

## **St. Vincent de Paul Church   Parish Council Meeting**

September 15, 2015   Minutes

Present: Fr. Richard Lawrence (Pastor); Joe Yingling, President (9:30); Peter LaCount, Vice President (9:30); Colleen McCahill, Secretary (9:30); John Kober (7:15); Mike Jacko (9:30); Matt Hill (Liturgy); Peggy Meyer (Social Action); Mark Palmer (Finance); Denny McMullin (Education & Enrichment); Bob Betta (Facilities); Anne Freeburger (Corporator); Michael Keating (Outreach and Engagement); Gerry Fialkowski (Exit Interview group); Mary Lynn Myers, Al Reichelt, Pat Ball, Bob Ball, Ray Heil (parishioners).

Absent: Denise Hamilton (11:45); Graham Yearley (Corporator)

The meeting began at 7:30 with prayer.

### **Pastor's Report**

Fr Lawrence reported that Pastoral Associate Chris McCullough completed his last day of work at St Vincent's at 5:30. He said they parted as friends.

*Chris' resignation.* Fr Lawrence observed that there remains a great deal of anxiety and turmoil over this issue. He said the Parish Council has two tasks around this:

- Reconfiguring the parish staffing.
- Attending to the pain, anger, other emotions and needs of parishioners.

Regarding staffing:

- We have money available in our budget which can be used in hiring new staff and/or paying current staff to take on new duties and responsibilities. This money comes from both Chris' salary, and last year's costs to support our Jesuit volunteer, Kieran (whose contract ended at the beginning of August).
- The staff, after discussion, consider at least one option as feasible: hire to specific needs. Currently, this would mean hiring a person to lead middle school through adult education and Christian formation programs (including sacramental preparation). This could be a person hired at .5FTE. Other on-site duties previously performed by Chris could possibly be performed by current staff, or current staff with the addition of a new person hired strictly for clerical duties.

*Speaker's Series.* Planning for this is going very well.

*Archdiocesan Planning Process.* Fr Lawrence will attend a meeting for this process on October 5. He will report back on this process at the October Council meeting.

*Database.* The Archdiocese now requires all parishes to use "ParishSoft," a cloud-based database. Fr Lawrence, Laureen Brunelli and volunteer Pat Frascati will attend an October training in the use of the database, after which Pat will do the necessary data entry to construct St Vincent's database.

*Archdiocesan audit.* We will undergo an Archdiocesan audit sometime this fall.

*175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St. Vincent's.* Fr Lawrence reminded the Council that we need to begin planning for this celebration, to occur in fall 2016.

*Church restoration and renovation.* It appears that the Historic Trust fund will have the monies needed to begin work on the east (front) of the church very soon; possibly also the north (side).

### **Mission Statement for Religious Education for Youth**

Joe Yingling reported that this mission statement had been requested by the Parish Council and was now complete. He read the statement.

### **Report, Discussion and Planning regarding resignation of PA Chris McCullough**

Council read the report from Chris McCullough's September 8<sup>th</sup> exit interview. Gerry Fialkowski, facilitator for the exit interview team, took questions. She explained how, to some degree, the report must stand on its own. The goals of the interview were to allow Chris to speak candidly and in confidence about his reasons for leaving, and learn whether there might be ways in which (if we hire a new person in a similar position) St V's might avoid any roadblocks/pitfalls that may have contributed to his resignation. Council requested the exit interview team meet with Fr Lawrence to discuss specifics affecting the future of the parish. Gerry agreed to convene this meeting.

Council discussed the ways Chris served the community. These included:

- attracting and keeping new parishioners, especially younger ones;
- emphasizing new education and formation opportunities;
- a "spiritual glue" and also booster or champion for the community;
- a good listener and supporter of parishioners' activities;
- a networker helping committees work effectively;
- continuity or bridge (for a parish anticipating change at the time of Fr Lawrence's retirement) to carry the mission of the parish into the future.

Council discussed, in light of committee input, staff input, and parishioner concerns, how to address **a)** Fr Lawrence's second directive [attend to the pain of the parish] and **b)** where we should go from here.

- Colleen and Peter asked about Archdiocesan expectations of parish leadership models for the future. Fr Lawrence responded that no lay leadership is planned, but that other models are in progress, i.e. through the current Archdiocesan planning process.
- Gerry spoke about the need to "gather the family," to affirm the concern of parishioners
- Mike J pointed out the importance of our Gospel mandate in this discussion and planning, reminding us that other parishes change leadership more regularly.
- Pat Ball suggested we should let the Archdiocese know that our model – despite the inability to advance Chris to PLD – has worked well for the parish.
  - o Who'd be best to carry that message? We did not answer this.
- We discussed the relative advantage of having a PA in place when the time comes for the Archdiocese to place a new priest as pastor of St Vincent's (probably with another church/churches, in one of a number of models).
- Pat Ball, and others, invited the Council – and the whole parish - to think holistically, creatively, and with a re-focus on vision.

