

Parish Council Meeting Minutes
June 11, 2024

ACTION ITEMS

- Review the constitution by-laws and meet with your small group to gather comments to be returned to the working group by June 28.
- If a pastor assignment for St. Leo's is not announced by the end of the week, Fr. Ray will contact Bishop Lewandowski and/or the office of Clergy Personnel
- Parish councils should reach out to each other.
- When a pastor is announced, we can begin to plan some type of first contact with the St. Leo's community. We are in agreement that this event should be primarily social or get-to-know-you in nature.

In attendance (in person): Kevin O'Reilly, Graham Yearley, Jim Casey, Geri Sicola, Pat Ball, Catherine Mundy, Leah Mank, Fr. Ray Chase, John Gontrum, Kevin Daly, Sharon Hunt, Rita McMullin, Denny McMullin, Colleen McCahill

In attendance (via Zoom): Sally O'Hara, Dennis Moore, Mark Palmer, Barbara Bowles, Mary Hennigan, Jeri Delambo, Gerry Fialkowski, Mary Catherine Bunting, Ray Heil, Ray Bahr, Audrey Rogers, Sonia Socha, Al Reichelt, Marianne Reichelt, Janice Bonner

Community FeedBack/Updates

- From Denny M.: Work has temporarily stopped on the roof. We received two change orders from the contractor, Fick Brothers, asking for more money to re-do the work. The coating was applied, and it dripped. Tony Lassiter, our facilities superintendent, did some research, and the coating manufacturer recommends that the product should be applied in two coats, which is not what Fick Brothers did. It is our hope that the issues can be resolved without further cost to us.

Pastor/Pastoral Associate's Report

- A Jesuit volunteer prospect was in the process of being assigned to us and had to withdraw for personal reasons. There is a fourth round of hiring, and St. Vincent's will remain a possible site for volunteer assignment.

Questions/Feedback on Report from Meeting with Bishop Lewandowski and Julie St. Croix

- Geri S. and Fr. Ray recapped the desire of the AoB for parishes that can serve a wider population (i.e. ecclesiologies & charisms- Do we lean hard into a particular niche? Can that niche approach work into the future?). The merger is suspended, but the process of investigation is genuinely open-ended. We do not know where it might lead. It was also emphasized that no other parishes have this opportunity.
- The perception of St. Vs as elitist or "know-it-all" might be limiting to growth. Colleen M. noted that people who visit and actually attend Mass don't necessarily have this perception, but those people are often out-of-state.

- Sharon H. expressed frustration with the blame being laid at the feet of the parishes. The AoB contributes to how welcoming the Catholic Church is perceived to be or not to be.
- Mary H. asked if the executive committee could address what we're being asked to do. To which Geri S. responded that this meeting differed from the past two meetings with Bishop L. in that it was looking forward with creativity. How can we, and St. Leo's, serve our area of the city?
- Marianne R. expressed confusion noting that the email to the whole parish said we are not being merged/closed, but in this discussion we are once again saying it could happen. Secondly, our ecclesiology is very much based on Vatican II, how would we depart from that?
- Jill H. expressed anger at the focus on perception, noting that perceptions are not real data. If being "missionary disciples" is truly the desired outcome, we are doing that already.
- Al R. said that if our mission is to reach the disaffected, regardless of geography, that's not a mission he is willing to give up. Maybe we need to find a way of phrasing that mission which is less objectionable.
- Kevin O. said that while he shares the angst of many at this meeting, we may share more with St. Leo's than we recognize, and we need to look forward. Dan McCarrthy recommended a facilitator experienced in church consolidation..
- Audrey R. noted that we could easily spend 11 months talking with no result. What are the measurement criteria to tell us that this has been a successful discernment process?
- Mary H. (in the chat) suggested writing a scope of work before we finalize decisions about who will lead the investigation/discernment process.
- Geri S. noted that we would be discussing some of these issues, especially neighborhood outreach in light of the vision statement, even in the absence of Seek the City.
- Catherine M wondered if part of what Bishop L. is suggesting is a greater inclusion of those who receive aid and services.
- Pat B.- Who will be paying for this facilitator?
- Colleen M. raised the point that we have been losing membership for 30 years. Where will we be in 2034? Is it possible that St. Vs will not be here anymore?
- Kevin D- The message seems to condense to "reach out"- to St. Leo's, to parishioners from parishes that will be closing, to neighbors, etc. Those people whose churches are closing are impassioned Catholics. They would be an asset to any parish.
- Rita M. shared that she recalled an issue with parishioners being critical of a JV who was more traditional, so the perception of "know-it-all" is not entirely baseless.
- Marianne R. proposed a joint Mass followed by a meal where we tell stories about why we love our parish. Do the socializing first to alleviate some of the anxiety before we get down to business

