

MEETING MINUTES JOINT PARISH COUNCIL/FINANCE COUNCIL

Thursday, December 4, 2008

#205 – 7:00 p.m.

Present: Paul Spera, Mike Ballato, Fr. Dan Brady, Jeff Trollinger, Cathy Forney, Beth Zorn, Dave Tindall, Jim Valacer, Bob Yondola, Jo Rohr, Jay Schukman, Scott Sartini, Eileen Walter, Kay Shalaski, Paola Brooks, Joe McGreal and Teresa Eastep

Guests: Bonnie Campbell and Joyce Major-Ballato

Excused Absence: Richard Mayhew and Andy Ferguson

This joint meeting of Parish and Finance Councils was called to order Mike Ballato at 7:00 p.m. and begun in prayer. Everyone went around the table introducing themselves and their council affiliation. This meeting is a combined follow up to the November retreat held with both councils and offered an opportunity to share the results.

FINANCIAL: In Andy's absence Fr. Dan presented financial operating budget.....and stated that our collections have remained stable or were actually up a bit in spite of the economic downturn. We must be ever watchful, but we can in fact afford to have even a slight deficit in the offertory at this time.

Joe McGreal announced that Dave Tindall officially started as head of the Finance Committee on December 1, 2008 for a three year term. He is not a newcomer when it comes to Finance as he was part of both Phases I and I of St. Michael's building fund, and has a MBA specializing in bank financing. Joe expressed his thankfulness to Finance Council for their support over the years, in spite of a change in priests; we have remained an active and vibrant church community.

A query was made on the income statement of activity regarding a \$141,666.66 amount which was clarified by Teresa Eastep saying the money is certainly there before it is spent, but often is allocated in a different month from when the amount was deducted. An example cited is the Haiti funding and the money flowing back and forth between accounts. Paola Brooks asked about the balloon payment owed on our mortgage in 2012 and was assured the Diocese of Richmond is very sound and there is no problem whatsoever with this.

Increased Offertory status was given, envelopes are still being collected, Fr. Dan stated the Diocese will be disappointed with the outcome of our collection amount. Nearly three hundred people responded with an envelope returned, though not necessarily an increase given. The Advent letter was recently mailed out where Fr. Dan clarified that both the St. Michael Guardian Angel Fund as well as the building fund donations are exempt from _____ (? Increased offertory consideration). Relative to fundraising it was reported Christmas ornaments are selling well as is scrip which is also now being offered during the weekdays out side the parish office.

HUMAN CONCERNS STAFFING: Fr. Dan announced that Parish Council voted to create a position for Human Concerns staff person; this was reviewed by Finance Council who approved this as a part time position of twenty hours per week. Karen Hannon was approached and accepted this six month contract position to begin on January 1, 2009 with the understanding that

in June open applications will be accepted for a permanent position, which may or may not be titled Director. This will be considered by Finance Council at their next budget cycle. Fr. Dan reiterated this is a position of justice which needs to be a funded position rather than a volunteer leadership one.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: Mike introduced Bonnie Campbell to discuss findings of the needs assessment study which was recently completed. The summary was Xeroxed and distributed to all here present tonight. A cap was placed on a parish membership of 1,500 families at the end of Phase II, with the understanding that another church would be built for the overflow. However, at the completion of the last phase membership was already at 1,700. In spite of the change of priests Fr. Dan said we remain stable and are considered a mega-parish in the Diocese. From 1992 – 2002 there was always something there that we would stop growth, six years have passed without this happening. Bonnie said there is currently nothing in place as far as a planning process.

The needs assessment study is essentially the first step in planning for building; it is not a definite plan, but where you identify as much data as you need both subjectively/objectively. She asked are we okay now or are we making decisions based upon space availability or ministries. The administrative offices are very crowded to the level where it is affecting work productivity. There has been 8% growth over the last four years and the space is not keeping up. Some meeting/educational space and some classrooms are empty during the early morning hours. It has been asked it is feasible to use space in the morning rather than at night and possibly opening the space to outside groups?

