

Minutes of the Meeting
of the Parish Council
of St. Vincent de Paul Church
February 16, 2010

The meeting was brought to order by the Council President, Jim Casey, at 7:33pm. Prayer was offered by Joan Campbell. In attendance: Fr. Richard Lawrence, Jim Casey, Audrey Rogers, Graham G. Yearley, Anne Marie Freeburger, Mary Catherine Bunting, Barbara Bowles, Maureen Daly, Joan Campbell, J. Edmond Guy, Jack Bonner, Nancy O'Neill, Rosemary Bitzel, Dennis Flynn, and Kevin O'Reilly.

Pastor's Report

1. Fr. Lawrence said that the parish was "two-thirds recovered" from the two recent large snow storms. The weekend of the first snow storm, February 5-7, only ten people attended mass. The snow removal contractor is working out well and Larry Fenaroli and friends were digging out the steps.

2. There have been two parish related deaths recently: Kathy O'Neill, parishioner, and Michael Murphy, the architect of our church renovation. Fr. Lawrence attended both funerals.

3. The Blue Ribbon Commission on Catholic Education will deliver its report on March 3rd. The conclusions of the report are not binding; the Archbishop has the final say on which schools are closed or merged. Fr. Lawrence believes the report will not ask for the closing of both of the Queen of Peace schools. If one is closed, it is likely to be St. Katherine's and not Saints James and John. It is hoped that if a merging of the schools is required that it could be put off two or three years when a merger could be better handled. Many of St. Katherine's pupils would have to be bussed to Saints James and John as the schools are not physically close.

Financial Report

Dennis Flynn delivered the financial report of January's figures. The parish raised close to \$20,000 for Haitian earthquake relief the last weekend of January. We raised close to \$1,000 for retired clergy and religious in a second collection earlier in the month. The February numbers are likely to be down as the snow storms lowered attendance for two weekends running.

Strategic Planning/ Growth Proposals

1. A committee of three (Jim Casey, Audrey Rogers and Fr. Lawrence) has met and has been developing job descriptions for the transition process. Fr. Lawrence has written drafts of four job positions: the Parish Life Director (PLD); the Pastoral Associate (the PLD in training); Senior Priest who performs all sacramental functions; and the canonically required Priest Supervisor (an outside-of-the-parish priest who can offer

consultation). It is intended for the Pastoral Associate to be a two year position whose successful completion will lead to appointment as PLD. At that time, the PLD will assume all of the administration of the parish; the Senior Priest will report to the PLD. Jim Casey commented that our parish constitution will have to be rewritten to accommodate a PLD as administrator of the parish. All these plans must be submitted to the Archdiocese for approval after the parish vetting and Council approval.

2. Audrey Rogers reported that the Growth Proposals from the Committees and Working Groups produced a plentitude of creative ideas for attracting new and retaining current members. She added the process of the Parish Council asking for committee and group assistance in achieving a Parish Council goal exemplified one way the Council can use the committee structure according to its constitutional responsibilities. The Council is considering how to address the evaluation of the many proposals that were received.

3. Another 2009-2010 Council goal was to produce a Three Year Strategic Plan for the transition process leading to Father Lawrence's expected retirement. The Council was asked to amend the timeline for the development of this plan given that discussion of the mission statement, the committee and group self-evaluations, and the growth proposals must occur before planning can reasonably be attempted. Therefore, Council agreed that the Three Year Strategic Planning should be tabled for now and will be taken up again perhaps as soon as the summer months.

4. The Ad Hoc Committee for revising the Mission Statement headed by Barbara Bowles has been communicating by email. While some of the review groups have returned their work, some others have not yet come in and Barbara asked for a brief extension of the deadline. She did feel that a draft could be presented at the March meeting of the Parish Council in preparation for parish input at the Spring Town Meeting. The Council will consider all recommendations at its May Meeting.

5. The date for the next Town Meeting will be April 25th, from 3pm to 5pm. The Town Meeting will focus on the discernment process for the mission statement. It is expected that some preliminary reports can be made about the results of the committee and group self-evaluations and the proposals for parish growth. Audrey noted that the Council must make provisions for childcare during the meeting if the attendance by young parents is expected.

Committee Reports

Peace and Justice: Rick Ulrich addressed the Committee on Habitat for Humanity, their plan to change how volunteers are used, and which house will be worked on in the near future. Nine volunteers from St. Vincent's worked last year; it is to be hoped a number closer to thirty would volunteer this year.

Education: Fr. Charles Sullivan of the Prisoner's Rights Organization will speak at St. Vincent's on May 5 at 6:30. He will be joined by our own Fr. Chuck Caterna. The Parish Retreat will be held May 14-16 at the same facility as last year. Fr. Joe Nangle will lead

the retreat; the topic is likely to be “Engaged Spirituality”. The Lenten Series studying Henri Nouwen is beginning on alternate Wednesdays. Three young people from our parish will be confirmed at the Basilica at 3p.m. on March 21.

Liturgy: The schedule for Lenten events was inserted into last Sunday’s bulletin. St. Vincent’s will be hosting Taizé Baltimore who will conduct services at our parish on Friday, May 7th; a potluck supper will precede the service. These services usually attract a good number of young people.

Park Working Group: Colleen will submit a report at a later date.

Pastoral Care: did the self-evaluation and it re-emphasized the need for the committee to better their communication with the larger parish and for more parishioners to inform the committee on what their needs are.

New Business

1. Maureen Daly reported that there will be a demonstration on Immigration Law Reform on March 21 in Washington. She hopes a large number of parishioners might bus together from the church to the demonstration.

2. Fr. Lawrence reported that the dedication of a monument honoring Fr. Caz will take place on February 28 at 3p.m. at St. Alphonsus Church.

The meeting was adjourned with the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer at 9:30 p.m.

In the Peace of Christ,

Graham G. Yearley, secretary to the Parish Council