

# St. Vincent de Paul Parish Council Meeting Minutes

**December 9, 2014**

**In attendance:** Fr. Richard Lawrence, *Pastor*; Chris McCullough, *Pastoral Associate*; Audrey Rogers, *President, 9:30 Mass Rep*; Bethany Gregg, *Vice President 9:30 Mass Rep*; Peter La Count, *Secretary, 9:30 Mass Rep.*; Joe Yingling, *9:30 Mass Rep*; Peggy Meyer, *Co-Chair, Social Action Committee*; Peggy Shouse, *Chair, Education and Enrichment Committee*; Bob Betta, *Co-chair, Facilities Committee*; Matt Hill, *Vice-Chair Liturgy Committee*; Anne Freeburger, *Corporator*; and Michael Kelly, *Coordinator Park Working Group*.

**Absent:** Denise Hamilton, *11:45 Mass Rep*; John Kober, *7:15 Mass Rep*; Mark Palmer, *Chair, Finance Committee*; Dan Rolandelli, *Facilities Committee*; Graham Yearley, *Corporator*; and Kieran Ruppert, *Jesuit Volunteer Corps*.

The meeting began in prayer at 7:40 pm due to traffic problems.

## **Pastor's Report**

The Harbor East parishes met with Bishop Madden to discuss the Archdiocesan project, "Be Evangelizing Disciples," which is the beginning of the major Archdiocesan parish reorganization. All previously organized parish clusters will be organized into blocks and each block will be assigned a consultant who will provide the parameters for future planning so that churches become evangelizing and sustainable ('bodies, buildings, bucks'). The blocks will be rolled out sequentially. While we do not know which block schedule our inner city church cluster will be assigned (it could be as early as Spring), we do know that our cluster has organized itself, planned for 'priest-less' contingencies occurring among us, adopted some common programs, and is stable. Therefore we should look on this process as one that can reinvigorate the planning done to date and offer opportunities for future staff and cost sharing.

The Vatican has distributed 48 questions to the world's bishops based on the proceedings of the Synod on the Family. To be useful these questions need to be translated into intelligible language and it is hoped that the USCCB may take advantage of survey research capacities at American Catholic Universities (e.g. CARA) to translate these questions into a useful questionnaire for broad-based input.

## **Pastoral Associate Report**

Chris reported that the façade renovations have been completed minus the removal of the scaffolding. He also noted that the upper croft structural repair was completed for less than the estimate.

The new superintendent for St. V's began working the Monday before Thanksgiving. His normal working hours will be Monday – Friday from 7 am to 3 pm.

Chris also reported about a number of evangelization documents that are available for distribution. The advent book is out as are mailed post cards advertising Advent and Christmas events for parishioners, including the time change for the Children's Mass.

## **Finance Report**

The finance report was presented by Fr. Dick as the finance chair is out of the country on business.

He noted that the offertory income was \$4,000 above budget. The amount expended for our ministry of word is currently under budget, while the amount for facilities is slightly above budget. The pastoral leadership is currently at budget.

Fr. Dick also noted that for the first time in about a year, the attendance has been increasing as has the corresponding offertory amount.

A question arose as to how funds are transferred to our sister parish. Fr. Dick noted that the preferred method is to have an individual from the parish physically go there. If this is not possible, then the money is transferred via bank transfer.

## **Old Business**

### **The Park at St. Vincent**

Audrey introduced Michael Kelly who will chair the park working group. Michael will be the lead person regarding any interaction with City personnel regarding the park and the vendors who give out food. The current proposal is that food donors will be able to give out food only after 1:00 pm so as not to interfere with worship time at St. V. A letter will be written by Fr. Dick noting this request and the rationale behind this request.

Michael's interactions will be as follows:

The Department of Public Works is scheduled to clear the park of any stored materials on December 18, 2014. The weekend prior to this, a notice will be passed out giving notice of this event. Michael will work with Muriel Ridge in getting the materials moved. At this point, the materials stored appear to be a health risk as well as an eye sore. The materials will be transported to the City

storage facility at Cherry Hill Park and will be kept there for 90 days, per DPW policy. Anything not removed prior to Dec. 18 will be stored and the owners may pick these materials up any time within the 90 day window.

Michael also noted that there have not been many volunteers to clean up the park. There is a place on the St. V web site where people can sign up to clean up the park on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturdays of every month.

The people who provide food in the park will be asked (per Fr. Dick's letter) to stop donating food before 1:00 pm after January 1, 2015. Michael suggested that this request be made both with the letter and by in person contact. The Council supported this method of communicating the need. The letter will outline St. V's viewpoint and rationale for the time change. Michael also noted that, in his opinion, the majority of those receiving food are not residents of the park.

