



ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting – August 14, 2023

Elected Members Present: Julie Laurenzi, Gale Britto, Beth Schick, Tom Fobert, Michael McGovern, Anne Savastano and Hector Hernandez

Elected Members Absent: Kate Gallaher-Carson and Rosa Gonzalez

Ex-Officio Members Present: Deacon Michael McCabe, Deacon Carl Locatelli and Peg Hoblin

Ex-Officio Members Absent: Fr. Sean Harlow and Mark Carson

Recording Secretary: Deborah Botti

Others Present: None

The meeting began with prayer at 6:46 p.m.

The minutes of the meeting of July 10, 2023, were approved and seconded.

Ministry Reports were provided:

Administration & Stewardship

Although the Finance Council has not formally met, income in June and July was more than \$30,000 each month, the highest figure since January and closer to the increased giving campaign's goal.

The gift certificates, donated as an campaign incentive for people to sign up on WeShare, will be raffled at the parish picnic.

Education and Faith Formation

- Nothing to report regarding Religious Education.
- In anticipation of their vacation, the Carsons provided the chair with a report: Registration for Discovering Christ has been opened to parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Our Lady of the Assumption. There will be a parishioner from Infant Saviour who will talk about the series at Mass the weekend of August 19-20 because the Carsons thought a speaker not affiliated with the parish might be helpful.

Christian Services

Nothing to report.

Social Activities

Nothing to report.

Worship and Spiritual Life

Nothing to report.

Art and Environment

Anne Savistano will decorate for Christmas, and the hope is the Ministry Fair will encourage participation from others.

Archangels

Nothing to report.

It was at this point in the meeting that it was learned that Fr. Sean was having difficulty connecting to the Zoom meeting.

Chairperson's Report - Julie Laurenzi

- Rick was not able to join the meeting to discuss the Parish Picnic. He did say there was no Saturday availability in September at the Town of Crawford Park, and suggested October. There were myriad comments:
 - Will the picnic have to be sacrificed because of Social Activities' weekly commitment to Discovering Christ? Maybe if the picnic is held on a Sunday, Discovering Christ attendees could have pizza or picnic leftovers for dinner.
 - Perhaps a potluck could be considered. It is popular with family reunions, and at St. Paul's, the Stone Soup Fest during Lent and a few others over the years have been well-attended.
 - There are other local parks that might have more availability.
 - The weekend of October 14-15 is the Discovering Christ retreat, so the Social Activities team does not have to prepare a meal. Would that be a convenient date for a picnic? Barring rain, the weather is often conducive to outdoor events at that time of year.

- It was suggested that there be a plaque in the kitchen to honor significant volunteers, such as Connie Capria, who have dedicated countless hours to that ministry. That group could come up with names to submit to Fr. Sean for his approval. Discussion ensued:
 - Would this be for deceased members only?
 - What about other groups, such as catechists who have taught for decades?
 - If other groups want a plaque, why not?
 - Where would all these plaques be displayed?

- Anne Savastano will coordinate the Ministry Fair. There was conversation about its timing and structure:
 - Some parishes hold that event in the spring so that ministry members can meet during the summer and be ready to go in September, rather than hold the fair at a time when the ministries are already up and running. Spring can also coincide with Religious Education and re-registration.
 - The event can be more of a family fun day with a theme that combines food, activities and the various ministries. In one church, it was done on a Saturday and was packed. It was pointed out, however, that fair took place pre-COVID and in a large parish. St. Paul's is an aging parish that can't even get four people to sign up to be ushers – even when approached directly by Fr. Sean. And Saturdays would be difficult for families given all the sports commitments.
 - Should a small Ministry Fair in the fall and a larger one in the spring be considered?
 - What about fliers for each individual ministry rather than a pamphlet that includes them all?
 - How about combining the Ministry Fair with the Parish Council elections? That would make two reasons to draw people into the hall.

Peg Hoblin joined the meeting at this point when the question was raised as to how to enforce family participation.

- When a parish enforces attendance, some take off and find another parish.
- If an approach didn't work in the past, out-of-the-box thinking becomes necessary.
 - Confirmation candidates help serve community meals and are involved in the making of prayer blankets. Perhaps they could even serve as greeters?
 - Altar servers could reach out to other children in class.
- Three Parish Council seats will be vacated in January. We need to look at the timeline for acquiring nominations for the November election. New members attend in December, and Julie Laurenzi will be stepping down as chairperson.
- Because of the loss of benefits and income, Jessica Carpino, our Religious Education Coordinator, has accepted a full-time position. Her assistant, Kim Porpora, is also resigning. What's the plan?
 - A few people have been approached informally, but no one is chomping at the bit to accept.
 - Peg Hoblin, in her role as the Archdiocese's Regional Specialist in Orange and Rockland counties, has put the word out about our need for a new Religious Education Coordinator. She will assist as best she can, including with some online training. However, it is difficult to find suitable candidates. Many people need to work full-time. And although this is a part-time position, because children are involved, there is a lot of mandated training, especially revolving around safety. But God always finds a way, and there has always been a strong sense of community at St. Paul's.

Vicar's Report

Computer problems prevented Fr. Sean from joining the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7:54 p.m. with a prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be Monday, September 12, 2023, at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti