

St. Vincent de Paul Church

Parish Council Meeting

December 8, 2015 Minutes

Present: Fr. Richard Lawrence (Pastor); Joe Yingling, President (9:30); Peter LaCount, Vice President (9:30); Colleen McCahill, Secretary (9:30); Mike Jacko (9:30); Bob Betta (Facilities); Denny McMullin (Education & Enrichment); Michael Keating (Outreach and Engagement); Ray Heil (Social Action); Denise Hamilton (11:45); Anne Freeburger (Corporator); Matt Hill (Liturgy)
Absent: Mark Palmer (Finance); Graham Yearley (Corporator); John Kober (7:15)

President Joe Yingling called the meeting to order at 7:32pm.

We opened with a prayer from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si*.

Pastor's Report

Archdiocesan Survey – Fr Lawrence reported that about 25% (61) of our average weekend mass attendees have completed the survey online. We also have about 60 surveys completed on paper. He reiterated the importance of every single parishioner completing the survey.

Financial Report

Mark Palmer is out of town. Fr Lawrence gave the report.

- He handed out copies of the Income/Budget statement, presented in a new format. He asked the Council to comment (after discussion of content) on the format; is it readable/could there be any improvements, etc. Fr Lawrence also handed out a balance sheet and an Offertory/Attendance comparison.
- Drop in attendance over the last year is of concern and was noted. There was discussion about the hike in attendance during Advent last year. Michael K asked: what are attendance figures for other parishes? Fr Lawrence said it was a good question: he didn't know the answer, but could ask some sources.
- Fr Lawrence reported he is satisfied with our financial standing as of now. The Historic Trust Fund (HTF) had a financial audit and it was approved. Currently, we can expect \$65K in income from the HTF this year, plus \$30K we have received in grants to be used toward the exterior restoration of the church building.
- The roof has a leak. The Archdiocese was contacted and must appoint a project manager. Fr Lawrence has not heard back from them. If the roof requires expensive repair, it will take priority over the restoration of the façade as far as the use of our HTF is concerned.
- Council made some minor recommendation re: changes for ease of reading the documents.

Parish Council Expectations.

- Joe Yingling thanked the Council for working together and being responsive to email correspondence regarding the somewhat challenging issue of Christmas mass planning.
- Joe asked if the pre-meeting process was working for Council [re: requests for agenda items and committee reports, and publishing of agenda]. Michael K suggested the first request for agenda items be accompanied by a draft agenda. Council members agreed this would be useful. We also said the current timing (about a week before Council meetings) is good.
- Joe reported that one of his goals for this year's Council is togetherness.
- Joe proposed policy: if a parish-wide survey is to be conducted by a standing committee, the committee will bring the survey to the Council before it is distributed to the parish.
 - Council approved that policy by consensus.

Pastoral Associate Search Committee Report

Mike Jacko reported for the Search Committee.

The committee, having received several good-quality applications, is confident it will find a PA who will be a good fit for St. Vincent's. Several initial phone interviews have been conducted, and the committee is in the process of scheduling on-site interviews. Applicants are a mix of men and women. Some applicants are from some distance away; three are local.

- Ray Heil asked - what role will the Council and Fr Lawrence play in the hiring process? – Mike replied that Fr Lawrence will be present for all on-site interviews, and the Search Committee will work in collaboration with Fr Lawrence to choose the best candidate.
- Michael Keating asked about the transition process: How will the new PA be introduced to the parish? What if parishioners have particular concerns about the new hire? If the new hire is from another state, will Parish Council members (or someone else) have any responsibility to provide some orientation/welcome? Mike J noted the new PA could be hired before the Council meets again in January, so questions of orientation by Council members (if any) might have to be conducted via email.
- Ray and Anne Freeburger asked whether it ought to be noted for the parishioners that this person will *not* be in the same role as Chris McCullough. Colleen said it wouldn't be appropriate, or useful, to introduce our new PA with a statement about what he is *not* going to be or do for the parish. Other Council members noted that the job title remains Pastoral Associate.

Liturgy Committee Baptism Recommendations

Matt Hill reported for the Liturgy Committee. He'd sent a copy of the committee's report (2015 Community Consultation) to the Council.

The responses indicated a near 50/50 split among the community for maintaining infant baptisms at the font in the gathering space (as opposed to returning them to the bema, where they've been conducted previous to building the font). The Liturgy committee, after discussion, recommends keeping them at the font, with the following concerns to be resolved:

1. More preparation for parents and godparents re: where to stand and when to move.
 - a. Barbara Hodnett has been asked to provide this instruction.
2. A musical interlude for time between the baptism and baby coming back to bema.
 - a. Joe Organ was contacted for this purpose
3. Audio-Visual needs be standardized and consistently managed.
 - a. Camera over font fixed, not moving. Screen to come down (and camera go on) on time. Camera plus audio feed to be working properly.

