

PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES

Thursday, March 12, 2009

7:00 p.m. – Room #205

(Revised)

Present: Fr. Dan Brady, Bob Yondola, Ivonne Gordillo, Scott Sartini, Jo Rohr, Richard Mayhew, Michelle Mason, Katie Lowenhagen, Jeff Trollinger, Beth Zorn, Paola Brooks and Mike Ballato

Excused Absence: Marshneil D'Souza, Andy Ferguson – Late: Cathy Forney

Mike called the meeting to order and led us in prayer at 7:05 p.m. The Minutes from January's meeting had already been approved so we dispensed with that. Mike then left to lead a Boy Scout meeting for approximately thirty minutes or so and Bob Yondola proceeded to move along the agenda.

FINANCIAL: Andy was not present but Fr. Dan presented a balance sheet and went over it with Council. There was a comparison from last year and this at the same time showing total assets and liabilities; we are at least even with last year even with substantial amounts given to Haiti and other monies put into the sinking fund. Collections continue to be about the same as last year and we are holding expenses to budget. Diocese has forwarded suggestions for increases in staff salaries of 0 – 2% and Fr. Dan feels confident the parish can accommodate this. It will be discussed with Finance Council for their input. The health insurance portion paid by the Diocese to employees of 60% was to have been increased in July to 65%; this will not happen this year. Fr. Dan again stated that the balance sheet numbers have been arranged to suit Diocese guidelines allowing us to conform to PDS, but is not necessarily a true reflection of categories where funds are at any given time. Dave Tindall said the budgeting process is now underway and Finance Council will continue to monitor the economic situation and how it impacts St. Michael's so we can continue to be good stewards.

The biggest expense outlays will be in capital expenditures and we will be very conservative and review how we can save money. The largest improvement will be the recommendation for automatic doors in the front of the church to accommodate handicapped people. The next item is to decrease the pitch of the concrete ramp in the back of the church as it is currently too steep. (This will be left alone for the immediate future as we are still accommodating the Symphony and the slope assists their equipment truck.) In a smaller vein, the church just switched to a different rate plan within Dominion Virginia Power and it is anticipated this will result in a savings of a couple of thousand dollars. Dave asked anyone on Council if they have any cost cutting ideas to present them to Finance Council, they are open to listening to anything brought forth. Growth rate of the parish continues at approximately 5% at this time. If Fr. Lewis leaves St. Mary's, we will need to reassess to see how this may impact us. Fr. Dan stated money will guide our decision making, but not drive the church's ministries. JAM continues to grow and respond to the need, jobs are slowly being found, stories shared and great speakers coming in with timely and informative presentations.

SPACE NEEDS STUDY: Not discussed, committee meets on March 17, 2009.

CENSUS & STEERING COMMITTEE: Scott led this discussion and updated Council on where things stand. At this time there is no copy of a rough draft of the census questionnaire available. He has visited other churches including Sacred Heart which is an inner city primarily Hispanic church; he distributed their bulletin. Michelle Mason questioned the methodology to doing census work here at church after mass, during donuts or even religious education class times. She is currently unemployed and suggested perhaps some CRHP groups would be willing as well to assist in this process. It was felt this would be more cost effective than spending postage to mail the information currently on hand to parishioners. This will need further discussion regarding the privacy aspects of who is asking the questions and reviewing the information although we do not ask anything really of a personal nature, people may be hesitant. Religious education currently asks for schools which could prove very relevant especially for high school and college students. This is dependent, of course, on what we are able to generate through PDS. We have never done a parish survey here at St. Michael so this is totally foreign to everyone involved.

Accessing this through the internet was mentioned, but presents difficulty with the lack of a password and the fact that not everyone is computer literate. Also, possibility exists of phone follow-up to confirm the information currently available through PDS. It was suggested that some parishioners, especially from JAM, have backgrounds in marketing and other skills necessary to get this off the ground. Additionally, it was confirmed that while there is a Steering Committee in place consisting of Scott, Fr. Dan, Mike Ballato and Beth Zorn, they have only met one time. Scott will contact Ed Landry about possible assistance from JAM people. An incentive was suggested to spur people to do this. Also it is important to determine a target date and then work backwards to accomplish this goal.

