

St. John the Evangelist Parish Council
Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2009

Attendees

Fr. Tom Powers	Norm Boucher	Mimi Eldridge	Pat Feige
Sr. Evelyn Ronan	Mary Gotgart	Susan Jablonski	Bob Kelliher
	Sally Miller	Patrick McGearry	Jane McDaid Murphy
	Mike Racette	John Salvati	Joe Tierney

Opening Prayer and Reflection

“Praying Together” was led by Sr. Evelyn.

Old Business

Minutes were reviewed and accepted.

Eyes and Ears

Joe welcomed Fr. Tom back and Fr. Tom asked to be brought up to speed on what has been going on at the parish level. Joe told Father that we were struggling with concerns about these difficult economic times. The impact goes beyond parish level; it is pervasive to all layers of people throughout the Parish. Bob began by mentioning an article in the Townsmen about the Hills Congregational Church starting a support group through creating networks, helping with resumes, etc. Concerns were raised about how we could help as a Parish; have support groups, have extra collections, collecting food, etc. A question was raised as to whether or not the Parish discretionary fund might be able to help those who are having trouble; paying rent/mortgage, people need help with medical bill, prescriptions. Fr. Tom reported that there had been some requests for help and that the Parish was able to meet some of those. It was suggested that we find out what Catholic Charities has to offer at this time. Fr. Tom noted that care would have to be taken before adding "second collections" to Saturday / Sunday Mass schedules, and that these additional collections generally have to be approved by the Archdiocese. It was mentioned that prayers could be offered at the Mass during the petitions for those in need. Sr. Evelyn volunteered to get in touch with the local food pantry.

Before closing this topic, Pat mentioned the conditions of ice and snow in the parking lot. Fr. Tom said that he would investigate it further.

Update on Previous Topics:

With respect to the construction project at 27 Washington Street, Joe reported that Kathi Aldridge and Dick Denning had submitted a letter raising safety concerns to the appropriate

Town Board on behalf of the St. John's School community. It was noted that because of the various permit/legal processes, it could be a year before the project was finally underway.

Joe then introduced the topic of the Parish Pastoral Planning group. Fr. Tom reported that he met with the group and they had given him a status report. He indicated that there had been no further conversation beyond our Parish. Fr. Tom reported that Fr. Fitzgerald from St. Paul's was the Vicar for our Area. There was some discussion about how a "cluster" of Parishes might be formed as we go forward, and suggestions were made to Fr. Tom related to the issues facing the Parish. Fr. Tom indicated that he would discuss this matter with Fr. Fitzgerald and report back to the Council. A discussion ensued about how these matters have been addressed in other regions within the US where consolidation has been addressed, and Sr. Evelyn noted that the report of the Archdiocesan Commission did address these experiences.

Sr. Evelyn reported that she had been moved by the incredible response of the Parish to the Haiti Marycare Project. The Service Commission and many volunteers dedicated many volunteer hours and had put together 634 birthing kits. Sr. commented that Advent, to her, was "the coming of a bright light" as our Parish contributed to the saving of a life through these kits. She also expressed hope that as Lent approached, that our Parish would once again see an opportunity to work with another similar type project.

New Business:

The topic of Christmas Masses was discussed and the need for future planning to ensure smoother transition from Mass to Mass, adequate parking lot supervision, and the providing of "Greeters" to welcome and help with the entering and exiting from the church.

Parish financials were discussed. Fr. Tom commented on the Parish budget and the need to streamline the process. There were some questions about the number of participants in the Parish collections, and Fr. Tom outlined the pattern of giving by parishioners. He explained how the Parish has an annual audit of both the church and the school. Joe and Fr. Tom discussed the Parish's practice of holding a joint breakfast meeting of the Parish Council, the Finance Committee and other selected Parish organizations in order to consider important matters for the Parish, and Fr. Tom indicated that he would explore that with the Finance Committee.

Parish Lenten Activities:

Sr. Evelyn reported that a schedule of all the Lenten activities would be included in the Parish Bulletin and would also be mailed out to every parishioner.

Adjourn:

We agreed to meet next on February 24th. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.