

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
062215

Our Parish Website: www.stvincentsspringbrook.weconnect.com

Attendance: Father Karl, Deacon Pete, Dan Siepierski, Ed Bukowski, Patti Valvo, Sal Valvo, David Squire, Shelly Squire, Lucille Janiga, Tony Vilardo, Carolyn Powell, Gerry Skrzeczkowski, Sue Wilson, Jeff Kney, Jolie O'Donnell, Carl DiNatale, Sue Rodgers, Richard Hoch, Norm Thor, Barbara Berger, Holly Neu, Bill Neu, Don Denz, Charlie Sauers, and Tama Gresco-Sauers

Father Karl opened with a prayer.

Father began the meeting with a summary of what he heard in private meetings with parishioners over the last several weeks since he announced his decision to eliminate a position in the Religious Education program and not fill a recently vacated position. He felt that the meeting was due to all the transition of the last year. It has been said that the Parish Trustees have too much power and that Father only follows the direction of the Parish Trustees. Also – it is that one family has taken over the running of the Parish.

There seems to be a power struggle with the St. Vincent's community and the former St. Catherine's community. There should be a better way of blending. This factor has lent itself to the division along with those who are supporting the current pastor.

Father thought that he had made himself clear with the elimination of one position and not filling a vacated position that he was looking toward the future with upcoming responsibilities coming forward with the Catholic Education assessment, changes in the Priest and Employee's Pension Plan, the Catholic Campaign, etc., There could be potential trouble to offset these upcoming financial obligations.

Those invited to the meeting felt that this was not the reason for the meeting and felt that the Parish Finances were the reason for the meeting and how do we move forward. Thoughts from those in attendance at the meeting were as follows:

- Committees make recommendations, not decisions.
- Every Mass should hear the same information regarding Parish issues. The 9:30AM Mass did not hear about the position eliminations due to the fact that Father Gabe presided at that Mass.
- No one knew about the school assessment, how decisions were made, and how information was communicated.
- Attendees feel that there is no power struggle. They are concerned about the youth and the continuation of the Parish.
- Is there an opportunity to re-instate the Youth Ministry position? Father Karl reported that he is working with Monsignor Slubecky and Human Resources at the Diocese on an alternative.
- With the resignation of the Religious Education Coordinator, there should be a savings.
- Parish Council feels that this decision should have been discussed with the Finance Committee before the decision was made to have staff reductions.
- Unilateral decisions cannot be made. You need to involve Parish Council. They are elected to the positions and they should be able to help with decision-making.
- We have seen the participation dwindle at all Masses, the donations are dwindling, etc. We have to do something to turn this around. We all want to see the parish grow. If we have idiosyncracies, then this is the forum to work them out.
- We need to reconsider the youth in this Parish.
- Financial reports are being requested.

