the duties of the park wake-up on weekends. Fifteen or so attended the meeting, some of whom are already volunteering in the park. Colleen McCahill will complete the evaluation for the committee.

Pastoral Care: has completed the self-evaluation. They met last week focusing on how they can better approach presenting themselves and their ministry. They are working on a plan to contact the parents of recently baptized babies at St. Vincent de Paul through home visits as a way of engaging these young families.

The Parish Council meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Minutes respectfully submitted by,

Graham G. Yearley, secretary of the Council

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 9 at 7:30 PM in the Education Building, parking lot level. All Parish Council Meetings are open to the parish community.