Michael will also spearhead the repair of the park benches. Many of the benches appear to be deteriorating.

Michael also strongly advocated for an outreach program for the park. He suggested this be comprised of alumni of the park who have successfully found housing and that these individuals could be trained as outreach workers. Parishioners and the outreach workers would work in conjunction to operate the park.

### **Council Recommendations for Faith, Fun and Fellowship**

The Council discussed the recommendations made to the council.

One of the Council-accepted goals of the 2014 Parish Strategic Plan was to undertake a formal evaluation of the parish's Children's Religious Education Program. Ms. Pam Sanders, a parishioner with substantial experience as the principal of an Archdiocesan school, spent six months in 2014 conducting this evaluation.

Ms. Sanders presented the findings of that evaluation to the Parish Council at their November 2014 meeting and these elicited significant discussion. Subsequently in preparation for their December meeting, Council members judged the value of the recommendations and reviewed this exercise.

The accepted recommendations of the Parish Council are these:

1. The religious education program must be mission-driven and have specific program goals; therefore attention must be paid to clarifying the mission. Without this attention, program evaluation is impossible and any parish program that is resource intensive in terms of funding and volunteer time requires formal and systematic program evaluation for transparency and accountability.

2. Our parish should move toward Archdiocesan certification of all teachers in the Faith, Fun, and Fellowship Program. It is noted that certification is *pro forma* for individuals with master's degrees in theology and only requires a letter from the pastor. This is the situation for half of the program teachers and certification should be obtained as soon as possible to demonstrate good faith compliance.

3. The parish needs a distinct and coordinated middle school program that recognizes the critical importance of this major transitional stage. Ms. Sanders noted the outline for this that was proposed and accepted by the Parish Council in 2010 but was not implemented by staff.

The Council requests a report from the pastor at its April meeting on the incorporation of these recommendations in the planning and implementation of the program for the 2015-2016 academic year.

### **Strategic Planning Cluster Groups**

Audrey noted that there had been many successful meetings of the focus groups. She reported that 21 groups had met and that only other 4 groups had gotten little or no response from individuals named in the geographic area.

### **Town Meeting Reflection**

The Council discussed the parishioners' comments and questions at the Town Meeting which occurred during Fr. Dick's hospitalization. It was also noted that any marketing plan for St. V's should include all demographic ages as various ages provide different strengths. It was also noted that many parishioners commented that they liked having children active in the liturgy.

### **Committee Reports**

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

1. The Education & Enrichment Committee met on November 13, 2014. At that time, more than half of the geographic cluster groups had met. Two groups were unable to schedule meetings.
2. Dinner For Eight will resume in January.
3. The children's leaders were not confirmed at that time, but have agreed since then.
4. Based on Fr. Lawrence's recommendation, Reading Mark for the First Time will be available to the parish for study while we are reading Mark during February and March.
5. There was discussion on the need to focus on evangelization and how to spread the word about our parish.

6. A Parish Day of Reflection is scheduled for February 28 at the Shrine of St. Anthony in Ellicott City. Some possible leaders have been contacted.
7. A survey of the parish was discussed, comparable to the survey done by the liturgy committee every 5 years. We focused attention on determining what programs people would help plan, what they would actually attend, rather than activities people think are a good idea, but to which they are not willing to commit time or effort.
8. All committee members were given information on the necessary STAND training.
9. Good news: I have had some inquiries from some possible new members of the E & E committee! I am all in favor of that!

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

Friday Dinner: We had the standard Thanksgiving meal the day after Thanksgiving and served the guests instead of having them stand in line for a buffet. We decorated the tables and had many servers.

Emergency Services: The food program gave groceries to families in November and spent \$670. The men's program gave clothing in November to 58 men and spent \$1870.

Peace & Justice Committee: We ask you to pray for two of our BRIDGE leaders. The Secretary, Jackie Gowans Maultby, died suddenly from sinusitis and David Casey has stage 4 cancer and is receiving chemotherapy. Please also pray for Bonita, our contact with Citizens Against State Executions, who was just diagnosed with Alzheimer's. With Pax Christi MD we led the Advent Services at Mission Helpers and heard an inspiring talk by Lin Romano, Chief Operating Officer of Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation and long time peace activist. We had many parishioners turn out for the gleaning day with Gather Baltimore on November 22 and we thank them. Next year we will schedule it earlier in the year and hope for warmer weather. We hosted a representative from Limay for a week. Our sister parish in Limay is having trouble raising funds for medicine and seniors. Beyond the Boundaries sent a letter to the Archdiocese expressing our belief that when selling property they should consider the affordable housing law.