- Colleen M.- There were historically more fraternal relationships among parishes of, at least, East Baltimore if not across the city. Pulpit-sharing, progressive dinners, etc.
- Janice- Consider our awkward position in making overtures to parishioners from closing parishes.
- Al- The elephant in the room is finances. When/how do we broach that topic?

Constitution By-Laws

- Brief discussion around the urgency of approving the by-laws. Members of the working group noted that the new constitution, which has been ratified, sets a deadline. Also, elections will be in October, which means nominations begin in September. Ideally, by-laws would be in place before-hand. No one opposed the suggested review procedure.
- Procedure: Council members, excluding the working group, will be broken into three groups. Each group will be assigned a portion of the by-laws, and that group is responsible for reviewing, meeting to discuss, and returning their feedback to the working group by June 24.
- Group leaders are **BOLD**
 - Group A- Fr. Ray, **Kevin O**, Jill H. Catherin M, Leah M
 - Group B- **Lindsay D.**, Geri S, Pat Ball, Janice Bonner, Mark Palmer, Denny McM
 - Group C- Kate Volpe, **John Gontrum**, Rita McM, Anne Freeburger, Ray Heil
 - **BYLAWS ARE DIVIDED INTO FOUR SECTIONS**
 - **ALL:** Introduction, Purpose, SECTIONS TEN and ELEVEN
 - **GROUP A:** SECTIONS ONE and TWO
 - **GROUP B:** SECTIONS THREE, FOUR and FIVE
 - **GROUP C:** SECTIONS SIX, SEVEN, EIGHT, and NINE

The meeting was concluded by praying the Our Father.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lindsay Dierkes

Attached: Social Action Committee minutes, Peace & Justice Sub-committee minutes

Minutes for the Social Action Committee Meeting May 13, 2024 Attendees on zoom: Joe and Peggy Cronyn, Pat Frascati, Ray Heil, Marcia Metzler and Peggy Meyer

The meeting started at 10:31am. Peggy M facilitated and read the Piscataway tribe acknowledgment. Peggy C opened with a prayer.

Next meeting date: Tuesday July 30, 2024, 10:00am

Breaking Bread with the Hungry: Peggy M reported that the meals have gone well with the number of guests fluctuating based on the weather and time of the month, 110 - 130. There have been no problems. We have a few new volunteers this year. We will probably move out to the park in June. Ray mentioned that we should let our guests know dinner would be ravioli each week if the ministry moves to St. Leo's. ;-) We previously gave feedback to the Archbishop on the expected resistance to this ministry in Little Italy. The "Do Tell" on 4/14 was well attended and maybe we will get more volunteers.

City Springs Elementary/Middle School: There are 20 days left in the school year. Most testing will be completed this week. May 29 is the last professional day. The one on April 3rd went well and Dr. Richetta discussed the budget, fluctuating student count and the timeline for the new school. Demolition is to begin late summer so a new school will be a couple of years.

Donna Dannals collected enough books to distribute 2 to each student on May 22. They include Spanish language books! The "Do Tell" at St. V's on 5/5 went well with a few people perhaps interested in volunteering. Joe went to the Jonestown Planning Council (JPC) and Jackie Jones said she would like to volunteer next year. We are losing Mary Strassner and Susan Hahn. Peggy M is going to work with the students in her class that aren't going to the Orioles game tomorrow.

Monday Food Program: Hurlie Waldman solicited additional help hoping to have a rotation schedule and got two new volunteers.