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- The Youth Minister position was just eliminated. The decline in Religious Education has been happening even when this position was in place. Why can't a volunteer spearhead this program? It is felt that there is more involved for a volunteer and it is a huge responsibility for one person or a group of volunteers.
- Finances were projected for 2016 to be a \$12,000 loss. There are expenses coming down the road which we aren't aware of completely at this point.
- What about the 5-Year Financial Strategic Plan? Cutting expenses is easy, but getting the intangibles should come through the 5-year plan. You need a 5-year projection or you will go out of business. The way to enhance donations is by increasing the size of donations or increase the parishioner base.
- Crossroads has a large base of children. They go for the outdoor mass, the camaraderie etc. The Finance Committee at Annunciation went and spoke to Crossroads to understand what it is they are doing to encourage the young people in their Parish.
- There should be "green-light thinking" instead of "red-light thinking". The problem is that all of the volunteers need to be involved, so that there is good communication, good decision-making, etc. The real problem is not the elimination of the youth ministry.
- How decisions are made is the real issue. If you aren't part of the decision, it just feels like you're dead weight. There needs to be good communication amongst all ministries of the Church.
- We all love our parish and have expertise to help this parish grow. This is a business.
- We need to create an environment where people will want to give more money.
- As Father suggested a couple of weeks ago - ask everyone for an extra \$1/week. We need to work this together and be included.
- How does Finance Committee and Parish Council become more of an active voice, so that we can properly advise? When can we share financials with the Parish? It was decided at the Finance Committee meeting the 2013-2014 financials will be posted as soon as possible.
- We need to know what's going on in the Parish instead of being blind-sided.
- The subject of the Picnic Pavilion was brought up at the May Parish Council Meeting and that it had to be presented to the Finance Committee. At that point, something should have been mentioned regarding finances.
- It seems that all the programs that are being cut are all youth programs – the Youth Minister, Vacation Bible School, etc. It was noted that a volunteer has come forward to run the Vacation Bible School as a Family Bible Camp this year.
- Perhaps the School could be sold and rented back to use for parish activities. This is green-light thinking.
- We need to invest in the youth of this Parish in order to plan for the future.
- We should move beyond where we are. Revenues are changing. Assessments are changing. Expenses are changing.
- We need to talk to the parish. We need to explain to the parish what we need to do to move forward.
- We want to change the process of how decisions are made. We want to create a better process to move forward.
- The clerical work from Religious Education can be moved to the Rectory. Invoicing has already been transferred to the Rectory and this will continue at the direction of the Diocese, so that everything is in one coordinated place.
- We should have some conduit in place to link the Finance Committee and the Parish Council, so that you can keep ideas moving, etc. It is felt that Father Karl would be the conduit.
- Could certain dollar limits on purchases be in place, so that work can be accomplished and that projects are not delayed by Committees?
- Parish Council, is an advisory committee.

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- The agreement for the music ministry was determined at the March meeting to have a room in the school. At the next meeting, it was determined that the Music room could be in a section of Walter Hall. How did that change?
- It was suggested that it is time to move forward and determine how we change the process. What are the proper suggestions?
- With the changes we have instituted with the Parish Council, new officers should be chosen, married couples should not serve together, etc. Father agreed with moving into his second year, this should be easier going forward. He had to learn the workings of the Parish.
- Trustees should not be in officer positions and this was confirmed with the Diocese. The Parish Council membership should be reviewed.
- There should be a 5-year budget and that Finance Committee members should have to sign a confidentiality agreement. This information would then be beneficial to the Parish Council.
- If someone is an inactive Parish Council member, we could replace that person with someone who actively wants to serve. It was suggested that a current inactive Parish Council member should be contacted to see if he still wants to serve on the Parish Council. The recommendation was made that if this member does not want to continue, then those three committee members who recently served would be asked if they wished to continue. If so, their names would be placed in a hat and one member would be selected to serve out a one-year term.
- We should try to secure three bids on work that it is needed by the parish, when possible.
- Parish Vitality is being melted into Parish Council as the new model for the Parish Council has to do with the vitality of the parish.
- It seems like the theme of the committees is that decisions are made and then not carried out. It was suggested that there should be a small subcommittee that follows through with action items from each meeting to ensure that the activities are carried through.
- The Parish needs a 5-year Plan.
- Monsignor Slubecky suggested that Father should send a letter out to parishioners regarding the Parish finances.
- As volunteers, there should be submission to God, our family, our spouse, etc. Father Karl came in at a very difficult time. The idea of moving forward is very good, but instead, why not use the thought of – “what if we could?” “What happened to servanthood – serving the Church without recompense?”

Holly Neu also volunteered to serve on the Finance Committee.
Carolyn Powell volunteered to serve on the Building and Grounds Committee.

Other

1. The 2015 Meeting Schedule is as follows:

July 14, 2015
September 8, 2015
November 10, 2015

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20PM.

Father Karl closed with a prayer.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Tama J. Gresco-Sauers

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