Bonnie noted in discussions with Pat Mundy, Director of Faith Formation, that modifications of programming is now necessary due to lack of space, we need to be looking at projections three, four or five years ahead. This facility was built for approximately 6-7,000 people and we have surpassed as we are now very close to 2,500 family units.

The possibility of renting space offsite was brought up. Also the possibility of offering some religious education classes in the summer months to alleviate the crunch during the school year. We need to prioritize our options and see what is next. Andy suggested possibly looking at outside storage as well as taking some of the smaller classrooms and turning them into office space. Classrooms could be given to administration as we expect to continue with growth, we are simply placing a Band-Aid on the problem. A couple of the offices currently have three people sharing them as well an additional work station set up in the main office. We need to think strategically about the long-term and be proactive in dealing with this problem.

Additional option is fixing up the Parish House for administrative space, Bonnie has checked with various engineers and apparently a second floor could be put over the existing space. It needs much work as far as electrical upgrades and mold prevention, but could conceivably be completed much sooner and cheaper than a building a new structure.

The smaller classrooms could be expanded, feasibility study begun along with preliminary design work, but again we need to think strictly about the long-term result. We need also to be sensitive to the economy and what will the parish support, either an addition to existing structure

something new. It takes approximately nine months to get basic design work completed, still time to start preliminary work before talking to the parish about what is contemplated down the road.

The bottom line at the end of the day is we need additional space. Another idea is to consider building a two-story building of which we only use the first floor at this time. There are no changes anticipated to the worship space, parking is adequate even if we add extra masses which is a very real likelihood. What we are talking about constructing is a series of boxes which is much less expensive than in planning and building of the worship space with specific craftsman for each specific area. Fr. Dan stated Bishop DiLorenzo is aware of our space constraints and knows are adding a sunrise mass on Easter and perhaps a “true” midnight mass for Christmas in 2009. There has also been consideration to adding another mass on either Saturday or Sunday. Also, we are in preliminary stages of conversation with Faith Formation about splitting numbers of children for reconciliation and first communion into two groups in the future as this year we are already at 180 children which are approximately forty plus more than in past years.

This does not answer the fundamental question how we are serving, we are not a maintenance parish, we want our parishioners to continue to stretch and challenge themselves. Faith needs to be lived out on a daily basis, not just on Sunday and our staff supports lay people’s ministries. Fr Dan expressed his appreciation for the promise of what St. Michael could become and a feasibility study is the next logical step as it does not commit us to anything definite. The Committee consisted of Bonnie Campbell, Heather Campbell, Linda Lyell & Bob Lanum. This steering committee is an Ad Hoc committee, it was suggested by Fr. Dan that perhaps Andy could head this up and offer a couple of directions in which to proceed perhaps with members of both Finance and Parish Council. Paola asked about the rate of growth and was assured that numbers will not change before the feasibility study could be completed, hopefully in approximately nine months.

St. Mary’s is a larger parish, but it is less well-used, at some point we will hit a cap and this will impact St. Michael as well. Bonnie believes we would be on parallel tracks if we wait two to three years, reinforcing the fact that help is need now. Fr. Dan said he has looked into possibly something like a portable cubicle which could be locked and stored in a classroom at the end of the work day so it is not taking up badly need space. Also, Andy is working on getting our wireless network up and running allowing some employees to work from home.

After considerable discussion, Mike called for a vote of those in favor of moving ahead with a feasibility study, Joe McGreal agreed and Jeff Trollinger seconded the motion. This motion passage establishes a feasibility study to take reasonable steps to use the space we have. Immediate desire now is to get us through the Christmas season and hopefully get this committee established in January. It clarified the steering committee is for management oversight only, not comprised of workers and this committee would be in place throughout whatever process is agreed upon.