Jonestown Planning Council: We had a large crowd attend the November meeting and discuss problems in Jonestown. The Police Department officers and those on the street joined us in finding positive solutions to crime in Jonestown. We met again last week and heard that Ronald McDonald House has raised more than half their funding and will break ground next year. The Hender Creamery developer is just waiting for the city to sign off to begin their 287 unit \$69 million project. City Housing and Parks approved the McKim park plan. Residents discussed strategy with police for safety.

The Resource Exchange: We supplied 8 Healthcare for the Homeless clients

with furniture and starter kits in November and are increasing the number of clients per move day to try to get most with furniture by Christmas. Our furniture donations continue at a good pace so that we still need the third storage unit. If anyone has storage space available for us, please let us know.

Helping Up Mission: HUM men are cleaning the park the first and third Saturdays of each month.

### **Liturgy Committee** (Valerie Rolandelli, Chair and Matt Hill, Vice-Chair)

- Liturgy Committee members need to complete volunteer training/commitment at [www.shieldthevulnerable.org](http://www.shieldthevulnerable.org) More extensive training for those who work regularly with children, unsupervised by parents. Much of training focuses on identifying signs of abuse and what to do when you see those signs.
  - Create your own user ID and password.
  - Anne Gibson prepared instructions specific for Liturgy Committee that was distributed at meeting.
  - Print out certificate at the end of the training and give to Anne Gibson
  - Volunteers need to comply before end of year if possible, but definitely before Lent.
  
- Easter Vigil Proposal
  - Recommendation to keep all-night practice with tweaks and reconstruction for those who cannot participate all night. Family life subcommittee supportive of practice and saw as pilgrimage, not a mandate and thought worthwhile to keep up tradition. Parish council approved keeping vigil.
  - Subcommittee: Chris, Colleen, Anne Maura, Jack Gohn, and Joe Hamilton will have first meeting Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. Geri will support committee and give ideas. Subcommittee will report by email on progress
  - Booklet re: explaining Easter Vigil – People who couldn't come would have booklet with more than a synopsis. Subcommittee will handle this.
  
- Advent and Christmas planning
  - Theme: Waiting for the God who ... reveals, heals, inspires, amazes
  - Janice found old Banner that can be refurbished to work
  - Janice passed out list of readings and planners for Advent. Planners will only be doing the prayers of the faithful during Advent. Dec. 7 Geri will be liturgy planner. Matt will help out with bell ringers. Also, Audrey and Colleen are switching. No liturgy planner for Christmas Day mass. Janice will circulate revised schedule

- All advent liturgy planners will be doing petitions only
- Advent planners: Geri, Matt, Al
- Reminder to readers re: projecting and volume?
  - We have close to 57 readers
  - Reminders don't appear to be working – may need to take people aside and given feedback on lack of projection and/or unorthodoxy.
  - Peer review for readers? Perhaps readers and liturgy planners must have a 5-minute post-mass review to address 3 points/questions in certain place. Could have special focus on certain persons.
  - Complaints are from people out in the pews so may want to invite people in the pews to give feedback?
  - Other option is to assign people for a series of readings... even 2 weeks in a row with feedback could help folks to learn from feedback?
  - Concern for people who may feel put-off by too much evaluation.
  - Better to get feedback from peers than from general congregation that can get rough
  - Need to communicate need for the peer review if not actual complaints from congregation
  - Janice will put together plan to bring to the next meeting
  - Other option is for Joe to have volume control over microphone. Unsure about cost. Joe will investigate cost to control. Other problem is that microphone picks up sound coming from speakers. Not sure if you can turn mic on and off from platform?
- Lessons and Carols: Committee would like Anne Maura to pick readings for Lessons and Carols on Dec. 14. Joe Organ will lay out program and suggest where readings may fall. Janice will coordinate with Joe and Anne to line up readers. Lessons and Carols starts at 6pm for reception and then lessons. Men's' Chorus participating this year as well.
  - Reception? Worked well last year with small catering. Valerie will ask Jeff Smith about possible catering for 80-100 people?
  - Outreach and Communication for Lessons and Carols:
    - Poster in gathering space still exists. Audrey will post in the gathering space
    - Reaching out to Jonestown planning already.
    - Peggy will talk to Our Lady of the Fields
    - Website will be updated – Chris

