

St. Nicholas Catholic Church
Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting
Tuesday, February 22, 2011, 7:30PM

Members Present; Maureen Fenty, Gerry Smith, Ann Rhomberg, Leonor Rojas, Karen Allen, Mary Dougherty, John Kelsh, Fr. Bill Tkachuk.

Members Absent: Nate Clark, Graziano Marcheschi, Susan Schaffrath

Karen Allen led opening prayer and the meeting commenced at 7:35PM.

Lynne Mapes-Riordan was a guest at the meeting and summarized her experience of being an 'inquirer' to the diaconate. She spoke of her reasons for entering the process and of the challenges remaining for women applying for the diaconate program. She expressed hope that Cardinal George would advocate for the inclusion of women as deacons. Currently it's difficult to know the status of this question in Rome. Ironically, Chicago was an early adaptor of the Diaconate role; hence we're in a mature stage (i.e., more emphasis on core theology than at other dioceses.) It was also discussed, as in previous parish council meetings, that the approach of the diaconate steering committee has been to conduct its advocacy in a non-confrontational manner avoiding media whenever possible.

Fr. Bill shared his perspective that the overall attitudes of parishioners seem, in recent weeks, to be more open. A council member expressed concern about upcoming speaker, Chris Schenk, whom some perceive as controversial. Fr. Bill stated that Chris's focus will be on historical foundations of the diaconate and that the aim of her presentation is to inform rather than to stir controversy.

Approval of Minutes: The January minutes were presented and unanimously approved by the group.

Fr. Bill's Comments:

1. We applied for Leadership Training Grant and have been approved. Jaime and Leonor Rojas have expressed their desire to enter the Spanish-language version of this program in the fall. If anyone else is interested, we can send as many as two more people during the 2011-12 fiscal year. Notices for this will be placed in the bulletin.
2. Lenten Retreat – Susan Ross will be our facilitator and the theme will be "Lay Ministry and the Church".
3. Carnaval Gala – All planning is going well. Ticket sales are healthy but we're hoping for more participation in remaining days.
4. Pope John XXIII School will be celebrating 25 years in 2011-2012. The timing of their fundraiser will move to the Fall in 2011 and remain in that timeframe each year. The Spring then will be open for the parish gala, which we plan to move out of winter.

5. St. Nicholas parish will be celebrating 125th Anniversary in 2012-2013. We'll need to keep brainstorming on appropriate ways of commemorating as a parish.
6. Finance Committee – Just passed a balanced budget which assumes one big 'push' for giving in the Spring and another big push this Fall. Necessary capital projects have been included without a capital campaign. (i.e., replace boiler that heats Social Hall and church.) This will reduce gas bill so long term improvement will be realized on expenses. However, the money that will be taken from our savings will need to be replaced eventually for future needs. We will face a capital campaign within the next few years to meet this and other needs identified by our Building Committee.
7. The financial agreement between St. Mary's Parish, Pope John School and St. Nick's Parish is now one year old and will be reviewed this fall.
8. School board - continues to build bridges with St. Nick's parish and St. Mary's parish. A council member asked why tuition rates vary for St. Nick's parishioners vs. non-parishioners. This warrants further discussion. (i.e., how to get these families more involved in parish life by giving them incentives and clear invitations to do so.)

Follow-Up Retreat Topics / PPC Structure Document:

The PPC structure document was in the bulletin and very little feedback has been received. The document will be our working statement with no further edits. One parishioner inquired about open vs. closed PPC meetings. The PPC continues to believe that closed meetings allow for more streamlined discussions in a consistent and productive environment so that we can best address the needs of the parish efficiently. If parishioners would like to attend/present an issue to the PPC, such requests can be directed to Fr. Bill or any PPC member. Parishioners may be asked to attend if input is needed for a specific conversation. The PPC will hold open Town Hall meetings when it seems appropriate. Minutes (now posted on the parish web site) are intended to keep the parish informed of discussions and issues.

Karen Allen offered the closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30PM.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Tuesday, March 22, 2011 (Opening Prayer: Ann; Closing Prayer: Gerry)

Tuesday, April 26, 2011 (Opening Prayer: Mary; Closing Prayer: Leonor)