Concerns over A/V needs

New discussion: Michael K (who, with several others, dealt with A/V concerns during the fall Speakers' Series) had specific feedback. We asked - Is the equipment we have sufficient for our needs? And - Who should have final responsibility for A/V technology at St. V's?

Michael Keating reported that a group (including Laureen Brunelli, Mike Hershfeld, Joe Organ, Jamyla Krempel, Jerome Bird, and Alana Fiore) would be meeting in early January (date TBD) to discuss the plan for A/V needs.

Matt reported that the Liturgy Committee does not want the technology responsibility, and suggested this could be a responsibility of the new PA. Several agreed with this. Fr Lawrence and Mike J both cautioned against expecting this skill-set in a person we haven't even hired yet. Mike J proposed a "techie ministry" model, in which a number of parishioners serve (like Eucharistic ministers) in rotation, so that no one person has responsibility every single weekend for running the technology needs for mass. In this model, the PA could take on task of maintaining a roster and coordinating & training volunteers. Michael K said he would take this suggestion to the group due to meet in January. Joe asked who would train these "techie ministers," and would they need to have meetings?

Fr Lawrence said after the 1990 renovation, St V's had an A/V audit. We agreed this would be useful to do again.

Colleen, Peter and Denny each know some people who do A/V work and sound engineering/recording, who might be able to help, or make recommendations. They will contact these people to ask for recommendations.

Committee Reports

Michael K said the Outreach & engagement committee was considering events and opportunities to bring to the parish. He mentioned a health & wellness initiative that has worked well in a larger, evangelical Christian church context. He asked if the Council would ok his bringing it for consideration to the O&E committee. There were no objections.

We recited the Lord's Prayer together and the meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm.

The next Parish council meeting is Tuesday, January 12, at 7:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen McCahill

Committees of the Parish Council

Meeting Minutes and Reports

December 2015

Outreach and Engagement Committee

Members met briefly and informally after mass on Sunday.

We've set our next meeting for Wednesday, Jan. 13.

We'll be reaching out to all the folks who helped plan the speakers' series to see who would like to be involved in either joining the committee or working on certain projects.

Old Business: We will return to the task of creating a more welcoming and informative gathering space.

New Business: Develop a plan of activities and events around the 175th Anniversary of St. Vincent's, which will include reaching out to the Liturgy Committee to see how we might work together to develop some historical themes. We also agreed to begin brainstorming new ways to reach out and engage both St. V's parishioners and non-parishioners. Possible themes include health and wellness and interfaith understanding.

Thanks,
Michael

Liturgy Committee Meeting Minutes

11-21-15

Attending: Janice Bonner, Joe Organ, Anne Maura, Valerie Rolandelli, Peggy, Geri, Pat Ball, Audrey Rodgers, Matt Hill

Advent/Christmas

- Banners and Schedule: Janice will get out schedule and banners all ready to go out. Will set up schedule through the end of January.
- Lessons and Carols: Anne Maura not in surgery – will coordinate Lessons and Carols
- Reconciliation Service: Have 5 priests lined up for reconciliation. Need 5 locations. Anne Maura will identify them shortly.
- Postcard re: Encyclical: Janice and Anne Maura – First couple of weeks of January or early Lent, possible postcard re: encyclical.
 - First Sundays in January, January 3 and 10: People told a week in advance, think about what you or your family are going to do as a response to Laudato Si
 - Next Sundays: people could write out postcards and bring up as part of the offertory, mail postcards to people after a couple of months
 - Front of the postcard could be Advent theme statement? Tie to Arthur's booklet?
 - January 10 is baptism; Ash Wednesday is Feb. 10.
 - Focus on month of January to get information out and information done
 - **Next Step:** Janice will talk to Dick about implementation – will keep it simple and focused on new year and Laudato Si
 - Insert in bulletin – Janice
 - Resource to put on website – Janice will send to Audrey

- May tie in to Advent statement?
 - May mail back in June?
- Candle-Bearing
 - Kathy Beta will take care of 9:30am
 - Anne Maura will talk to Eve Prietz for 7:15pm
 - Peggy will coordinate with Dennis Moore for 11:45am
- Archbishop Lori NOT coming this year – will be coming for 175th Anniversary next year on Nov. 13 or 20th – not sure yet

