



ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Minutes of the Special Parish Council Meeting – May 23, 2022

Elected Members Present: Julie Laurenzi, Christine Forbes, Michael McGovern, Tom Fobert, Pam Vogt and Rosa Gonzalez

Elected Members Absent: Hector Hernandez, Beth Schick and Peter Adams

Ex-officio Members Present: Deacon Carl Locatelli and Fr. Sean Harlow, O.Carm

Ex-officio Members Absent: Deacon Michael McCabe.

Recording Secretary: Deborah Botti

Others Present: None

The meeting began with prayer at 7 p.m.

The Chairperson, Julie Laurenzi, set the foundation for this special meeting:

Although the next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for June 13, we needed to discuss this topic before then.

Our Mass attendance numbers are dwindling, COVID-19 cases are up and summer is on the horizon, during which attendance typically drops.

Should we return to one Mass on Sunday? Although it is expensive to run the air conditioning, money is not the motivating factor. The quality of worship is negatively impacted when the church is empty. There's no energy, the music suffers, volunteers are stretched.

What are your thoughts?

- It's clear this is the necessary direction, but there is concern about backlash. No matter what we do, there will be unhappy people.
- Mass at 10 a.m. might be more convenient for young families in the summer.
- There have been some new faces since the return to two Sunday Masses – but not enough. The first Sunday of Lent, there were many new faces – upward of 100. Since Easter, there have been between 65 and 85 people at the two Sunday Masses – more recently between 65 and 70 - and about 60 on Saturday.
- Should a parish meeting be entertained beforehand so people can air their concerns? Parish Council members and the deacons would be in attendance to accept

feedback. It is important that parishioners feel they are heard. Discussion then ensued about when to hold the meeting. If there was one meeting after the 11 o'clock Mass, the 9 o'clockers might feel inconvenienced or left out; yet, this meeting after the 9 would be difficult with a Mass slated for 11 a.m. And there should at least be a brief meeting after the 5 p.m. Mass because some people do bounce between Saturday and Sunday. Is face-to-face the best option? What about Survey Monkey?

- After discussion, it was decided that the summer Mass schedule be announced – 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. on Sunday beginning the weekend of June 11-12 – because of our concern for the quality of the worship. The Mass schedule will be revisited in the fall at a parish meeting after the 10 a.m. Mass. This approach solves most of the previously-described obstacles.
- Although the circumstances were different, the precedent was set for changing Mass times during the summer. Before air-conditioning was installed, the times were changed to 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.
- Labor Day traditionally ends summer. The parish meeting will be scheduled for the following week, September 11, and include a Coffee Social.
- The summer schedule will be announced at Mass and via a Flocknote, posted on Facebook, published in the bulletin and highlighted on the church website. The time on the monument will be changed, as will the office voicemail.

The meeting closed at 8:05 p.m. with prayer.

Next Parish Council meeting will be Monday, June 13, 2022, at 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti