

**Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting  
of St. Vincent de Paul Church  
October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

The meeting was brought to order by the Council Vice President, Sara Kelley at 7:35 pm and started with a group prayer.

**In attendance:** Fr. Richard Lawrence, *Pastor*; Chris McCullough, *Pastoral Associate*; Sara Kelley, *Vice President, 9:30 Mass Rep*; Rosie Graf, *Secretary, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Bethany Gregg, *9:30 Mass Rep.*; Laureen Brunelli, *Communications and Outreach Committee Chair*; Peggy Shouse, *Education and Enrichment Committee Chair*; Peggy Meyer, *Social Action Committee*; Maureen Fitzsimmons, *Finance Committee Chair*; Anne Marie Freeburger, *Corporator*; and Graham Yearley, *Corporator*.

Excused Absence: Audrey Rogers, *President, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; John Helie, *Liturgy Committee Chair*; and Dan Rolandelli, *Facility Committee Co-Chair*.

**Missing:** John Kober, Sr., *7:15 Mass Rep.*; Denise Hamilton, *11:45 Mass Rep.*; and David Potts, *Facility Committee Co-Chair*.

**Pastor's Report:**

Father Richard Lawrence shared about the meeting of the Historic Trust Fund. Effectively money through next year is already spent. Our investment gains did well so we should be pleased.

Fr. Lawrence is going to his 45<sup>th</sup> seminary reunion which will be held on October 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. On Nov 23-26 the Society of Biblical Literature Conference will occur and Fr. Lawrence will be attending. Some guests attending this conference will also stay at the rectory. Father Lawrence will go on retreat this year in November. From October 17-20<sup>th</sup> a group from UNC will be staying at the rectory for service opportunities. The group will assist with Friday feeding of the homeless and other things in town to be exposed to poverty and ministry.

**Status Report on Catholic Churches of Central City:**

The CCCC met to discuss the diocesan plan of re-organization at the state level. In Boston they formed collaboratives of 1-3 parishes and asked all priests to resign. They then appointed one priest to serve that collaborative. Our cluster (CCCC) offered critical feedback about the Boston plan. They advised that all re-organization proceed on local level and have contingency plans ready at the Diocesan level. The Archbishop took all under advisement and will get back to the CCCC soon. The first joint effort of CCCC is the implementation of a combined RCIA process, where Fr. Lawrence was the speaker on scripture.

We are being audited Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. It is the first time in 3 years and really should occur every 2 years. The diocese is outsourcing this auditing.

### **Finance Report:**

Parking donations are up. Maureen Fitzsimmons shared about the budget. There were no questions.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Finances Presentation to Parish Town Meeting Planning:**

The town hall meeting will occur on October 20<sup>th</sup> in between the 9:30 and 11:45 masses. Audrey will do a slide show presentation with handouts and would like a few council members to proof read this. Any questions we know in advance should be given to Audrey ahead of time. Graham Yearley, Peggy Shouse and Peggy Meyer will proofread this presentation for Audrey. The letter will be distributed again this week. Ushers will give this at the end of mass. Announcements will occur again this week and it will be included in the e-mail tree. Peggy will give a copy of the letter from the Parish Council regarding finances to Women in Ministry on their retreat. Finance committee will be present to help answer questions but Council will handle the presentation.

#### **Report 2013-14 Strategic Planning:**

Tabled for Audrey Roger's return next month

#### **Report on Issues in the Park:**

Sara Kelley reported on the park. She has some volunteers signed up for park cleaning. We will need more response for this to continue. May need someone who is not super involved to make this announcement. Michael Kelly will be a co-leader. He will be a liaison for the donations. The park has not been closed in recent years and so this is not the expectation of current folks living there. This will be a difficulty. The bathroom is an issue as well. The park smells like urine. Sara went on Saturday and started spreading the word that the park will be cleaned and cleared daily. All items still left in the park will be thrown out. Someone is cleaning on the week days but the park is not being cleared daily yet. We will need consistency of our volunteers and the daily cleaners to clear the park. Sara will bring further issues and concerns to council. Council suggested that it will take repetition to get volunteers. It will be important to keep using the e-mail tree and announcements to get people to remember to sign up. Maybe local colleges or universities (i.e. Newman Centers) could help with this initiative too. The church will need to discern how important the park is to parishioners. If we don't help to keep it clean it may be forced to close in the future. Some parishioners shared that it is important to keep open. Some have shared they like this parish because it is open for all to come. Do others feel similarly? We will need more support in this effort.