Laudato Si

- Original Idea: Team would create examples of encyclical-based petitions and educate planners on the need to incorporate Laudato Si and at least one example petition or some variation thereof
- Next Steps: Janice will email planners about idea; remind there is link on the website to the encyclical – no need to have example petitions

Community Consultation re: Midnight Mass and Baptismal Rite

Midnight Mass

- Need to correct numbers on folks who attended Midnight mass last year. Of 27 who attended midnight mass last year, 54% favored keeping midnight mass
- Not sure how many actually came to last year's midnight mass
- Observations
 - Generally 60-40 in favor of changing. Older parishioners stronger in favor of change
 - Seem to be enough people to consider an 8ish mass. There is significant contingent at 5:30 Mass who wants a 8:30 mass
 - Need to consider congregation opinions out of respect
 - When regulars are not willing to come down for a midnight mass, we need to respect that
 - Is Midnight theologically grounded or culturally grounded – if cultural, then need to consider making Sabbath for man, not man for Sabbath – need to keep community engaged liturgically
 - Fr. Lawrence has no problem doing an 8:30pm and Midnight
 - When talk about growing the parish, we could get more people at 8:30 than Midnight
 - Focus on Ecclesiology of welcoming, engaging, meeting people where they are, pastoral of other Catholics
 - Tradition is not always something we need to buy-in to. Sometimes traditions need to be changed to engage, inspire, and grow. But what about Easter vigil?
 - Joe thought should have choir at one service, not necessarily both, and would probably want to have choir at 8:30 Mass
 - Maybe have quiet service at Midnight Mass with candlelight?
 - Joe: Can scale down Midnight Mass, possibly 15 minutes of carols?
 - Anne Maura could not find anyone to read last year and this year not going to be available
 - Fr. Lawrence supports keeping Midnight Mass and 8:30
 - Move Lessons and Carols at 8:30 service; have readings at Midnight and some carols during Midnight but 8:30 will be full vigil liturgy

- Important to celebrate mass, evangelization, community
- Working a couple hours more per year is not an imposition on the pastor – would much rather do this than create division in the community on which to do
- Logistics:
 - Peggy will talk to Bob on signing for 8:30 if approved by council
- Matt will send recommendation to council

Baptism

- Data was a wash – 50 to 50
- Problems
 - 1) AV logistics rarely work
 - 2) Big break between baptism and coming back into church
- Early church had a litany of the saints while baptismal candidate went out of the church did the baptism and came back in.
- Adding ritual of arms extended by congregation to bless the new child? Play “come to the water”?
- Consensus to keep as is
- How do we make this work better?
- Joe Hamilton and Mike Hershfeld already volunteered to help with AV – don’t want to extend too much beyond core group. Mike Hershfeld is in choir
- Volunteers fine but need a central person who has responsibility and ready to ride herd – prefer to have member of staff to coordinate
- Michael Keating could assist? Not sure
- **Recommendation:** AV needs to be part of next PA’s responsibility – extends beyond Liturgy committee to make technology work – Suggest that Council needs to address issue both with staff and need a temporary fix. Prefer to have one person responsible for operating sensitive equipment who can train a cadre of 2-3 volunteers. Matt will follow-up with Council.
- Peggy will ask Joe and Alana about possibly assisting more with IT
- Baptism:
 - Positioning of children, etc. for people on sides of church who cannot see through technology or when people are having baptism
 - Someone who could help position people during the ceremony?
 - **Pat Ball will ask Barbara** to consider helping to talk parents and others through talk to Paul Rolandelli
- Add St. V question and answer about baptism into bulletin and answer in the bulletin
 - Anne Maura will work on after Christmas—will send out to committee for comments

Lent and Easter

Committee will start planning Jan. 9 – need to get things done then because Lent starts Feb. 10

Weekend Mass times?

- Fr. Lawrence: Everyone needs to fill out survey forms from Archdiocese – important to preservation of St. Vs. Very few priests left, many priests (50) of retirement age but still working full-time. Need to consider that number of available clergy going to get smaller and smaller. Current parish structure not going to support those numbers. Everything west of Cumberland is now one parish. Going to continue to merge parishes. All will be the result of planning process.

- Changing mass schedule premature until we find out whether we'll be consolidated with another parish
 - Would need to be negotiated with other parish
- Next Meeting: Jan. 9 from 10:00am to 12pm in education room

**Minutes: Friends of St. Vincent's Park
November 29, 2015**

Present: Michael Kelly, Merrill Smock, Joe Yingling, Carolyn Moody, Peggy McMillan, Peter Asquino, Mary Lynn Myers, Sue Woodman, Frank P. Szustak, Tim Callender, Nicholas Wiedorfer, Barbara Wiedorfer, Bill Rupert, and Marty Gray.