- Several spoke of the need for any future Pastoral Associate, or person hired in a similar role, to have both important leadership qualities (including theological education) and responsibilities.

Joe Yingling asked if he was hearing consensus that we wished to continue, at this time, with the pastoral leadership model of Priest Pastor plus Pastoral Associate. Council affirmed this. We began planning.

- The exit interview team will meet with Fr Lawrence to discuss, in confidence, useful learnings from the exit interview, including suggestions for planning for any future hires. They will make recommendations for a job description for a future PA.
- An ad hoc group (Pat Ball, Joe Yingling, Peter LaCount, Mike Jacko, and another person to be chosen) will convene. They will consider committee feedback, Council discussion, and parishioner input on the value of/proper role of a PA for our parish, and will recruit further parishioner feedback. They will make recommendations for a job description.

#### **Other business**

Peggy Meyer reported that the Peace and Justice committee, in cooperation with the Esperanza Center, is planning to host a traveling memorial in our park, for the youth in Baltimore who died of gun violence in 2015. She requested Council approval for this event. Approval was given. Colleen suggested Peggy contact the Episcopal Cathedral of the Incarnation, which maintains a standing memorial with similar purpose.

Mike K shared posters and postcards printed to advertise the upcoming Speaker's Series on *Laudato Si*. He invited us to take these and post them. He also reported the St. V's planning team feels very ready for the events.

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer at 9:40.

Our next meeting is **Tuesday, October 13 at 7:30pm**.

Respectfully submitted,  
Colleen McCahill

## Meeting Minutes and Reports

### September 2015

#### Facilities Committee Meeting Minutes

**9/8/15**

In Attendance: Bob Betta, Bob Ball, Bob Reuter, Jim Dimmer, Denny McMullin, Pat Ball

Not present: Dave Potts, Jerome Bird, Rita McMullin, Dan Rolandelli, Charlie Chapman

Jim reported that all repairs have been done in the park: the benches have been repaired and the lights have been installed by BGE. They are guaranteed for 5 years and BGE will repair any problems that occur during that time. The cameras have also been installed and are functional. Jim reported that the park residents are aware of the cameras and are moving outside the park or to the outskirts of the park, where they are not in view. In the future, we may need cameras in other positions, but the park is remaining clean. Downtown Partnership is coming every morning during the week and doing the cleanup. The fence is fixed and the gates have also been installed and have needed some repairs, but are functional.

Jim has no news on the installation of the doors in the undercroft and men's clothing room. The company was given the okay to order the doors, but Jim has not heard back from them. He will follow up on this. If we can't get a response from them, we may consider having Baltimore Trades Guild do that work. Jim has had a lot of success working with them and getting projects done quickly.

Jim reported that Lou Mank seems to be interested in working with us on the drain repair. He has not had a chance to connect with him, but will call him tomorrow to see if he can work with him to assess this project and arrange for its completion.

Bob Reuter reported that the handrail on the ramp outside the church is in need of repair. Jim agreed to ask Orel, from BTG about doing that repair.

Jim also reported that Bath Fitters has come out to assess the needs in Fr. Chuck's bathroom and will be sending someone else out to do additional measurements. Only the wall needs to be replaced, not the tub. It will take 2 – 4 weeks for this project and will cost \$2900.

Jim also discussed the need to set up account(s) and/or get a credit card that he can use for maintenance projects. He is not in a position to spend money for supplies and then get reimbursed. The committee agreed that these arrangements needed to be made in order to ensure that routine maintenance of the building can be done in a timely fashion and within the maintenance budget.

The lightning suppression system has been replaced.

The remainder of the meeting was spent discussing the impact on this committee of Chris McCullough's departure. Jim has had very good access to Chris and shared common goals. Father Lawrence will not be personally available as much as Chris and has a different outlook regarding maintenance and facilities issues, so Jim will need to establish a working relationship directly with Father Lawrence. The committee agreed that this will be a challenge, especially if Father Lawrence wants to continue to maintain a reduced work schedule. We believe that Father Lawrence should continue a reduced work schedule for his own benefit and having a pastoral associate has proven to be a valuable necessity for the work of

this committee. A separate report will be done regarding this issue and will be presented to the Parish Council for consideration at the meeting on September 15<sup>th</sup>. Several of us will attend that meeting.

The next meeting was scheduled for October 6 at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by

Pat Ball

**To: St. Vincent's Parish Council and Father Lawrence**

**From: Friends of St. Vincent's Park 9/13/15**

We write on behalf of the Friends of St. Vincent's Park to offer a suggestion to the Pastor and the Parish Council. As you consider how to go about replacing Chris McCullough, we imagine you will want to consider various options, ranging from updating the job description of the pastoral associate position of Chris, to perhaps options like dividing up some of his responsibilities into various part-time or volunteer positions.