- Chris will be sending postcard re: Christmas mass time change and Lessons and Carols to registered parishioners and TSC recipients
- Announcements in Advent
  - Chris will make announcement about no announcements on Sunday, Nov. 22;
  - Valerie to provide Chris a write up for bulletin that no announcements in Advent
  - Closing announcement to invite to gathering space?
    - Keep to one pre-written announcement by Mary Lynn using cantor microphone... remove microphone from side.
      - Keep it short and to the point about welcoming visitors below
      - Valerie will advise Mary Lynn
  - Will keep greeting announcement by cantor at the beginning of Mass.
  - Penance service at Corpus Christi on December 10 at 7:30 pm
  - Chris is working on Advent booklet and has thrown wider net to get submissions.
- Gathering Space
  - Chris will talk to Lee about signage as part of reclaiming gathering space
  - Need to have signage about Book of Remembrance as it is being used as a visitor's sign-in.
    - Perhaps need to move book near ambo? Maybe by the altars?
    - Ritualize the signing of the book? Would elevate purpose and process it to the ambo or candles to indicate that this is different type of book. Perhaps placed out in October and then taken down in November?
    - Concern with insulating book from more regular use and not have to wait until October.
    - Chris: Could invite people to place remembrance petitions throughout year on papers placed in box but then keep book special and set apart.
    - Book now is placed at foot of the altar on All Saints/All Souls Day... no other use at present
    - Follow-up next meeting
- LENT
  - Colleen will take care of banners with young people



- Cycle B from three years ago: God's covenant – new banner each week.
  - Banners this year may not reflect themes as closely but still based on scriptural readings
  - Stewardship and evangelization discussed in education & enrichment committee. Understanding evangelization beyond negative connotations, etc. Strategic plan calls for unfolding stewardship campaign in lent.
  - Committee decided that theme is: “This is the time of fulfillment. The Kingdom of God is at hand.” (Taken from the Gospel for the first Sunday of Lent.)
  - Would like to have every liturgy planner begin with this statement and then expound on themes incorporating evangelization and stewardship when possible.
  - First planner should set the tone and coordinate with banner makers
  - Valerie will be liturgy planner for first Sunday in Lent.
  - Janice for second Sunday
  - Holy Thursday – see if Peter and Susan Lecount are willing to plan this;
  - Good Friday – Anne Maura
  - Vigil – Jack Gohn
  - Palm Sunday – Lauren and Sara (??) Valerie to ask.
- Teaching Mass – this is one of the Committee's goals
  - 5 Ordinary Sundays in January/February - possible time to do this and prepare us for Lent;
  - Focus on 5 points during each of those five Sundays?
  - Chris will send around the “Why do we...” FAQ's
  - Janice: Two people sitting near altar off to the side. One person asks question. Other person responds with explanation? Lights used to direct attention. Or, could have people sitting in front pews and then step to the front when the time arrives. Also could have longer explanation in the bulletin.
  - Points covered should focus on meaning of various aspects of liturgy and take opportunity to promote mindfulness of sacred space.
  - Janice would be able to help with this but cannot begin planning until late December; she could get it together by Jan. 18 and will chair subcommittee.
    - Matt and Amber will email and discuss points for newcomers to explain
    - Colleen will participate too

- Next Meeting: January 24, 2015 from 10am to 12pm in education room. Valerie will be absent. Matt will coordinate. Focus on Lent and Summer Series. Bring all ideas for summer series (possibly V2-based?)

### **Facilities Committee** (Bob Betta, Chair, Dan Rolandelli, Co-Chair)

The following issues were discussed as part of old business:

- Jim Dimmer was welcomed as the new superintendent and he gave a report on the status of the facility as he sees it to date. He reported that health and safety issues were his first priority and, after an assessment of supplies, he has established an account with Odorite and placed an initial order for cleaning supplies. In this context, we also brought up and discussed our preference for environmentally sound cleaning materials both in use and in initial manufacture. Jim indicated there was a price differential and he indicated he would check on that. He also indicated that everything he has ordered is safe for use for our purposes. He has cleaned up the workshop area to the left of the stage in the undercroft and has organized it. In so doing, he found much evidence of rat and mice infestation. Terminix has been in and set traps, but we will need to fill the holes from the outside that are allowing the rodents in. Jim has also cleaned and organized the area at the foot of the stairs which lead from the church to the undercroft. He will continue to clean out and organize and we will need to notify other parishioners and committees to identify any items that they want kept. Otherwise, he will be disposing of anything for which he sees no need. Once this has been completed, he will establish some policies and procedures regarding supplies and usage, so that everyone who makes use of our facilities will know where supplies are and how to account for them
- Chris reported that the west side refurbishing project has been completed, except for some touchups and repairs of areas where scaffolding was installed. As part of this process the trusses for the uppercroft have been brought in and are being installed
- The accessibility project in the rectory has been postponed until the first of the year. Chris felt that the start date that had been provided, 12/15, did not represent good timing and so asked for the postponement. The repairs to Fr. Chuck's bathroom will coincide with the project.
- The Pepsi refrigerator in the kitchen of the undercroft has been removed and some cleaning out is being done. However, the main work of cleaning and reorganizing the kitchen will not begin until after the holidays.
- Some parishioners, namely Dan Rolandelli and Bob Ball, continue to monitor the entrance to the rectory from the church during 9:30 Mass.