### **New Business:**

#### **Repurposing Rectory-**

Facilities committee reviewed repurposing of rectory. A contingency plan was reached at the facility committee meeting to allow for use of the two spaces that were Father

Lawrence's apartment while they work on a solution to the issue that it is not currently handicap accessible. Council discussed the idea of being inclusive and handicap accessible while balancing the current needs of our community. Father Lawrence suggested we could use a chair lift on the stairs to make this handicap accessible. With a wheel chair placed on the other side of landing. The council discussed the issue at length and several members felt that they could not approve a plan for repurposing until a concrete plan for making it accessible was in hand. To resolve the impasse, Fr. Lawrence offered to have all of his belongings moved out of his old apartment by December's Parish Council Meeting (Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>) and asked Chris to have a plan ready by that time as well. A consensus was not reached at this meeting so further discussion will follow at December 10th's parish council meeting once council has a written plan to view.

The Godly Play room materials are created and this room could be ready in the near future. Volunteers could be used to help Fr. Lawrence move the remainder of his belongings out of his apartment. The nursery is planned to be moved to the front parlor, freeing up the present nursery space for a new catechetical program called Godly Play.

### **Committee Reports**

#### Liturgy Committee (*John Helie, Chair*)

The Liturgy Committee is meeting on October 19 from 10 am to 11:30 am, so the report provided for September's parish council is still up to date.

One update is: St V's will commemorate All Saints and All Soul's the weekend of November 2-3. Set up will be Saturday, November 2 with more details to follow in the bulletin. It would be great if we could receive some assistance as this service takes considerable set up. We usually start about 1 pm or so, but will confirm once I check with Fr. Lawrence and/or Chris about the availability of the church that Saturday.

#### Education and Enrichment Committee (*Peggy Shouse, Chair*)

1. The E&E committee met in Cape May on October 5, 2013.
2. There are about 40 children/youth, pre-K through high school, involved in FFF this fall.
3. The Family Life Subcommittee has planned several service and social activities for the coming year. Dates will be in the bulletin and website.
4. The annual Women in Ministry retreat will be October 11-13, 2013, on the topic of Poetry: Words to Live By. Sixteen women plan to attend.
5. Dinner for Eight is underway with our largest number of participants so far—8 groups.
6. We do not yet have a retreat director for the May 30-June 1, 2014 parish retreat. So far we have contacted a several people who have been unable to lead this retreat, although some had to decline because of scheduling conflicts and asked us to keep them in mind for future dates.

7. Our next meeting is December 2, 2013 at 7 pm.

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

St. Vincent de Paul Feast Day: We planned the liturgy for September 29, the feast day of our patron saint.

Project Homeless Connect: We supported this project at the Convention Center on September 19th. Representatives from numerous Agencies and Centers were there to offer free services for individuals and families experiencing poverty or without a home.

Our Daily Bread: We have been cleaning and chopping vegetables on Sundays from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. The Peace & Justice committee went September 15 and the Social Action committee will go on October 13. The Parish Council is narrowing in on a date to help.

The Resource Exchange: We supplied 8 individuals, whom Healthcare for the Homeless placed in apartments, with furniture and starter kits in September. Our cupboard is bare! The Resource Exchange really needs gently used: end tables, love seats, small couches, small rocking chairs, small kitchen/dining room tables and chairs, dressers, lamps, coffee tables, chairs etc. There is room in 2 storage units for slightly used furniture. We do not accept beds.

Friday Dinner: We continue to serve 150-300 guests each Friday evening.

Maryland Affordable Housing Coalition: On September 16 we attended a discussion about the National Housing Trust Fund and how it could end homelessness. The keynote speaker was Congressman Elijah E. Cummings.

Jonestown Planning Council: Prior to the meeting we met with the city reps from Development and Housing and Councilman Stokes office to discuss needed actions for some of the abandoned properties in the neighborhood. At our JPC meeting we had three Jonestown congregation reps, from St. Vincent's, Gallery Church and B'Nai Israel, who spoke to the group. They discussed their congregations and efforts in Jonestown to improve the neighborhood. We updated the community on development progress and the city meeting.

Peace & Justice Committee: We meet Monday but included information on the website.

Emergency Services: The men's program will give out clothing Thursday.

Solar Panels: We did several more revisions of the solar contract and requested roof inspection.

Facilities Committee (*Dave Potts and Dan Rolandelli, Co-Chairs*)

