

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES
Thursday, February 12, 2009
7:00 p.m. – Room #205

Present: Mike Ballato, Dave Tindall, Joe McGreal, Cathy Forney, Andy Ferguson, Scott Sartini, Jo Rohr, Ivonne Gordillo, Richard Mayhew, Michelle Mason, Fr. Dan Brady, Marshneil D'Souza, Katie Lowenhagen, Beth Zorn and Jeff Trollinger

Excused Absence: Bob Yondola

Unexcused Absence: Paola Brooks

The Meeting was called to order by Mike Ballato at 7:00 p.m. and we were led in prayer. Fr. Dan arrived shortly thereafter and we began the meeting. January 2009 Minutes were discussed and motion to accept as read by Dave Tindall and seconded by Jeff Trollinger, and approved by all eyes. Brief discussion ensued about getting the Minutes out onto the web along with brief biographies of the Council members. A form was generated for approving the Minutes online and as soon as Karen receives approval from five members, Minutes can be sent to Beth Barnett for posting on the Website.

I. WELCOME: Brief introductions were made of the three new incoming Parish Council Members: Ivonne Gordillo, Michelle Mason and Marshneil D'Souza and a warm welcome extended by Mike and Fr. Dan.

II. FINANCE: Andy passed around a balance sheet for January as Parish Council meets prior to Finance Council and further details are not yet available. Considering the economy, we are very fortunate that St. Michael's is still averaging approximately \$18-\$20,000.00 weekly from the pews along with approximately \$9,000.00 weekly from Autodraft. The operating account which we like to maintain with a balance of \$100,000 has \$133,798.56 in it currently. There were no additions to the sinking fund. In January Fr. Dan took a check to Fr. Elizier for \$50,000.00 to help build their new church; needless to say Fr. Elizier was speechless by this generosity. Scrip still owes St. Michael's close to \$40,000.00 and we are looking for a date for the check to be presented.

The JAM (Job Assistance Ministry) has nearly sixty people active, eight of whom are now employed which is a great incentive to the others who are looking. We happened to get this ministry off the ground at the right time and it has generated much outside interest of other churches wanting to do something similar.

Building Maintenance: Andy announced the ceiling leak in the Parish Hall has been repaired as well as the cracked tiles on the worship space floor. There are burn marks on Jesus statue at the Grotto which we are looking into repairing.

Dave Tindall noted the Finance Committee is beginning the budgeting process of assembling the parts and pieces necessary; fiscal year runs from July 1 – June 30. The Diocese has not yet sent us the required figures necessary to move ahead in that direction.

III. KAREN HANNON'S L'ARCHE SUB-MINISTRY: Mike Ballato summarized a proposal sent to Parish Council by Karen Hannon requesting L'Arche formally become a sub-ministry of Human Concerns ministry. L'Arche is an organization composed of families of special needs adult children related to providing group housing based on a multi-year basis in a stable community. The question was raised about budgetary assistance as well; but this was not stated in the request from Karen Hannon. Mike Ballato asked Parish Council if they were willing to support this, all ayes, recommendation of the same will be given to Karen Hannon making L'Arche a sub-ministry of Human Concerns ministry.

IV. NEEDS ASSESSMENT STEERING COMMITTEE: The Steering Committee comprised of Bob Yondola, Fr. Dan, Mike Ballato, Joe McGreal, Dave Tindall and Bonnie Campbell met on January 20, 2009. It was decided to also add David Nemetz to the committee with his expertise in construction as well as Bill Berry. Dave Tindall reiterated that the process for this space needs feasibility study will take from six to nine months. No actual work is begun during that time frame, a number of sub-committees will be established and much gathering of information during this time. Some concern was expressed about whether or not we were locked into building and exactly what the space will be allotted towards, is it a done deal? The overall process was clarified for new members and the detail asked in the surveys presented to staff members with very specific time constraints noted, i.e., faith formation being one ministry using the majority of space in the church including classroom and conference rooms. The bottom line is the building is extremely well-used to capacity a great deal of the time; less well-used in the mornings as opposed to evenings. In October of 2008 Bonnie Campbell sent out a very detailed executive summary of the study which elaborated the findings and time management piece which was passed around and reviewed tonight by a couple of members. It was agreed that at this time there are many unknowns to be resolved before moving ahead, but this the first step of the process.

VI. CREATION OF PARISH VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT: (The census, which was number 5 was skipped in hopes Lani Vasquez would make it here to be a co-presenter with Scott Sartini.) Fr. Dan presented what he hopes will be the new St. Michael's vision statement:

“To be the presence of Christ...”

