

Parish Pastoral Council Minutes
Church of the Holy Spirit, East Greenbush, NY
March 20, 2017 at 6:45 pm

In Attendance: Cathy Bellisario, Amy Boel, Cathy Bruno, Deacon Bill Dringus, Kevin Haggerty, Rick Hannmann, Matt Heitker, Mike Kosar, Karen LaFrank, Ellen Murphy, Fr. Joe O'Brien, Frank Putallaz. ***Present:*** Laura Countryman, Eddie Trevino. ***Absent:*** Nick Bruno, Steve Wiech.

Opening Prayer – Fr. Joe opened with prayer at 6:50pm

Review of Minutes – Frank Putallaz moved that we accept the minutes, with a second from Karen LaFrank. The minutes were accepted.

Old Business – none

New Business

Introduction

Fr. Joe O'Brien introduced Laura Countryman to members of the Council. Laura ministers with LIFT and Lifelong Faith Formation. She invited Council members to come to our April LIFT gatherings.

Council operation and direction

The members discussed ways that the Council could become better known to parishioners. It was suggested that Fr. Joe introduce Council members at Masses and photos of Council members could appear in our parish newsletter or on our website. This was for parishioners to know Council members to have contacts for communicating parish ideas and/or concerns.

As part of a discussion of how the Council conducts meetings, several members offered ideas on how officers could be selected and how officers could conduct our meetings. Rotating leadership, discussing terms limits and working subcommittees were brought up as discussion topics. Kevin Haggerty recommended that we review our Parish Pastoral Council By-Laws which revised and adopted just a few years ago; we could look at how we are following our By-Laws as a place to begin a conversation.

Fr. Joe will email a copy of the By-Laws to Council members soon so we could review the documents to prepare for a discussion at the April meeting.

Parish Pastoral Council survey

To help facilitate a discussion of the results from the Parish Pastoral Council's recent survey of parishioners, Amy Boel, Frank Putallaz and Fr. Joe O'Brien met to review and summarize the information.

Over 140 completed were received from parishioners at the weekend Masses. Approximately 50 blank surveys were returned. Three topics came up more frequently than others: the church's sound system, LIFT and the availability of handicapped parking spaces near the church.

Some discussion on all three points followed. Kevin Haggerty said that we could arrange for the sound engineer to make a return visit and review the system. Given the range and mix of comments on LIFT, it was suggested that we share the comment with Laura Countryman and Eddie Trevino for review. Members felt that parking options were limited, given the size and location of the parking lot. It was suggested that we look into a ride service to assist parishioners in need.

For follow up, members requested a summary of results for review. Amy, Frank and Fr. Joe said they would prepare a summary to be emailed to members before the April meeting.

Deacon Bill Dringus asked that the top three items in the survey be shared with parishioners. Kevin Haggerty suggested that the 'concerns' be communicated to the community, but the Council needed to spend more time with 'fixes' before going forward.

Parish Financial Report

Matt Heitker provided a review of church and school results through the end of February. Matt acknowledged both Council members and the Finance Committee sought to review the decline in offertory giving that has been taking place over the last three years.

The Finance Committee has been looking into measures available to review offertory trends. We know that there are over 1100 households registered in the parish and approximately 800 receive offertory envelopes. Some 400 envelopes users give using their envelopes during the year, some more frequently than others. We also know, week by week, how much money is received from envelope users and how much total offertory is received.

There is approximately 18 months of this information available to the Finance Committee. (This information was not consistently recorded in the computer prior to the Fall of '15.)

Matt stated that the downward trend may, in large part, reflect an aging community and the impact of the Building Fund diminishing offertory. He indicates that the Finance Committee supports conducting an offertory improvement campaign but wait until later this year, giving the Building Plan some additional time to near the completion of its goal.

Holy Spirit Building Project

Kevin Haggerty reported that there has been a delay in the most recent report from our architect. Heather Hasselbacher, who had been working on our project, accepted a position with another architectural firm. We are scheduling a meeting with Paul Mays, our architect, and the Town of East Greenbush to tell them of our project.

The Facilities Planning Committee is reviewing what has been collected, and what has been spent on the project to date to determine how much money is left to work on Parish Center improvements. With this information, we will move towards a final design and cost with Paul Mays.

Kevin Haggerty indicated that we would likely break up the work to be done so that three or four smaller contractors could work on parts of the project rather than have one larger contract. He believes that this will help to lower contract management fees.

Kevin Haggerty got a call from Rosemary Horan about placing a tree for Geri Stewart. They looked at different locations and prefer near the garden beside the church. This is preferred over a spot near the parish center as construction will take place in future months.

Frank Putallaz and Kevin Haggerty are looking to develop a long-term plan for both the school and parish with a group formed that would be in charge of planning. Cathy Bellisario mentioned that local Boy Scout troops, with scouts looking for project work to support Eagle applications, may be a good resource to consider.

Holy Spirit School

Mike Kosar reported that we are 66 percent through the school year but 60 percent of tuition collection so far. Mike indicated that this was due to a month lag in reporting tuition collection and a six-week lag in reporting after school program receipts. Some state mandated services aid has yet to be received.

The school has received their school accreditation certificate. All 22 schools in the diocese have been accredited.

An Open House is scheduled for Thursday, April 6 for the entire school, pre-K programs through the eighth grade. Enrollment has begun earlier this year than in years past. Families were asked to contact us by March 1; the pre-K is half full.

LIFT report

March gathering were centered on Lenten prayer. The parishioner evaluations were good. April gatherings are scheduled for Sunday, April 2nd and Monday, April 10th. The April topic will be on the prayers of Holy Week.

Youth Report

A group of youth and parents from Holy Spirit met at Copson House on March 11. It was a great turnout. They will be doing a room makeover on the weekend of April 29. The next planning meeting will be Saturday, April 1 after the 4pm Mass.

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 27th at 6:45 pm in the Parish Center.

Closing Prayer at 8:30 pm.