We request that, as you evaluate how to engage the parish community in addressing how to proceed, you take into consideration that the presence of St. Vincent's Park is an important element of the mission of the parish. We would like to work with you to think about how best to support the Park as an integral element of the Christian mission of the parish.

Several new developments in the Park have occurred of late that are both promising and challenging:

- *The closing of the Park due to safety considerations in early August.* We have now re-opened the Park without fanfare. The census of people sleeping in the Park is now more limited --3 to 5 people, plus the same number on the front steps and entrance to the church. Before closing the Park, we had as many as 20 to 25 people overnight that was declining to about 10 or 12 as the threats and violence increased that led to the decision to close. Many of the people and groups visiting the park to feed and provide clothing to people are back, so that, for example, crowds on Sunday morning and on Saturdays are similar to what we experienced before the closing.
- *Action by the parish facilities committee, the superintendent and others while the park was closed* led to the restoration/replacement of all the wooden benches, installation of two surveillance cameras, the installation of proper gates for the park entrances and the decision to upgrade substantially the lighting with an arrangement with BG&E that should lead to construction in the next few weeks. Our Superintendent, Jim Dimmer, will arrange instruction about how the cameras work and can best be used to improve safety in the park.
- *Notification to Friends of St. Vincent's Park by the Downtown Partnership that it is prepared to clean the park each weekday.* Their highly professional crews move people out of the park and clean the park, but they will not address the people and belongings on the steps and entrance to the church or the sidewalk area along Lexington St. to the north of the parking lot. Their presence during the week is an invaluable asset to the parish.
- Kevin Daly's Fellowship application to OSI that, if successful, may well bring crucial staff support and program activity to the Park.
- Notable increase of Parish interest in the park, particularly:
  - *Our success (even before the closing) in maintaining Saturday and Sunday coverage for clearing and cleaning the Park from 7 to 9AM.*
  - *The migration and renaming of the Park Working Group to a more sizeable and engaged "Friends of St. Vincent's Park" including*  
\*efforts to clean the steps of the Church,

\*parishioners joining with The River Christian Fellowship in working with people in the Park.

\*efforts to build a relationship with the Southeastern District of the Baltimore Police Department.

We see several areas for discussion the role of the Park within the St. Vincent's parish community:

- continued monitoring the safety of the park,
- some modest, durable landscaping to enhance the appearance of the park,
- strengthening relationships between the parish and the police, the homelessness services community, Jonestown, and city government officials,
- building a more effective and efficient network of the large numbers of volunteers and organizations from the Baltimore Metropolitan Area and the State of Maryland that seek to serve people of the park,
- seeking volunteers who would agree to spend time during the week in the park, more or less taking the temperature of the Park and building relationships rather than cleaning or clearing it,
- exploring the possibilities of opening the bathroom across from the undercroft, on the assumption that the essential challenge is staffing with monitors—that an open St. V bathroom without monitors is unwise if not reckless,
- encouraging people from the parish to join existing members of the Friends group, whether cleaning the park, or working with people in the park, so that they could feel comfortable pairing with another parishioner and learning first hand how experienced people interact with people in the Park,
- thinking more broadly about the several activities of the parish, including the men's clothing ministry, the food pantry, the Friday dinners, TRE [The Resource Exchange in partnership with Healthcare for the Homeless], and the work of the Friends of the Park itself [reflecting elements of partnership with Helping Up Mission as well as the River Christian Fellowship]—conceiving all of these as integral elements of the parish mission to the poor and marginalized in our neighborhood and city. We should be doing more to think of each of these functions—and other parish activities—as distinctive elements of the parish's larger social justice ministry. Should, e.g., the parish council composition or meetings, or our outreach and engagement activities, reflect more the importance of our multi-faceted ministry to the poor?

Thank you!

The Friends of St. Vincent's Park

### **Liturgy Committee Notes**

#### ***September 2015 Parish Council***

The Liturgy Committee has not met since the last Parish Council meeting.

Our annual retreat and first meeting of the year will be Sept. 19 from 9:30am to 1:30pm.

Our agenda:

- Mass Attendance Review and Evangelization/*Laudato Si* Brainstorm (20 min.)
- Setting goals for Committee this year (30 min)
- Day of the Dead Planning (10 min)
- Advent Planning and Advent Booklet (30 min)
- Follow-up on bell ringers and middle school altar dressers (10 min)
- Christmas Midnight Mass changing times (20 min)
- Non-Easter Baptisms in front of church (20 min)

- Teaching Masses (10 min)
- Plan meeting times for rest of the year (10 min)
- LUNCH

### **St. Vincent's Outreach & Engagement Committee**

**Monday, Aug. 24**

Our next meeting will be Monday, Sept. 14, at 7:30 p.m. For those who were not at the meeting, please let me know if you will not be able to attend this meeting.