The meeting began with a consensus decision to set the meeting schedule of the Friends of SVP for 11:00 AM on the third Sunday of each month in the downstairs classroom. Barring urgent issues, the next meeting of the group will be the third Sunday in January.

1. The group discussed at some length the importance of creating signs to help address problems we are encountering in the Park:
 - a. Post the existing sign Park (as amended) in a prominent place as people enter the park at the Front Street gate. [see text at the end of these minutes, and send any edits or corrections to Mike Kelly by Thursday December 3rd] Kelly is to get the text to Jim Dimmer, the parish superintendent, to create the sign and Peter Asquino will take charge of moving the sign structure to a better place. Kelly will explore with Dimmer the possibility of additional copies of the sign for posting on the fences of the Park, as suggested by several people as the meeting was breaking up.
 - b. Create a new sign to be posted near the church to the effect "Please keep the front steps of the Church clear on Sundays between 9:00 AM and 1:00 PM and on occasions when there are programs being held in the Church. Thank you."
 - c. Create a new sign for posting on the Park fences to the effect,

"We welcome donors of food and clothing in the Park at any time other than 9AM to 1PM on Sundays when the overabundance of donors and religious services in the Church can cause real congestion and safety issues around Front Street. Please direct your Sunday activities to any time after 1:00 PM. Please do not leave food or clothing unattended and unsupervised and take any left-over food or clothing with you. We strongly recommend you take clothing you expect to leave in and around the Park to nearby Helping Up Mission at 1029 East Baltimore Street. The Mission has the capacity to sort, clean and distribute clothing to appropriate shelters and organizations for the homeless. Thank you."

2. The Church website needs revision to reflect the important role the Park plays in the mission of the parish. Peggy McMillan agreed to work with Lauren Brunelli to
 - a. Delete stuff on the website that is completely out of date or irrelevant, such as the Park Ad Hoc Committee Report and the Parish Council Letter to the Parish on the Park and the letter to the Parish after the 2010 cleanup.
 - b. The sign-up software for work in the Park (using a commercial product, Sign-up genius) is largely disused. It is a good system, with automatic reminders, but it is simply not being used these days, because so few people volunteer for clearing out and cleaning the Park. We probably should just get rid of it.

- c. It might be helpful to have a Park “journal,” a place where we can learn how many people are sleeping over, and identify particular clean up or security issues that have arisen, etc. –just a sentence or two that people working in the Park can post to alert other workers. Marty Gray and Tim Callender will be contacting Lauren Brunelli to arrange regular viewing of the surveillance camera output to count people sleeping over and groups distributing food or clothing. They could post to such a journal, or create their own records. Our goal is to list in the parish bulletin each week the number of people “thus far in 2016” “seeking overnight refuge” in the Park, and number of “groups using the Park as a venue for distributing food and/or clothing.”
 - d. Make recommendations to Joe Yingling, the webmaster, to provide a location on the parish home page to enable users to get to the Park quickly, where people can find revised sets of instructions or advice for
 - i. Volunteers to clear and clean the Park from 7AM to 9AM on weekends,
 - ii. Volunteers who want to go to the Park to engage with homeless residents. [Mary Lynn Myers had agreed earlier to prepare something for this group],
 - iii. People or groups considering donating food or clothing in the Park or wish to sponsor events there.
3. Nick Wiedorfer discussed his Eagle Scout project to build a game board for Park residents with accompanying benches projected to be built in the summer of 2016. Everyone was enthusiastic about the idea. Nick circulated some photos of possibilities, and agreed to return to the group to provide more information and ideas about the construction. People were confident an appropriate location could be found in the Park.
 4. Mary Lynn Myers raised the possibility of sponsoring an event with the homelessness speakers group that meets Wednesday noon in the undercroft. Merrill pointed out the River Christian Fellowship could help provide good speakers for such an event. Damien, the leader of the Wednesday noon group will be invited to a future meeting of the Friends of SVP. The goal would be to design an event that stands the best chance of drawing a good crowd and is short enough (in each speaker’s time, assuming a group presentation) to make it a good experience for the audience plus time for questions.
 5. Father Lawrence has given the go-ahead for trimming the large holly tree in the parking lot, removing the bottom limbs to create no more than a three foot clear space under the tree. Peter Asquino and Peggy McMillan will coordinate to get the job done in the near future.
 6. Mike Kelly agreed to provide a contact list of donors that he has accumulated over the last year. The goal should be to communicate with these donors immediately via e-mail, (ultimately personally through telephone calls), and alert them to our request that they steer clear of Sundays from 9 AM to 1:00PM and ask them some simple questions about whether they have a regular schedule for their visits to the Park. The Contact list, inadequate as it may be, is attached to end of these minutes, along with a proposed e-mail. *Your immediate feedback would be much appreciated!*
 7. The matter of expanding the toilet off the alley between the church and the parish house/rectory is a major issue that no one was prepared to get into at this time.
 8. Curt Wise has been appointed liaison to churches in the area by Helping Up Mission. All agreed we should invite him to a future meeting to discuss building on the already close relationship between Friends of SVP and HUM.

