

Holy Redeemer Parish Council Minutes
November 18, 2009

Holy Redeemer Church, Saint Maria Goretti Room, 7:30 p.m.

Attendees: Father George, Dave Fortuna, Rosemary Allender, Ellen Davis, John Enns, Mollie Huitema, Agnes Newman, Mark Russo

Opening

- a. Dave Fortuna opened the meeting with a relaxation exercise and a prayer.

Letter from the Archdiocese directly to parishioners regarding offertory collections

- a. A letter from the Archdiocese was received last September by many parishioners
- b. A 3rd party fund raiser has been retained to manage offertory collections for the parishes
- c. The firm claims to guarantee a 25% increase in offertory collections when using their services.
- d. If the parish chooses to take advantage of this service, 8% of the offertory collection will go to the Archdiocese.
- e. There does not appear to be widespread support for this service.
- f. It was also mentioned that the Archdiocese plans to increase the normal "tax" on offertory collections by 1%.

School Board

- a. Mollie Huitema advised that she is not the School Board representative to the Parish Council
- b. Mollie is a Community Representative on the Parish Council.
- c. She has also volunteered to serve as the Parish Council Liaison to the School Board.
- d. The School Board had previously advised that they do not have enough people to send a representative to the Parish Council meetings and asked that the Council send a member to the Board meetings instead.

Rob Pannell's e-mail address is incorrect. As a result, he has not been getting e-mail messages regarding the Council meetings.

Review of September Minutes

- a. Mark Russo advised that, per previous agreement of the Council, the minutes of the September meeting were subjected to two rounds of comment via e-mail and concurrence obtained on the second draft via e-mail.
- b. Comments and concurrence were received from all Council members that were present at the September meeting.
- c. Accordingly, the minutes were considered to be approved by the Council and forwarded to Carol Macknis for posting on the Parish web page.
- d. There was brief discussion and consensus that this process is adequate and results in a more timely posting of the meeting minutes.

Social Justice Conference at the University of Maryland

- a. Dave Fortuna presented information about an upcoming conference at the University.
- b. There was discussion that there needs to be a mechanism to get information on such opportunities out to the parish, particularly when there is short notice provided.
- c. It was discussed that the primary mechanism is an announcement in the weekly bulletin.
- d. In general, a small written entry is preferred over a bulletin insert.
- e. It was also noted that there is a Parish Partners Training Day on Saturday, December 12th, from 1:00-5:00 pm.

Reports

School Board- Mollie Huitema

- a. Mollie provided a detailed report of the last School Board meeting, which was held on November 4, 2009.
- b. A copy of the report is attached.
- c. The school received a grant for the installation of solar panels on the roof of the school. The panels will likely power lights in the main school corridor.
- d. St. Hugh's School is closing in 2010.
- e. Students will be transferred to St. Joseph's in Beltsville. Students from St. Nicholas are also being encouraged to transfer to St. Joseph's.
- f. Eleven (11) other schools are under evaluation for possible consolidation or closing, including St. Mark's and St. Jerome's.
- g. The Archdiocese announced a diocese-wide change in the school tuition system. Beginning next year, there will only be two tuition categories- Catholic, and Non-Catholic.
- h. There will no longer be lower tuition levels for members of the parish that sponsors the school in question.
- i. In addition, there will no longer be decreased tuition for multiple siblings attending the same school.
- j. The Archdiocese plans to increase its annual support to schools from \$2 million to \$4 million.

Youth and Christian Formation

- a. No report- Marie Winterson was not present.
- b. Father George was asked to speak with Marie about designating representatives for Youth Group and Christian Formation to attend the Council meetings.

Finance- Father George

- a. As mentioned in the schools report above, as a result of the Archdiocese-wide policy change, Holy Redeemer has been mandated to reduce the number of tuition categories for the 2010/2011 school year from 6 to 2.
- b. Overall offertory collections are down significantly from last year.

- c. Father George just returned from the Home School Association meeting, where the majority of the discussion centered around how the school will handle the new tuition policy.
- d. Fr. George believes we should not be penalizing large families who want their children to attend catholic school.
- e. It was stated that schools will not be allowed to “grandfather” current students with the existing tuition categories.
- f. Financial aid application forms must completed by all families in the school interested in receiving aid and submitted to the Private School Aid Service (PSAS). Forms are due on December 4, 2009.
- g. The Archdiocese never sees a family’s income information- this information goes to PSAS.
- h. The Home School Association is committed to come up with a fund or some other mechanism to ensure that all families that desire a catholic education for their children are provided the opportunity.
- i. The Bailey Fund was created with a bequest to Holy Redeemer School- it is not “taxed” by the Archdiocese.
- j. The Archdiocese is now considering whether to “tax” bequests to individual parishes.
- k. Very few families at Holy Redeemer School qualify for Archdiocesan financial aid.

Security- Mark Russo

- a. A meeting of the ad hoc Security Committee was held on October 6, 2009.
- b. Michael Schoonmaker of Broadview Security and Harry Pitt attended to participate in a discussion about security cameras and parking lot surveillance.
- c. There was extensive discussion about lower cost alternatives to the four-pole surveillance scheme previously proposed.
- d. It was reported that, by spending slightly more for cameras with lower light capabilities, similar coverage could be obtained with fewer cameras.
- e. Mounting cameras to cover the parking lot on the roof of the school was also discussed as a cost-saving alternative.
- f. Michael Schoonmaker will provide an alternative proposal for consideration by the Parish.
- g. The Committee reviewed a draft letter to the College Park Mayor and Council requesting additional street lighting on existing utility poles.
- h. The letter will be finalized, placed in the proper format, and forwarded to Father George for consideration/signature.
- i. The Committee continues work on an assessment of exterior lighting for the church and school.