- 1.) The committee met on September 18. Bob Ball, Pat Ball, Chris McCullough, Mary Otterbein, David Potts, Bob Reuter, Danny Rolandelli, and Audrey Rogers were in attendance.
- 2.) Dan Rolandelli met with a representative from Gutter Helmet re: installing a gutter helmet (cover) over the gutter system on the south side of the church. The purpose of the gutter helmet is to keep debris (foliage, trash, etc.) from collecting in the gutter. Dan received a proposal for the gutter helmet, which he presented to the committee.
- 3.) It was agreed to get a proposal from an arborist to trim the trees in the park, and wait and see if trimming the trees will help solve the debris in the gutter problem, before presenting to council the proposal for the gutter helmet. Bob Reuter will head up this effort.
- 4.) The representative from Gutter Helmet felt as though the gutters and downspouts are adequately sized. This will be independently verified by David Potts.
- 5.) The outside of the church needs to be painted, the foundation requires shoring and some door frames need to be replaced. There are also several of the windows and other areas on the exterior of the church that appear to have flashing and or caulking that needs to be repaired or replaced. This is causing water damage on both the exterior and interior of the church.
- 6.) The topic of hiring a Preservationist, who would develop a scope of work for the exterior of the Church was discussed. Means of funding the Preservationist, and the work on the exterior of the Church was also discussed. Chris is exploring both of these topics further. Chris mentioned that there might be a potential the American Institute of Architects (AIA) may be able to help the church, pro bono, with this. David Potts to research further.
- 7.) The need for more parking was discussed. Bob Reuter feels as though we may be able to gain more parking by utilizing the current lot more efficiently. Bob Reuter, David Potts and Bob Ball are going to measure the lot to determine if more parking is possible. Several options for restriping the parking stalls was also discussed.
- 8.) Chris has spoken with somebody at Park Ridge (near Shot Tower) to see if we can use their lot for satellite parking on Sunday mornings.
- 9.) David Potts contacted Hirsch Electric about inspecting the electrical wiring in the undercroft. Joe Hirsch will get in touch with Chris to coordinate.
- 10.) Chris plans to get a few security companies to help assess the church's security needs and also provide cost proposals.
- 11.) The carpet in the dining room has been cleaned and reinstalled with a new carpet pad.

- 12.) Chris will coordinate with the Baltimore Trades' Guild for an estimate to repair the floor underlayment under Fr. Chuck's tub.
- 13.) David Potts and Bob Ball are going to prepare an estimate of costs to repair the damaged park benches.
- 14.) Chris submitted several ideas for how to use the now vacant spaces in the rectory. The committee approved the plan. Bob Reuter stated the rooms that would be used for the public would have to be handicap accessible. The committee agreed, with Bob's input, to explore options for accessibility. The repurposing plan will be submitted to the parish council for consideration.
- 15.) Sarah Kelley has taken up the charge of recreating the park working group.
- 16.) The next facility committee meeting is scheduled for November 6, at 7 P.M.
- 17.) Made an application for a grant to historical presentation committee for restoration of front of church \$5,000

Communications and Outreach Committee (*Laureen Miles Brunelli, Chair*)

The committee met on October 6, 2013. We evaluated some of our past efforts:

- **Summary of Registration/Directory** - Directory is nearly completed; we are waiting for proofs from the printer. Registration and database work will be done by staff going forward.
- **Website** - Identified issues with website, which include:
  - Frequency/consistency of posting by editors
  - Quality/Appropriateness of posts
  - Use of 3<sup>rd</sup> party tools
- **Signage** - Discussed the purpose of the corner sign, which includes tying the church and park together, showing that we are an active church community, and giving people actionable information. We agreed the current canvas sign is too difficult to read for those in cars at the intersection of Fayette and President. We discussed moving it to the fence closer to the parking lot where walkers and those moving more slowly in cars on to the Fallsway could read it. What would go in its place on the corner is a topic we tabled for future discussion, once we have a better sense of our outreach goals.
- **Facebook** - Laureen noted that she and Chris are experimenting with programming on the Facebook page with a variety of posts such as upcoming events, links to news stories, videos of the homilies, links to static pages on our website (About Us, Mission Statement), announcements that were in the bulletin, etc. At this point, it seems like Facebook may be more of an outreach tool than internal communication, but it needs more observation/experimentation.

**Committee Leadership/Growth of Committee**

Laureen told the committee that she does not want to chair it again next year. We discussed the need to get new committee members. We would like to have goals and places to "plug in" new members by Lent and clear goals for the new leadership.

### **Creating a “Funnel” Communication Structure**

In evaluating our past efforts one issue that continually resurfaced in regard to most modes of communication was the disparate nature of the flow of information. Each committee/ministry sends out information regarding its events to a variety of (or maybe only a single) medium. This is not only inefficient; it also can create silos of information because only those already involved in the ministry know where to get the information. To rectify this, Laureen has been collecting information from one source and moving it to another, e.g. taking notes during announcements and then adding them to the web or copying bulletin items on to Facebook or the website. But this is time-consuming and inefficient.

We discussed creating a system that is more of a funnel. For instance, parishioners or committee chairs who wish to put out information would send it to one place, e.g. an email address like “news@stvchurch.org” or possibly through a webform, and it would be then sent out via the media selected. However, we realize this would involve something of a culture change.

Jackie and Joe didn’t feel that they had a deep enough of an understanding of how information is currently being disseminated, who are the senders of information and what streams do they use.

Prior to the next, meeting, Laureen will prepare a report outlining how communication currently flows, and she will identify some of the structure of the parish committees and ministries. Members will read the report in advance, and the next meeting will be dedicated to working on how to implement a new communication structure.

### **Meeting Evaluation and Closing Prayer at 9:30 pm.**

**Reminders:** The Next Parish Council Meeting is November 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 pm.

Minutes submitted by  
Rosie Graf, Secretary to the Council