9. The meeting closed with a visit by members to an upstairs office to examine the surveillance cameras in the Park and how they work. See item 2.c for a project that two volunteers from the Friends of SVP have undertaken to launch, using the visuals from the cameras.

The meeting concluded around 12 Noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Kelly

Proposed text of the Sign re: Park rules described in item 1.a. of these minutes:

St. Vincent de Paul Church Park

- All are welcome here.
- Please be respectful and kind.
- The Park is closed daily from 7AM to 9AM for cleaning.
 - At 7:00 AM anyone in the Park must leave with all belongings
 - Nothing may be stored in the park.
 - Anything left in the Park will be discarded.
 - At 9:00 AM people are welcome back in the Park
- Please help us keep the park and the Church steps clean and free of litter.
- Trash, bottles, cans, paper and food containers should be disposed of in the trash containers provided in the Park.
- Visitors who come to the Park in fellowship and charity ought to assist in keeping the area clean.
- Dumping is strictly prohibited.
- No mattresses, cushions, furniture, structures, tarps or tents will be allowed.
- No alcohol or illegal substances are allowed
- Everyone in the park is responsible for his or her own actions. The park is under surveillance for the safety of those enjoying use of the park.

Draft e-mail note to...list of e-mail addresses [of individuals or groups that come to the Park]:

Hello from Michael Kelly at St Vincent's Church and Park, downtown Baltimore.

I'm a parishioner at St. Vincent's with particular responsibilities for the Park. I'm writing to ask your help.

You have at one time delivered food or clothing to the people in our Park, for which we are most grateful. We are now in a high season of activity in the Park and, if you still have an active interest in the Park and its people, we want to encourage your continuing generosity to the poor and homeless but with one caution. We now have so much activity on Sunday mornings that the overabundance of donors attracting crowds plus those attending services in our Church causes the growth of congestion and creates genuine safety issues in and around Front Street. We'd be grateful if you would direct any of your planned Sunday activities to take place after 1:00 PM.

I have one question: would you be willing to share with us a schedule, if you have one, of the times you generally come to the Park to serve people there? We would like to gather schedules and share data with donors about what's going on in the Park. We think that information like this might be interesting and useful to donors in their planning, although entirely non-obligatory on your part.

Thank you for your good work on behalf homeless and near-homeless people who are attracted to our Park.

Facilities Committee Meeting Minutes

12/1/15

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 the repair of the drain on the south side of the church is almost complete. There was a delay because of the other repairs being done to the south side wall. Weather permitting, the drain repair should be finished this week.
- The replacement doors were due to be in to the supplier today, but Jim was not able to contact them to confirm that. He will continue to try to check on that.
- Father Lawrence put in a request to the Archdiocese regarding the inspection of the roof, but he has not heard back from them. If he did not receive an acknowledgment from the Archdiocese, Doug Johnson will handle getting the request processed.
- The LED lights in the parking lot have been installed and are working well.
- There was discussion of a request for installing blow dryers in the bathrooms downstairs for drying hands. Not only is that very unsanitary, especially in our situation, but it would be prohibitively expensive. Jim proposed installing motion detected dryers, soap dispensers and new toilet paper dispensers. Total cost would be \$498. Jim has used these in other facilities and reported that they work extremely well with little maintenance required.
- Jim reported that we will be getting a smart meter for the water after an inspection.
- Jim reported on a problem with the installation of new lights in the park, which was supposed to be done by BGE. When doing a preliminary inspection by "Miss Utility", they discovered a water valve/line that they could not trace. Because of that, they wanted us to sign a waiver, accepting liability for any damage that might be caused by their digging. We will not agree to that. Jim suggested just repairing the current light structures by doing horizontal repairs to the wiring, which would not require digging. The committee approved that.
- Jim reported that 2 of the 3 spigots have been repaired.
- Jim also reported that the gates in the park fence have been re-welded. Bob Reuter was concerned about damage to the fence and the deterioration of it. Jim agreed to assess the status of the fence and report back to us.
- Jim reported that the handrail on the handicap ramp has not been repaired yet. However, it has not gotten any worse.

The next meeting was scheduled for February 3 at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by

Pat Ball