Both Eileen Walter and Kay Shalaski asked about the possibility of offering faith formation classes on Sunday mornings perhaps between the mass times to alleviate some of the weekday

stress and crowding. It was explained this would not be possible on Sunday mornings as there is Pre-School offered at those times.

JOINT NOVEMBER RETREAT SUMMARY: Joyce Major-Ballato was present and Mike asked her to stay and make the presentation about the recent retreat. She brought everyone up to speed on the fact that Cathy Cawley lost her home the day following the retreat to fire which hopefully the insurance company will declare a total loss and she can rebuild. Temporarily, she is living there at Shalom House and does not have any immediate needs other than our prayers. She then commended the group present at the retreat that bonded over the course of Friday evening and everyone felt a bit more at ease with each other. Also, special gifts of each committee allowed them to move forward in terms of a vision for the future. Positive energy not negative was encouraged and Joyce stated there was a good foundation on which to build. Four priorities were noted:

1. Complimented the great work done by Fr. Dan and also Deacon David Nemetz and their ability to keep going ahead in spite of challenges.
2. Worship is noted to be important, people want to be active participants
3. Opportunities to grow in faith, i.e. Fr. Dan's bible study, "Reading God's Word", seminars on annulment, funerals, wills etc.
4. Church itself, the space itself, allows for leveraging

Charisms are powerful, a service to all, allow opportunities for growth and areas for improvement.

1. Youth – an area which was emphasized, are we serving our own enough?
2. David Nemetz – due to our rapid rate of growth, have we missed opportunities to serve our own in crisis, did we drop the ball. Mike asked Fr. Dan's question "would St. Michael be missed if we were no longer here?" Can we care for our own as well as others in the community?

This was brought up as David will complete his second year here as Pastoral Associate this month and as part of natural progression now we ask how things are going? We want to be sure there is an infrastructure in place to adequately support him and his good work. On a day-to-day basis, what happens next in pastoral care, we are there for all our people? It came up that several new ministries have gotten off the ground; one of these is the JAM (Jobs Assistance Ministry) helping people find work through networking. Also Guardian Angel Fund came up, which benefits St. Michael parishioners in need and Fr. Dan mentioned this week in Advent letter to parishioners. With the failing economy we are getting more requests for assistance than ever before. Also discussed the mechanics of pastoral visits, it was suggested that Fr. Dan speak to David about this over the next couple of weeks and that David come to the January 8, 2009 Parish Council meeting and make a presentation bringing everyone up to speed on Pastoral Care ministry. The last leg of the stool is how can Parish Council assist David as he serves our parishioners and the community.

CENSUS: This will determine if all our needs are being met when it is done in early spring and will entail 200 – 300 volunteers canvassing neighborhoods. Scott Sartini is diligently working to complete the inputting of new families so the neighborhood grouping can be then completed.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: Fr. Dan suggested again that we review St. Michael's mission statement which was last revised in May of 2004 and ask the parish to recommit to its mandates.

Role of both councils working together on Human Concerns also discussed. Parish Council has the dreams and vision and Finance Council acknowledges hearing them and trying to make them a reality and sometimes putting on the brakes. Joe McGreal stated to do good work it begins with good people which he feels strongly are currently in place. Fr. Dan expressed his pleasure at how the two councils work together and suggested perhaps doing a joint meeting on an annual basis.

Mike asked where we go from here, do we need to form a group to work on the mission statement.

ROUND ROBIN: Catherine Forney asked if we could obtain multiple flu shots from another source rather than using a vendor such as CVS to lower the cost; a liability factor was cited.

Also, the policy of holding seats at the Christmas masses either by coats, orders or worship with/without people actually occupying the seats was brought up. It was suggested that one member of a family should be physically present to hold seats. A letter goes out regarding this next week and the church's policy is spelled out pretty clearly. Hospitality is pretty vigilant about seating as many people as the church accommodates.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Bowens
Admin. Assistant