Green Team: Ray had another planting session for our Restoring Creation Program in May for native plants. 13 volunteers helped on Saturday and finished. It looks beautiful! Thank you, Ray! Over 5 days he had 20 volunteers. He involved more children and they made it fun. We also celebrated earth day at the mass on 4/4.

Men's Clothing Program: Marcia said we continue to have 25 or so clients with the program running smoothly. Mary L has been buying most of the items and Gail Meier collects items from a thrift shopping friend. Gail Meier, Joe

Epstein and Peggy M had 33 men last program day. Mary L solicited for more volunteers in the e-news.

Homeless Questions and Answers:

Joe filled in JPC on the RFP that was not issued yet for the permanent supportive housing in the two hotels on President St. They will be a shelter, temporary housing to turn permanent in a couple of years. It is unclear until the RFP comes out. Dan McCarthy and Kevin Lindamood of HCH may work together on it. Dr. Richetta was at JPC meeting and she called Robert Stokes and he said the first he heard about the hotel conversion was in the Sun Paper so he was going to find out more. There are perhaps 150 total rooms in the two hotels. They will need redevelopment to include kitchens so the number will shrink.

Peace and Justice Subcommittee: We will send out the minutes from the last Peace and Justice meeting.

Prayer Walk: Peggy M is unaware of the next prayer walk. Perhaps Seek the City side tracked them.

The Resource Exchange (TRE): Peggy C helped coordinate the talk on affordable housing and racism at Roland Park Presbyterian Church on April 16th and Kevin Lindamood and Dan McCarthy were terrific. Many of us went but it was not well attended.

Peggy C said she is very stressed dealing with the finances since Peggy M can no longer have a check book per the archdiocese. Peggy C has had to work with Kim to verify expenses. Peggy C has the only credit card now, used for the thousands we spend on beds and our three storage units, which are on different schedules. We have \$21,700 after the Beatty fund donation.

We continue to have significant problems with Health Care for the Homeless. Kathy, Peggy C and Peggy M have been very frustrated with the referrals. Some weeks had two families or were incorrect. Jasmine is transferring to a different position so let's hope we get somebody good. We will only do moves on 3 weeks in the summer and 1 pick up per month. We did well at Charlestown and we thank Chris and Charlie Cronyn who filled in since we were missing the Bobs. We ran out of truck space and had to leave some good things. Thankfully Tom Hyatt brought his truck to add to the rental.

We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism: Peggy M said WHaD will meet this week, May 15th. She asked that everyone watch the two videos in the e news about SBCLT and their great progress. She watched the Faithful America webinar: Giving Up White Supremacy Taking the Logs from Our Own Eyes with

Reverend D. Gayle Fisher-Stewart and Reverend Nathan Empsall. It reiterated much of what we have learned about the racial myths and Papal bulls. People know they were wrong but can't admit the evil that advances whites.

Joe said Helping Up Mission purchased the Hendler Building, will demolish it and turn it into a park for the men and women.

Legislation on Racial Equity: Jack reported during our WHaD meeting the results and we again thank him for his great work!

Black Lives Matter: Peggy M said the next rally is Sunday at 4601 Liberty Heights Road at 1:30 pm.

Afghan Family: Peggy C said she would close out the \$1700 for them and is working with Colleen on that. They are all in school now and she expects things to mostly end in June. A huge thank you to Peggy and Joe and their team!

Global Peace Foundation: Chuck and Peggy M attended the first Baltimore Cross Community Reconciliation Project meeting led by Global Peace Foundation and United Way on 3/13. They attended the Stakeholder Meeting for the Project on 4/24 and will participate as Stakeholders.

Social Ministry Convocation: Peggy M said about 11 from St. V's attended the SMC on 4/13. She attended a great session on Pro-life, Social Justice & Not Being Cringe with Mike Denny who has a pop culture podcast. He was fantastic. She also attended the Prison Ministry through Kairos that was inspiring and signed up for a slot to pray during the Kairos weekend.

Seek the City: The Parish Council sent out the draft letter to go to the Archdiocese and will discuss it at the Parish Council meeting tomorrow night.

