

St. George Parish Council Meeting
Minutes
January 22, 2017
6:30 pm

Parish Council Meeting Start Time: 6:37 pm

Location – **Lattanzi Room**

Attendees - Fr. Stephen Sledesky, Margot Burkle, Susan Weady, Francine Wainer, Anthony Sicignano, Maureen Goss, Tony Pinto, Brooke Sheldon, Kathy Thomas, Mary Hally, Helen Kaiser-Pedersen, Paul Wettemann,

Absent: Fr. Alex, Tammy Afragola, Chris Kranick, Cara Moore

Guests – No guests were present

Opening Reflection/Prayer – Maureen Goss

Welcome – Tony Sicignano

Approval & Acceptance of October Minutes – Approved by Sue Weady, 2nd by Tony Pinto

Special Project

Listening Campaign – Fr. Stephen

In lieu of Tammy's absence, Fr. Stephen informed the Council that 4 members from St. Bridget's came to St. George on Saturday, Jan. 21st to meet with those parishioners who have requested to be "listeners". During this meeting, the group took time to get ideas on how to approach the listening activity. St. Bridget's offered their suggestions on how to listen, what worked for them, wording to stay away from, body language, etc. The St. George group was then able to practice one on one with each other, with the end result concluding that more practice is needed before actually beginning the campaign. Another practice meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 28th at 2:00 pm.

The following items were determined:

- A pared down list of questions is needed instead of the 14 questions the Listening Committee originally brought to the table.
- Start with general questions and let the person talk, remember this is not an interrogation
- Whatever the interviewee brings to the table is fine. No need to have an agenda going into this.
- It was suggested to look at this as a SWOT analysis and simply keep 4 questions in our mind when conducting the interviews.

At the Council meeting, a discussion took place regarding the questions and how best to approach them, concluding that we should follow the 4 SWOT questions and keep it simple. The questions will also help should there be a lull in the conversation:

What do you like about the parish?

What are some of the things that you see should be improved upon?

What do you see as some of the obstacles to making these things happen?

What do you see are some of the challenges we face?

In addition, the listeners should all gather general information on the individuals they are meeting with such as how long they have been a member of the parish and household background. This will help to make sure we are reaching all target audiences. It is important to inform all of the interviewees that their information is anonymous.

Fr. Stephen informed the Council that 50 pew cards were returned during the Christmas masses; that we will have another weekend where we distribute pew cards to allow individuals to sign up. It was also suggested that a commissioning be conducted at each of the masses in order to “send forth” the listeners out to the parish. The goal of the Listening Campaign is to help provide the Parish Council with an agenda for several years to come.

Video by Mark Fisher

“What the Church Envisions the Council Should Be”

The Council viewed a video by Mark Fisher who has written extensively on parish councils. Based on Vatican II origins, he concluded that the Council serves a threefold purpose: To Investigate, To Consider (reflect & research) and To Formulate (recommend conclusions) to the pastor.

By-Laws Committee

After review of the video, it was decided that the By-Laws Committee will meet again prior to our next meeting in February to review Article II – Purpose and Function of the Parish Council.

Reports:

Peer Ministers – No Peer Ministers are on the Council yet. Tony S. will reach out to Claire for representation.

OLM – Mary Hally

Catholic Schools Month - January 29 – February 4th

- January 23rd – 27th – Teacher Appreciation Week
- January 29th - Catholic Schools Week Mass, St. Margaret Church
- February 3rd – Family Bingo & Pasta Night, Guilford Knights of Columbus
- February 3rd – Student Appreciation Day
- TBD – Parents Appreciation Day

January:

- Free Throw Championship – OLM School Gym, Saturday, January 28th, 12-1 p (Sponsored by St. George & St. Margaret Knights of Columbus)
- State of the School Meeting, OLM School, Monday, January 30th (Snow Date February 1st)

February FUNdraising:**Links of Love, OLM School, February 1st – 28th**

- A class will be selling Pink, White, and Red heart-shapes for \$1.00 to write messages to teachers, what/who they love, or an act of kindness to be displayed in the front-entrance hall.
- \$1.00 feeds 4 lentil meals through *Feeding Children Everywhere: Hunger Project (details to come February)*
Note: <https://www.feedingchildreneverywhere.com/what-is-a-hunger-project/>

Valentine's Dress Down Day, OLM School, February 14th

- Students pay \$2.00 to dress down in Pink, White, or Red to support *Hunger Project*

Pastor's Report – Fr. Stephen

Fr. Stephen indicated that he was pleased with the Christmas attendance. He and the staff are currently working on the end of year and budget reports, which will be submitted to Hartford by Mid-February. The Annual Report target date is March.

Father Stephen indicated the rollout of the new website will occur shortly and that Lori Roche is in the process of being trained to work with the website.

All of the churches in the Archdiocese will be getting a new parish app free of charge from the company who is now producing the Catholic Transcript. The app, entitled "My Parish App" will be user friendly and totally customizable and will be launched during the 3rd weekend of February during the masses.

Special Outreach Parish Programs**Abraham's Tent - Jan. 2017 – Francine Wainer**

Fran stated that we had a total of 9 men who were hosted this year for the AT program. The week went very well with no issues. All the meals were planned well, with minimal leftovers. New this year, under the direction of Diane Birdsall, were the 6th grade CCD classes coming each night to help serve dinner and dessert and to socialize. There were over 175 people who worked behind the scenes to make this a positive experience for our guests. Tony and Fran will speak with Fr. Stephen, Claire and Diane to determine the best time for next year to potentially host the AT program in January 2017.

Open Forum - All

No parishioner comments were presented.

Tony S. indicated that he would like to revisit the “Ministry Minute” that Brooke brought to the Council at our last meeting. This opportunity allows a Ministry leader to speak for one minute about their Ministry prior to the start of Mass. After Mass, the Ministry’s members are available to speak further to parishioners. We have approximately 60 ministries. Some questions posed: would this happen every weekend? Once a month? At every Mass? Two suggestions arose: offering one Sunday a month utilizing 4 different ministries; the second suggestion was perhaps offer a video format for our website – where a ministry leader is videotaped speaking about their ministry and rotating it on the website - Ministry of the Month. Further discussion will follow.

Date for Next Meeting: February 26, 2017 @ 6:30 PM

Closing Prayer by: Maureen Goss

Meeting Adjourned: 8:21 pm

Respectfully Submitted by: Francine Wainer

Upcoming Dates for PC Meetings:

Feb 26, March 26, April 23, May 28 (Memorial Day w/e – to be rescheduled), June 25