Facilities

- a. No representative was present.
- b. It is not clear who is currently chairing this work group.
- c. Father George stated that the initial goal was to have parking lot lighting in place before the end of Daylight Savings Time, however, financial issues have delayed that schedule.

- d. Fr. George is considering requesting a 5-7 year loan from the Archdiocese for a number of capital improvement projects, including the convent and library roofs, and the parking lot lights.
- e. Bishop Knestout is the point of contact within the Archdiocese for such matters.

Old Business

Review of Parish Constitution

- a. A number of potential changes to the Parish Council Constitution were discussed. The changes outlined below are considered proposals until all recommendations have been formulated, a consolidated recommendation made to Father George, and he approves or disapproves.
- b. Page III, Article II, Section 1, (1)- Change “elected youth member” to “appointed youth member.”
- c. The current makeup of the Council is:
 - a. 9 elected representatives
 - b. 1 youth representative (appointed)
 - c. 5 representatives of the primary ministries:
 - i. Social Justice and Community Life
 - ii. Liturgy
 - iii. School Board
 - iv. Christian Formation
 - v. Finance
- d. It was suggested that an alternate approach to Paragraph 2.3 on page IV would be to stipulate that Council would consist of one representative appointed from each of the primary ministries, with the balance of the Council elected by the Parish. With this approach, the specific ministries would not be listed, so the Constitution would not have to be changed if ministries are added or subtracted.
- e. There was discussion about why Council representatives are elected rather than appointed.
- f. The importance of elected members was mentioned in the Archdiocesan pastoral workshop in August.
- g. It was also pointed out that having all members appointed by the Pastor might not result in the widest variety of opinions during Council deliberations.
- h. There was discussion about whether the School Board should be required to provide a Board member or a representative designated by the Board to attend the Parish Council meetings, rather than having a Parish Council member attend the School Board meetings and report back to the Council.
- i. There is confusion about whether School Board meetings are supposed to be open or closed to the Parish.
- j. Dave Fortuna volunteered to check with Fr. Smarsh and Maria Balducci to determine who is going to serve as Liturgy Committee representative to the Parish Council.
- k. Page IV, Section 4- change “representatives” to “representative”.
- l. A question arose as to whether Council members can be divorced. Fr. George advised that they could, if they have not remarried outside the Church.

- m. Page V, Article V, Section 3- Delete the general format provided, including the list of agenda items.
- n. Page VI, Article V, Section 3.1- Make this the new Section 3 (Agenda Committee). The agenda committee will determine the form of the agenda, rather than specifying it in the Constitution.
- o. Page VI, Section 4.1- Retain this section (Executive Session).
- p. Page VI, Section 5.4- The question was raised as to whether, for purposes of determining whether a quorum exists, only the elected members should vote, so the quorum would be reduced from 8 to 5 people. Father George felt this would be too small a number to be representative of the entire Parish.
- q. Father George asked that we table further consideration of the Constitution until the January meeting. He asked Council members to send proposed changes to Ellen Davis.

Next Meeting

- a. The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held on Wednesday, January 20, 2010.
- b. Ellen Davis volunteered to provide refreshments.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Russo
Secretary
mark.russo@hhs.gov

Report from the School Advisory Board Meeting

November 4, 2009

Comments from Father George and Mrs. Bovich:

1. Saint Hugh's will be closing in 2010. Students will move to Saint Joseph's. Children from Saint Nicholas will also be encouraged to attend Saint Joseph's.
2. The archdiocese is eliminating the tuition reduction for siblings; the tuition categories will be Catholic or non-Catholic. Father George said the parish will try to find a way to accommodate any child who wants to attend our school. The archdiocese has increased its tuition support from \$2 to \$4 million, and expects to do more. It will follow the same policies for elementary schools as they do for high schools.
3. All parents have been advised to fill out the PSAS form now to facilitate processing if aid is needed later.
4. Eleven schools, including Saint Mark's and Saint Jerome's, are "under consultation" (in danger of closing).
5. Mrs. Bovich would like to have a Holy Redeemer Day (a Saint Day Celebration)
6. Efforts are underway to spruce up the Wednesday lunch programs and provide healthier food.
7. Mrs. Bovich is serving on the Archdiocesan Advisory Board to consolidate information pertaining to the schools.
8. School enrollment is 228. Although the school had budgeted for 235, Mrs. Bovich says the financial status is solid.

Committee Reports:

1. Home School Association
 - Raised \$5,000 from wrapping paper and \$3,000 from football madness; expected more from the foot ball, but the total of both is equal to last year's wrapping paper drive.
 - Will do an overview of parent obligation for fundraising.
2. Development
 - Need to see development as more than just fund raising.
 - Tie fundraisers to specific goals.
3. Marketing/PR
 - Working with College Park to display signs to the school on Route 1 and Greenbelt Road.

- Lack of signage inside the school was noted by the Middle States evaluators; we are working on this also.
- Planning to place ads for the Open House in local newspapers and direct marketing to local nursery schools.

4. Long-Term Planning -- see attachment

5. Building/Facilities

- Inspection to determine if Pre-K and the Pre and After School facilities meet state requirements. - NOV 13th
- Solar panels, paid for with a \$5,000 grant, are waiting installation.

New Business

1. A committee is looking at some changes in school uniforms.
2. Mr. Jankowski is submitting Holy Redeemer for the Blue Ribbon School Award.

Respectfully submitted,

Mollie Huitema