

**St. James Parish
Regular Parish Council Meeting
December 2, 2015**

Attendees:

Parish Council: Fr. Bob Sprott, Eileen Quigley (Chair), Sara West (Secretary), Dave Bowman, Eva Leonard, Virginia Picken, Dave Samber

Guests: None

Absent: Bill Kusek, Werner Seyfried, Jim Sherman, Fran Williams (Vice Chair)

Eileen called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. Fr. Bob led the prayer.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the November 4, 2015 regular meeting and November 18, 2015 special meeting were approved with minor changes.

Local Advertising Information

As Jim Sherman and Fran Williams were both absent, no update was provided on this item.

Knights of Peter Claver (KPC) Weekend

As Fran Williams was absent, no update was provided on this item.

Meeting with Bishop Perry on November 27

Fr. Bob reported that following the special Parish Council meeting on November 18, he had received a phone call from Bishop Perry. Bishop Perry related that he had summarized the November 18 meeting to Archbishop Cupich and would like to have a follow-up meeting with the Evangelization Board and Finance Committee of St. James.

The meeting was held on November 27, 2015. The only member of the Finance Committee able to attend was Werner Seyfried; several members of the Evangelization Board, as well as St. James staff, also attended.

Fr. Bob stated that the overall theme of the meeting was parish growth, and that Bishop Perry reported the following:

- St. James needs to establish benchmarks for parish growth and reach them.
- The parish should prepare a written plan and submit to him by Christmas.
- He will then review the plan with Archbishop Cupich.

Fr. Bob reported that he met with the staff following the meeting with Bishop Perry and developed the following plan of action:

- Reinvigorate and repurpose the evangelization board.
- Refocus the job description for the Director of Evangelization.
- Focus parish growth efforts on the unchurched and lapsed Catholic population, rather than former parishioners.

Fr. Bob noted that in ten years, the likelihood of the existence of any parish with less than 400 members is very small, owing in part to the projected lack of priests.

Virginia Picken offered her assistance in drafting a strategic plan; Fr. Bob suggested that could be helpful in the new year.

The Council discussed the challenges of doubling the size of the parish, but identified possible ways to increase the profile of St. James, including choir concerts, a CD with recordings of the choir, a community garden or farmer's market on the Michigan Avenue parcel, and media coverage.

The Council then discussed media coverage, which Sara West pointed out had been discussed multiple times at other Council meetings, but no action has yet been taken. Virginia agreed to take ownership of print media efforts; Fr. Bob noted that someone is still needed to manage social media. Eileen Quigley offered to contact Old St. Patrick's to discuss ideas for growing the parish.

Old Business

Fr. Bob reported that he recently spoke with the president of De La Salle High School; DLS is looking for a practice field that would be available for use during the construction period relating to the school merger. The practice field could be a possible use for the land parcel on Michigan Avenue.

Dave Bowman reported that the cost of repairing and refinishing the wood floors in the hall is estimated at \$3,800. The intent is to schedule the project for December or January. Dave also noted that an estimate is being prepared for the basement floor; the proposed treatment is paint with fleck-filled epoxy. Finally, he reported that the lift in the hall will be fixed so that it can function without an operator.

New Business

No other new business was discussed.

Adjournment

The next regular meeting of the Steering Committee will be at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 5 at the Polo Café.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sara West.