In its simplicity it reveals a great deal and the three dots allow room to grow... It is easy to remember and sacramentally it could be the lead statement of our Mission Statement. This clearly ties in to “We Walk by Faith” which will be gone into in greater detail in the next few months. The four precepts of WWBY are: Word, Worship, Community and Service. Fr. Dan elaborated in great detail at an easel how many of our ministries fit into the above four categories and how many also overlap in more than one category. Word it tied to scripture, Bible study, preaching, faith formation, reading God's Word, RCIA, CRHP, question of the week and living it. After the first presentation we broke down into small groups and brainstormed ideas for the other three precepts for five minutes and then came back together to share results. Fr. Dan copied all ideas shared on paper and these will be saved and compiled into some type of document to save for future used. When the question arose do we actually need a formal mission statement, Fr. Dan stated the Diocese wants us to have one in place to see what we look like, who we are, and have an opportunity to measure ourselves. We need to move away from the mentality that the majority of the parish work is accomplished by only a handful of people, it may seem like

that but the reality is not so. We need to show how we are trying to be Christ for the world, living out St. Michael's vision and mission statements.

Fr. Dan reiterated the mission statement does not need to be lengthy, could summarize some of the above for a beginning. Fr. Dan would like to have the new mission statement engraved into large pieces of Plexiglas which would then be displayed in the Commons and parishioners could sign their commitment to it on the glass. Additional blank sheets could be made available for future parishioners to be able to sign this as well; being a piece of history and offering a sense of ownership.

Easel sheets noted above will be saved by Fr. Dan as possibly a starting point for a future retreat. Fr. Dan possesses a unique perspective as someone still relatively new to the parish having been here over two and one-half years, but somewhat of an outsider. He sees us now as he did when he first came to St. Michael – a parish who lives out its belief. Stressed “administration” broken down is defined as: ‘ministering to the church and each other’ which is what the staff he has hired do on a daily basis. WWBF is a mandate from Bishop DiLorenzo that it is presented to each parish and then he will make a personal visit to the church and discusses the results with us. Mike Ballato recalled working on the original document with the late Sr. Diane Guy and Msgr. Muench and what a powerful experience that was.

V. STEERING COMMITTEE FOR PARISH CENSUS: (We saved this item until the end waiting for Lani but she did not make the meeting). Scott did the presentation and began with distribution of a sample packet of what questions are currently asked on our parish registration form of newcomers as well as a 17 page document printout all the possibilities available within PDS (Parish Data System). What other pieces can be added to what we have now? He said parishioners will receive a printout of their current PDS listing to make corrections and turn back in for editing here at church. Fr. Dan praised Lani's efforts with data entry and her willingness to learn the system. Having one person responsible for the majority of the data entry is much more efficient than what was done previously as she is dedicated primarily to this project. For example, with specific information such as name of college our students attend, an e-mail could have gone out in light of the Virginia Tech tragedy last April checking in with them. Additionally, with accurate cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses, employers, etc. we would have a much more accurate data base which offers other possibilities. For instance, currently we have no idea when parishioners who were married other places a number of years ago celebrate milestone anniversaries such as their 50th. Fr. Dan would very much like this information included and will attach a letter along with a form to be sent out to parishioners.

Cathy Forney brought up that not everyone has access to a computer, a kiosk could be placed perhaps somewhere in the church where changes could be made. This could be a real community organizer to learn and share information. The census is a snapshot of where we are at this point; stewardship is where we are going in the future.

Fr. Dan said after giving this major project much thought, he believes we should go ahead with the census part this spring, but put off the visitation part to collaborate with WWBF until fall. There is simply too much going on around the church this time of year to do the job justice and it

is too important to rush it through. There are many possibilities to explore through PDS, i.e. photos, additional information, mapping techniques.

Ivonne Gordillo asked if we planned to make the census available in other languages. Spanish at least would be a good possible second language. She recently helped with Cross-Over Ministry and in addition to the language barrier, noted many people of ethnic backgrounds; do not read in any language at all. She is eager to help in this regard with whatever she can do including offering some Spanish lessons to parishioners as necessary. The largest non-Anglo group is mixed Hispanic followed by Southeastern Asian. Some discussion ensued about how we can be more inclusive to minority groups. Clarification was made that the form was based on one household regardless how many families may be blended into it. It was stressed that overall we need to be more welcoming and hospitable to everyone parish wide. On the survey that we are not asking a number of questions to be nosy, but to add to our record keeping so we can better serve our parishioners. A little additional information is a powerful tool.

ROUND TABLE: At 8:53 p.m. Fr. Dan suggested we close the formal part of the meeting and open the floor to any overall concerns anyone has to share. Cathy commented on the large numbers of parishioners exiting mass after communion, what can be done? Fr. Dan stated we are to remain seated until we are sent out after commissioning. Being the fifth largest parish in the Diocese of Richmond which does not help things; we realize with the large numbers in attendance at mass, many look for a quick exit. Suggestion was made that during Lent we should push to wear name tags more and again offer to have them made for new people desiring them.

Mike noted the next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 12, 2009. Dave Tindall announced Fr. Dan will be the featured speaker at his Rotary meeting on Thursday, March 19, 2009 at 7:30 a.m. The topic will be "Ethics of youth in America" and Karen volunteered to send out an email reminder of this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned with thanks to all and a Glory-Be.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Bowens
Recorder