



## ST. PAUL'S ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

### *Minutes of the Informal Virtual Parish Council Conference – April 29, 2020*

**Elected Members Present:** Christine Forbes, Deborah Harrison, Peter Adams, Rosa Gonzalez, Patricia Davies, Thomas Mulroy, Pam Vogt and Kevin Green

**Elected Members Absent:** Ross Terranova

**Ex-Officio Members Present:** Fr. Sean Harlow, O. Carm., Deacon Carl Locatelli, Deacon Michael McCabe

**Recording Secretary:** Deborah Botti

**Ex-Officio Members Absent:**

**Parish Members Present:**

**The virtual conference began with prayer at 6:30 p.m.**

Fr. Sean had reached out to the Parish Council chair to arrange an informal virtual conference six weeks into the sheltering-at-home mandate prompted by the coronavirus, which included the closing of churches.

**The first topic of discussion: Looking forward, how do we welcome parishioners back? How do we celebrate?**

- A Welcome Home-themed banner was favored as it will be profound when we can get together again. Members should be ready with plans to get banners in on time.
- Flowers would be nice, too.
- But much will depend on *how* we reopen. How many people will legally be allowed at Mass?
- It is expected that prior to reopening, the Archdiocese will issue clear directives and guidelines – especially regarding liturgical issues such as giving the Eucharist, bringing up the gifts, handling the collection, etc.
- Still, some families will probably be hesitant at first.
- Should we consider handing out masks at the door?
- Consideration is also being given to updating the plumbing with touchless faucets and soap dispensers, another indication of St. Paul's concern for parishioners' well-being.
- Might a ceremony of consecration of the building or altar be warranted, given the months of non-use?
- When the time comes, will there be individual Masses for those who have died during since mid-March, or will parishioners be satisfied with one Mass for all the deceased?
- It is not just St. Paul's facing these questions; the entire world is grappling with reopening. It was agreed that big celebratory events are not the way to go

- right now.
- Cues for St. Paul's will be found in how society opens. There will be others that open before us, and we will learn from their successes and mistakes.

**The second topic of discussion: Finances.**

- We are OK right now, but how will we make up the loss suffered?
- How will we replenish the food pantry and the emergency fund in the coming months? We expect the need to grow. The church stocks the pantry when the shelves are low, with a goal of staying ahead.
  - Send out a Flocknote letting people know that nonperishable pantry items can be dropped off at certain ours between the doors of the hall.
  - It will be mentioned in the bulletin.
  - Some parishioners have reached out to see how they can help. Some have donated grocery gift cards that are distributed through the office. Others sent checks specifically for the pantry. When inquiry is made, options will be given.

**The third topic: How do we reach out to parishioners?**

- Deacon Carl shared how he has reached out to all of the more than 400 registered parish families.
- This outreach should be continued, although the concern was raised that during this age of scamming, phone calls could be a source of anxiety, particularly to older people.
- It was suggested that the caller identify him or herself as "...calling on behalf of Fr. Sean and the St. Paul's community ..."
- The parishioner list can be divided among members interested in calling others.

**The informal conference closed at 7:40 p.m. as the UberConference technology started breaking down.**

**No future meeting was scheduled.**

**Respectfully submitted, Deborah Botti**