

Social Justice and Caring Committee
Minutes of the Meeting Held on Thursday, June 3, 2021 (via Zoom)

Present: Martha Arko, Bill Dorgan, Mary Huettl, Ann Karner, Julie Ludden, Christine Malec (minute writer), Fr. John Mitchell, Julie Moore, Eileen Muetzel, Ray Muetzel, Kim Roering, Mary Root and Mary Weyandt

Prayer

The prayer was led by Bill Dorgan.

Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative

Julie Moore announced that, at the last Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative meeting, she learned that the St. Paul City Council voted unanimously to adopt a Ramsey County property tax levy through its Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) which will be dedicated to affordable housing. She said that Ramsey County is in the process of determining its budget and that it has not yet been determined what percentage of the HRA dollars would be used to support area median income funding.

In a matter unrelated to the tax levy, Ann noted that Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative has an expectation that its members offer it financial support - even if the amount is small. Christine noted that the parish has supported the Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborated by choosing this organization as a past We Care Campaign fund recipient.

Committee Budget

Christine stated that Kim asked parish Business Administrator, Theresa Ruttger, whether the committee has been given any budget dollars and Kim was informed that it has not.

Fr. John said that if the committee wanted to receive funding from the parish, it could submit a budget proposal.

We Care Campaign

Kim mentioned that Theresa Ruttger told her that a dedicated account has been established to hold the funds donated to the only option in this June's We Care Campaign (St. Pascal's Outreach) - since the amount collected will be used to support outreach efforts in the neighborhood surrounding the parish.

Community Event/National Night Out

The committee members renewed their discussion on hosting a National Night Out-type event on August 3, 2021, as a way to develop relationships with those in the neighborhood surrounding the parish. Fr. John and Mary Weyandt reported they proposed this idea at the last parish council meeting and it was well-received. They stated that the council members were supportive of

getting to know the neighbors around the parish and suggested that the event be held on the playground.

The committee members acknowledged that parishioners may be attending their own neighborhood's National Night Out on August 3rd, but thought that the parish could invite those who do not have their own neighborhood event to attend. They mentioned again the possibility of delivering invitations to those living in the neighborhoods around the parish.

It was said the parish could register on the National Night Out website in order to receive a coordinator tool kit and a guide. Fr. John stated that Theresa Ruttger is willing to register the parish. It was also noted that the St. Paul Police Department might also provide a National Night Out starter pack.

The committee members discussed that police officers and fire fighters often volunteer to make appearances at such events.

The committee members acknowledged that, since National Night Out takes place on August 3rd, planning for the event would need to begin soon. Mary Weyandt volunteered to contact Theresa Ruttger about registering for the event and to organize a planning meeting. Mary Huettl, Julie Ludden, Christine, Julie Moore, Eileen and Ray offered to help with the planning. Mary Weyandt said that she would also communicate with Parish Council members to ask if any of them would be interested in helping plan this event. It was noted that parishioners might like to assist with this event as well. Kim offered to assist with any office-type help the planning team might need - such as scheduling Zoom meetings.

Donation Closet/Clothes Collection

The committee members continued their discussion on the collection of donations for Brittany's Place, Joseph's Coat, Merrick Community Services and The Listening House. At their last meeting, the committee members debated whether the parish should continue collecting for each of the above-listed organizations year-round or if donations should be accepted for each organization on a rotating basis - switching the donation focus each month - so that each organization would come up in the rotation several times a year. They decided to collect for the organizations on a rotating basis.

The committee members reviewed the donation closet collection proposal that Kim and Ann drafted. The proposal recommended that:

- donations be accepted for each organization for whom the parish collects on a rotating basis (either bi-monthly or monthly) - with the addition of collecting for the Catholic Charities Giving Tree program during the month of December,
- if parishioners wished to donate items or money at a time when the parish was not accepting donations for their desired organization, they could consult the Social Justice and Caring Committee page on the parish's website to find links to these organizations' websites which would provide them with the information they would need to make their own donations,

- calendars, cards, religious medals and rosaries would no longer be accepted and
- a committee member or parishioner would be needed for each organization for whom the parish collects donations and that this volunteer would be responsible for:
 - contacting the organization in advance to determine what type of donations it would like to receive,
 - writing/submitting announcements for the parish bulletin and electronic newsletter, the *Pulse*, regarding the collection and
 - taking or arranging to have the donated items taken to the organization at the end of the month.

The proposal also contained a sample bi-monthly schedule in which the parish would collect for the above-listed organizations for two months in a row (with the exception of collecting for the Catholic Charities Giving Tree program during the month of December) and a sample monthly schedule in which the parish would rotate the organization for whom it is collecting donations every month. The committee members debated which of the two schedules to adopt and decided upon using the monthly schedule.

The committee members noted that, since for the last several months, the parish has been collecting clothing items for Progressive Baptist's ministry to the unsheltered and the guests of Freedom House (a day shelter located at the former fire station on West 7th Street), it might be confusing to collect clothing for Joseph's Coat as well. Since the parish is currently partnering with Progressive Baptist on social justice-related concerns, the committee members decided that, for the time being, the parish would collect clothing for Progressive Baptist/Freedom House and not for Joseph's Coat. It was suggested that the parish could continue to support Joseph's Coat by choosing it as one of the options in future We Care Campaigns (as it has done in the past).

In light of the proposed requirement that a committee member and/or parishioner be responsible for contacting each organization, submitting bulletin/*Pulse* announcements regarding its desired donations and for delivering the donations received to the organization, the following committee members volunteered for the listed roles:

- **Brittany's Place**
 - contacting organization and submitting bulletin/*Pulse* announcements: Martha
 - delivery: Julie Ludden
- **Merrick Community Services**
 - contacting organization and submitting bulletin/*Pulse* announcements: Mary Root
 - delivery: John Roche
- **Progressive Baptist/Freedom House**
 - contacting organization and submitting bulletin/*Pulse* announcements: Christine
 - delivery: Eileen and Ray

No decisions were made regarding donations for The Listening House since the committee members felt they should first discuss the proposed change with Andre Simone, the parishioner who currently delivers donations to this organization.

The committee members decided they would start the new donation schedule in August. Kim volunteered to write an announcement for the bulletin and/or the *Pulse* informing parishioners of the pending change to collecting donations for the above-listed organizations on a rotating basis.

The committee members discussed posting a schedule on the door of the donation closet listing the organizations for whom the parish would be accepting donations each month. They also considered posting a revised version of the flyer that that committee had previously created explaining the various organizations for which the parish collects donations.

Meeting with Progressive Baptist

Ann stated that not many were in attendance at the last meeting with Progressive Baptist. She said a discussion was held concerning the need for volunteers for Progressive Baptist's food shelf. Ann stated that there are plenty of volunteers for the food sorting that takes place every Friday between 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. but that help is needed for the distribution of food on the first and third Saturdays of the month from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. She said that volunteers could choose to work all or part of this shift. (Ann reported that Progressive Baptist has a sufficient number of volunteers for the food distribution that takes place on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month.)

Next Meeting

Thursday, July 1, 2021, from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

Kim will schedule the Zoom meeting.

Mary Huettl agreed to lead the prayer.