(7:40 p.m. – Cathy Forney arrived – Mike returned shortly after as well.)

More discussion on are we simply trying to verify current information and if more information is sought, then what will we do with this once received. Fr. Dan mentioned for example there are no anniversaries listed for anyone not married here at St. Michael, i.e., fiftieth anniversaries to be celebrated. Also, questioned whether it made more sense to start over again from scratch and not worry about current information being accurate. We need to determine what will be done with this new information so we can make some long range planning. Additionally the PDS information should be verified on a regular basis to determine its accuracy; Fr. Dan suggested this is something Lani Vasquez could work on since she is gaining proficiency in the system. Andy, Scott and Lani will meet soon to discuss what kind skill backgrounds are available from JAM and then move ahead and establish a Steering Committee. Parish Council members Beth, Michelle are eager to be included in this Steering Committee as well. The questionnaire needs to be mailed out by mid May; which is just under two months away to reach people before they are busy with summer activities and traveling.

WWBF: Mike is familiar with this process having worked with it before. Ivonne will help with any Spanish translations or those with limited reading skills. WWBF data sheet was described to Council by Fr. Dan which simply categories to be rated 1 – 5 on agreement rating. The possibility of a St. Michael Catholic Church flag was discussed briefly which could be flown at certain times of the year. A flag would first need to be designed.

Phase II (in-home visits) will begin in approximately mid October to be completed by early November or around the time daylight savings begins. The need estimated is for 200 – 300

parishioners to canvas the neighborhoods over approximately a two week period, mostly done on weekends. Fr. Dan believes with the growth St. Michael has experienced, many people, though not all will welcome the personal touch of a home visitation. The dual purpose of this is to enable us to serve people better as well as provide community building to hopefully prevent us from becoming a mega church. Jo Rohr volunteered to assist with this part of the census project.

CREATION OF PARISH VISION & MISSION STATEMENT: Fr. Dan reiterated his proposal for a vision statement for the church:

“To be the presence of Christ...”

The easel sheets which were filled with ministries related to each of the four WWBF areas at last month's meeting were consolidated into smaller handouts including: Word, Worship, Community and Service. He Fr. Dan handed out work sheets encompassing the first two areas of Word and Worship and had Council break down into four small groups to discuss specific questions on each category. A speaker for each team read off their answers and the sheets were gathered and given to Karen to assemble. Mass attendance was discussed and determined that combined attendance for the four masses is between 3 – 3,500 people.

ROUNDTABLE: The stewardship mailing went out and Fr. Dan will be talking about this during his homily this weekend. One tri-fold brochure is broken down according to Time, Talent and Treasure which will be brought back to church on Palm Sunday and placed near the altar.

Jeff Trollinger mentioned that the reflections booklets put out for Lent were only for families this year and there are many parishioners who are single. Fr. Dan will mention this to those involved in the ordering so we can hopefully avoid this in the future. (Apparently, there were other booklets available which did not get displayed the first week). Comments again made about encouraging hospitality to bring people forward who continually sit in the back; this is easier said than done. Cathy Forney noted people tend to squeeze her hands too tightly during the Lord's Prayer as well as jerking her arms up into the air; Fr. Dan said he will take this under advisement as to possibly bringing this to everyone's attention. Also, Spanish and shadow stations were no substitute for the real ones in her opinion, traveled to another church for those.

It was determined our next meeting will be on April 30, 2009 due to April 9th, the second Thursday of April being Holy Thursday. Perhaps this meeting will cover both April and May as the second week of May is interview week for Personnel Committee and Fr. Dan will be unavailable. Pictures were taken of Council members by Mike Ballato and reminders given to have bios sent to Mike in the next few days.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m. with a Glory-Be led by Fr. Dan.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Bowens
Recorder