Other possible solutions to this security issue were discussed, but no other solution was felt to be safe and practical. Chris reported that the police in attendance at a Jonestown community meeting suggested to neighboring businesses using security cameras that feed into the police station. That is something we may consider, but Jim warned that we need to be willing to prosecute should we identify burglars. Bob Reuter reported that there are many lights out on the exterior of the church and rectory. Jim will evaluate.

- We also spoke about replacing the double doors to the undercroft to something more secure and easier to lock
- We questioned about recycling for the church: the when, where, and how of it.
- We also spoke about continuing the restoration project in the spring, but there are no definite plans for that at this point. Because of weather issues, nothing else to the exterior can be done until, at least, the spring.
- Jim will be establishing a schedule for regular maintenance of the church and rectory.
- In discussing the issue of the sound in the undercroft, Jim suggested that a drop ceiling would need to be dropped too far to make this a practical solution and acoustical tiles on the ceiling would not accomplish much and be difficult to maintain. He suggested putting a curtain around the stage, which could be opened when needed. He thought this would absorb a lot of the sound and would be a good first step. We will evaluate the cost of that.
- Chris reported that he has not been able to consult with the parishioner who had reported seeing a good use of signs at another parish. Chris will continue to pursue this. Jim reported that Corpus Christi has an account that they use for making signs and that we might be able to utilize that in some way.
- Bob Reuter presented information to be considered about the installation of bike racks for the parking lot
- Audrey asked about the status of the gutters and was told that they would be part of the restoration project
- Jim reported that he had met with Mike Kelley, coordinator of the park services, and they will work together to get the benches repaired and painted
- Audrey reported that the bells and dedication plaque should be in place for Christmas
- Finally, Chris reported that he heard from Hirsch Electric, who had previously evaluated our electrical system, and estimated that it would cost about \$75,000 to upgrade it. They have had a very good year and

would like to give back, as a result of that. They have offered to complete this upgrade at no cost to us. They have been in and had BGE in to evaluate and plan. The paperwork should be completed by the end of the year and the work will begin after the first of the New Year. A huge thank-you to them and to God for bringing them to us. We are also grateful to David Potts who set up the initial contact with them.

It was noted during the meeting that the handle in three bathrooms don't work – trouble getting out – it's too loose.

It was also noted that the lines in parking lot to be painted in July 2015.

The next meeting was scheduled for January 27, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

### **Communications and Outreach Committee (Submitted by Audrey Rogers)**

Laureen Brunelli has resigned as chair. The committee met on December 4 to evaluate its current status and the utility of its present charter. To date, the committee has focused on both internal and external communication and outreach activities. In its first few years, the committee reformatted the bulletin, redesigned the website, and examined functionality of the email tree. Because of these activities it retained the responsible volunteers as *ex officio* members. Presently, the production of the bulletin is entirely managed by parish staff as is the predominant content on the website and *Facebook* entries. This is an arrangement that the committee was working toward since the public face of our parish needs to be compliant with our own parish and Archdiocesan policies. At its December meeting the committee decided to recreate itself by rewriting its charter to focus on the outreach and growth initiatives that are being informed by the Strategic Plan. It will no longer be responsible for internal communications, although it will participate in evaluating the website diagnostics annually as well as available metrics from other media that may be employed.

Furthermore, the committee will design a marketing plan to give structure to this outreach and growth effort. The marketing plan will be comprehensive and multi-faceted, taking advantage of all the information and ideas coming in from the cluster group meetings. .

The committee will meet monthly until these important tasks are completed. Once the committee's scope and mission are better clarified, new leadership will be recruited.

Next meeting is Monday, January 5, 2015.

### **New Business**

None reported

Meeting was closed with prayer at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Peter La Count