New Business

Learning Spanish at St. Vincent's: Ray put this on hold pending the Seek the City outcome.

Transit Equity Coalition: Peggy M collected signatures at church for the Transit Equity Coalition and gave them to Bob Reuter. We concluded with the Our Father.

Respectfully submitted, Peggy Meyer

Minutes for Peace and Justice Sub-committee Meeting on May 28, 2024

A video meeting using Zoom began at 7:02pm. Attending: Barbara Bowles, Mary Catherine Bunting, Peggy Meyer, Dennis Moore, Bob Reuter, and Jack Schmidt. Mary Catherine facilitated and led with a prayer from a Ukraine prayer site. Peggy led the acknowledgement of the previous ownership of St. Vincent's property by the Piscataway Tribe.

Next meeting: Monday August 12, 2024, 7:00pm by Zoom. Maureen Daly will facilitate.

Minutes from Last Meeting: Mary Catherine asked if anyone had changes to the minutes of March 25. Since no one proposed changes, she asked us to approve the minutes as written. We approved them.

We Have a Dream: A World Without Racism (WHaD): Peggy said the group met in April and discussed how to hold private controversial conversations. In May, we talked about political inroads and how we might impact the elections and conversations using a racial justice lens. We discussed the possibility of the first black female senator from Maryland. The next meeting is June 19 and Skipp invited the mayor of Hyattsville to give us some advice on political issues. We hope to come up with action items to support a particular candidate and to get people to vote. Bob said we need to focus on the issues.

A discussion followed on restrictions on informing, promoting, or discussing political candidates within the church setting. As the election nears, we will consult the League of Women Voters for excellent background documents.

Mary Catherine and Peggy cited a paper put out by Jody Cooper for the USCCB that compared Biden and Trump on various catholic issues. Peggy cited that as showing that you can discuss actual candidates as long as you show each candidate stance on the issues.

Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ): Jack said that he was not aware of any action by SURJ since the conclusion of the General Assembly. They opposed the Governor's signing of the juvenile justice bill.

ALIVE: Neither Katie Little nor Maureen Daly were present to give a report. Mary Catherine asked if ALIVE is still meeting. Peggy thought they are.

Immigration: Mary Catherine said that Jules Valencia-Banks has been very busy especially involving the 6 Hispanic workers who died during the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. She was not at the meeting to provide an update. Jules later sent an email saying that the mayor extended the period for donating to the fund for the 6 workers until August 31, 2024. This is the best place to donate (and Jules is on the committee for distribution):

<https://www.baltimorecivicfund.org/key-bridge-response-fund>

We supported the Immigration Rights' Access to Care Reform Bill and Governor Moore signed it.

Bob mentioned that a recent talk by Pope Francis covered the issue of immigration very well. (However, in that same talk, Pope Francis unfortunately closed the door on women deacons.)

Mary Catherine talked about the great work that Annunciation House in El Paso, Texas is doing to feed and shelter immigrants. However, the state government denounces their work and is trying to get a temporary injunction against them to close it.

Inclusionary Housing: Peggy said that, on April 16, Kevin Lindamood (President and CEO of Health Care for the Homeless) and parishioner Dan McCarthy (Executive Director of the Episcopal Housing Corporation) gave a fabulous talk on affordable housing, filled with numerous statistics about housing and how difficult it is for lower- and middle-income people to afford housing especially on a minimum wage salary. Both Peggy and Mary Catherine said how great a job Dan has done providing affordable housing for many, many years.

Peggy also said that Kevin and Dan, working together with other partners, are waiting for the Request for Proposals (RFP) to turn the 2 hotels that the city has recently bought into housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.

BRIDGEMD: Peggy said that BRIDGEMD is sponsoring a crab feast on June 29 from 2 to 6pm. Cost is \$85. She sent the flyer to committee members.

Prayer Labyrinth: At the January 22 meeting, Bob asked about a peace prayer labyrinth and wondered if it would be possible to install one on St. Vincent's property (possibly in the park or on the ground edges around the parking lot). Bob said that he sent information on this to committee members, and no one responded. Bob still believes it should be considered. The consensus of the committee was that with the longevity of the parish uncertain they weren't sure if this was a good time, but that Bob could address the parish council himself or submit the idea in the suggestion box.