Brenda's husband, chef Jeff Smith, will coordinate the refreshments with Anne Maura.

I will reach out to Arthur to see if he can adapt his reflections for the Advent Booklet.

I will reach out to committee chairs about what they can do to continue the efforts after the series is complete.

Laureen will find out if our childcare workers can work the nights of the events. If so, we will provide free childcare. If not, we won't.

Kathy is coordinating with the security company. We will have two guards for four hours each night. Joe will coordinate with video team and work out all details regarding audio/video. To be on the safe side, we will not involve speakers in Skype chats during the Q&A.

Lee will post updates to Twitter and Facebook accounts during all three nights.

Here's Rita's update on volunteers:

Greeters: 10 people. They can all do all 3 evenings.

I assume 2 of these volunteers will be used for accepting donations.

Ushers: 6 for all 3 evenings

4 more for 9/30

3 more for 10/14

2 more for 10/28

This includes me, but we cannot be there till 6:30.

Parking: 3, including Denny--cannot be there till 6:30

Refreshments: 4

The refreshment people have been advised that they will miss at least part of the Q & A time.

Laureen and Pam are working on the publicity, posters, program, etc... Laureen will send around a list of locations where we need posters posted for people to sign-up for. We will also ask folks after an upcoming 9:30 mass to help post.

Pam is working with Ivy Bookshop so we can offer books for sale from the speakers, the Pope, and other climate change titles, perhaps. She will need a few volunteers to staff the books as Ivy has other events on our nights.

Everything is coming together well. Thank you all for all your efforts.

Please let me know if I missed anything.

Michael

### **Social Action Committee Report**

**August**

*The Resource Exchange:* We supplied 9 Health Care for the Homeless clients with furniture and starter kits in August. We scheduled an extra day (today) to deliver just beds to three clients so they would not have to sleep on the floor and will deliver the rest of their furniture in October. We could use gently used full size sheets, blankets, comforters/spreads and new pillows.

*Food Justice:* Five parishioners had a very productive garden work day August 22 at the Roots & Branches School garden, along with a Master Gardener Peggy Cummings. We weeded beds, installed some tree saplings & plants, watered, harvested produce and then delivered the food donation to St. Peter Claver Catholic Church in West Baltimore. Fr. Ray Bomberger was thankful for our donation and commented on the strong, fragrant scent of our fresh, organically grown herbs, especially the basil & mint. The food was distributed to parishioners attending the weekend masses. We harvested: 5 oz. garlic, 1 lb. 14 oz. basil, 5 lb.s mint, 1 lb. 3 oz. turnips, 12 oz collards, 9 oz. mixed lettuces, 2 lb.s 7 oz. scallions, 1 lb. cherry & plum tomatoes and 1 carrot. Though this was a fairly small harvest we were happy to outreach to our faith neighbor in the West Baltimore community in solidarity with the recently formed Black Church Food Security Network, which we are involved in through Baltimore Food & Faith.

*Jonestown Planning Council:* City Springs Elementary/Middle School started school in their new space in Freedom Academy. Ronald McDonald House is still on target and the Hendler group's financial backer backed out after the riots. City is in talks with developers for vacant properties. Jonestown has a new logo - come 10-1-15 to Jewish Museum - exciting plans!

*Emergency Services:* The food program gave groceries to families in August and spent \$900. The men's program did not give clothing in August but spent \$745 in preparation for their startup in September. They are still looking for a volunteer to accept the government food on the 4th Friday of each month, time flexible, and prepare a monthly report on remaining food. Please let Peggy know if you could do that.

*Friday Dinner:* We have been unable to reach the First Baptist Church in Tomball, TX to get pictures they took when here, discussed in last month's report. We had 1252 guests in August and 375 on the 4th Friday. The smallest crowd we had last month was 279. Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parishioners donated some food and are planning a dinner at their church for the consistent volunteers after this Friday's dinner. We continue to give clothing and suitcases and back packs many weeks. Garden Harvest donated bread and desserts and are working on getting us meat that OLF or OLPH will cook.

*Peace & Justice Committee:* We had four parishioners work on the United Churches' Habitat build day Saturday and no one was hurt! Pax Christi will have a wine and cheese social at the Frascati's on 9/19 at 6:30 p.m. Sr. Patricia Chappell, USA Pax Christi Executive Director, will be the keynote speaker at their Day of Reflection, 10/17 at St. Vincent's, 9:30 - 1:00. Please consider attending. Two schools in San Juan de Limay installed solar panels to help with air conditioning. This spring, 13 people died in Limay from extreme heat.