Beyond the Boundaries (BtB): Mary Catherine said that the Inclusionary Housing Coalition (IHC) hired Jenny Torres for a leadership position. BtB is a part of IHC.

Global Peace Foundation (GPF): They are a worldwide organization that works to resolve issues dividing a community. They are in Baltimore because of the racial divide. Peggy and Chuck attended the first meeting of stakeholders on May 8.

San Juan de Limay: Mary Catherine said that she did not attend recent meetings since they always seem to occur when she has other meetings scheduled. She did not know of any recent developments.

Pax Christi: Chuck had given Peggy his report: Mary Catherine will receive Pax Christi USA's 2024 Teacher of Peace Award, a well-deserved honor. It will be officially given during a zoom meeting on September 6/7 and Pax Christi will present the award in person on a Sunday in October at St. Vincent's church. Mary Catherine said she was shocked. A flyer about the award is attached to these minutes.

The all-day spring meeting in DC focused on the problem of violence especially gun violence in cities like Baltimore and Washington - Chuck thought it was excellent. They are thinking of rolling something out as a follow-up to the conference. Pax Christi National's director is resigning in July 2024, and they have not yet selected a replacement.

Six Black Candidates for Sainthood: Mary Catherine stated that Ralph Moore of St. Anne's parish frequently writes about these efforts in various publications and that an event is usually held in November at St. Anne's to further their cause.

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Black Lives Matter: Peggy and Mary Catherine attended the rally on May 19 at Liberty Heights. There was a small turnout. The next one at Timonium Fairgrounds was previously scheduled for Father's Day so they think they'll reschedule it.

Anti-racism Car Magnet: Bob has been hoping to get additional copies of this magnet. He talked with Colleen who told him to wait until after the new magnet is released.

Racial Justice Circle: Mary Catherine said that the most recent meeting was held on May 19 and most of the discussion revolved around the parish closings and how sad everyone was about it.

Catholic Campaign for Human Development: Bob distributed to the committee members a letter from BRIDGEMD that notes the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' dislike of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) and its possible efforts to discontinue that program. Noting that CCHD has been one of the most successful anti-poverty programs in the country, BRIDGEMD is sending a letter to the USCCB's Spring Plenary Assembly held in Louisville, KY during June 12-14 to advocate for support of the program. Bob would like all committee members to sign onto the letter and to forward it to others who may also be willing to sign. Peggy sent a copy of the letter with the sign-on button to committee members. Letter from BRIDGEMD is attached.

Transportation Issues: Bob also distributed a copy of the Red Line Light Rail Transit Community Compact 2.0. This is an agreement between local community members along the Red Line and the Maryland Department of Transportation that ensures that certain amounts of economic benefits from the Red Line will accrue to the local communities. Bob has asked that the Peace and Justice committee members read through the agreement and vote, as a group, to support the agreement by signing it. He

wishes that a vote of committee members be taken by June 5. Committee members will contact Bob with their votes. (We subsequently told him to sign our committee to it.)

On the petition to get the creation of a regional transportation authority for Baltimore on the November ballot, the Baltimore Transit Equity Coalition (BTEC) had previously submitted 5,000 signatures toward the required 10,000 and intends to send an additional 5,000 in the next week or so. However, Bob said that the city only accepted approximately 3,600 signatures.

Maryland Catholic Labor Network: Mary Catherine said that they are very concerned with the situation at St. Agnes hospital where the nurses have decided to unionize and have been subjected to harassment. The nurses sent a letter to Archbishop Lori asking him to send a letter to the hospital supporting the unionization.

Social Ministry Convocation: Peggy said that 11 or 12 St. Vincent's parishioners attended the convocation, and she attended two great workshops.

Closing Prayer: Mary Catherine led us in a prayer for all the churches being closed and their members and for our staff and its efforts to keep us open.

The meeting ended at 8:10pm. Respectfully submitted, Jack Schmidt