

**Ss. Maria and Isidore Torribia Planning Committee
Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, April 2, 2019 – 6:30 pm
St. Joseph's, Campbell

Members Present: Fr. Pat Connor, Suzanne Krebs, Deacon Doug Farwell, Peter Olausson, Anna Bauer, Kathy Bailey, Theresa White, Roger Parulski, Mark Houck, Greg Cacace, Joseph Crance

Members Absent: Janette Malavet, Kevin Krebs, Nicolette Butler

Others Present: Karen Rinefierd – Resource, Planning Consultant for Diocese of Rochester

I. Welcome / Introductions / Organization

- Opening Prayer – Father Pat led an opening prayer.
- Kathy Bailey was selected to record minutes for today.

II. Questions / Thoughts / Concerns Since Last Meeting

- Reflections on the March 23-24 Town Meetings:
 - Attendance was a little disheartening in light of the seriousness of the issues we are facing.
 - After taking out the committee members present, meeting attendance totals were:

St. Joseph, Campbell –	26 attendees
St. Stan's, Bradford -	36 attendees
St. Catherine's, Addison -	13 attendees
 - Feedback from parishioners included:
 - Disappointment in not being able to discuss/ask questions during the meeting. (The next meeting will allow a chance for discussion and suggestions/questions for all.)
 - Information wasn't in depth enough. (We will try to address some of that with answers at the April 7th meeting.)
 - Handouts were too small and too small on the screen. (They were small on the screen, which is why the handouts were generated. The charts and spreadsheets were one-page documents, which are difficult to fit on a slide. It was thought that the screen slide was there to use to point out where the information was located and parishioners could follow on the handout.)
 - Felt some distrust due to lack of detail in the expenses. (The intention of the committee is to be as transparent as possible and freely share information. The broad overview was given to share as much information as possible within the time constraints of the meeting. We will try to give more detail during the April 7th meeting and attendees can also ask for more specific information if clarification is needed during the meeting time. In addition, questions can also be directed to Suzanne Krebs and Peter Olausson as they come up.)

III. Prepare for April 7, 2019 Town Hall Meetings

- Purpose of the meeting is to address the questions that were submitted at the previous Town Hall meetings and offer an opportunity for discussion, clarifications, and suggestions from the congregation.
- How do we divide up the two hours allotted for the meeting and structure our time? What guidelines do we want to follow?

- Answer as many questions as we think we can handle during the time allotted. Any questions left can also be submitted in written form after.
- **Need to be very clear early on: We will NOT categorize worship sites or pit one worship site against another. We are ONE parish (Ss. Isidore and Maria Torribia) that needs to solve the problems. It is NOT our intention to close a church/worship site, but rather find a solution, if possible, to sustain our three worship sites. In order to accomplish this, we must work together to address the financial issues, increase attendance, and revitalize our parish community.**
- Figure out what needs to be addressed first based on the compilation of responses.
- There was a lot of redundancy in the written questions, so we can categorize those first and answer them.
- Can we split up the speakers/voices to keep the meeting flowing and have those with the pertinent information answer the questions asked? For example, financial questions answered by Suzanne and Peter, diocese questions answered by Karen, ministerial questions answered by Father Pat and Deacon Doug, etc.
- Is it feasible to develop some answers tonight and get them printed to distribute to help move the meeting along? (possibly)
- We will need to have a timekeeper and notetaker for the meetings.
- Best framework seems to be:
 - Introductory information and presentation in the first hour.
 - Oral give/ take, questions, and open forum in the second hour. (Follow rules for civility.)
- Review/Discuss the compilation of submitted questions.
- Finances, Diocese Questions, and the CMA seem to be the areas that have generated the most questions, with most asking for more detail in expenses and more concrete answers. (Suzanne will prepare to answer the financials, Karen/Deacon Doug answer the diocese questions, and Karen will answer the CMA questions.)

➤ FINANCES

- Firm answers in some areas are difficult to give due to the fluid nature of the collections. We cannot tell parishioners how much each one needs to increase because everyone has different financial responsibilities and abilities to give. We are simply asking that everyone give what they can to help ensure financial stability for our parish.
- What we can identify concretely is that our collections are down 39%. Balancing our major expenses and loss of revenue in a small budget caused the financial crisis to happen very quickly.
- There has been NO identifiable fraud or mismanagement.
- Employees: (While we can walk through the expenses, we will not give individual employee salaries. Can give for example, we have a full-time priest, 60% business manager, 20 hr. per week maintenance person. The Deacon position is not paid and his volunteer commitment is really only for 10 hours per week.)
- Can we get a weekly breakdown of expenses? Is there a quarterly statement that can be developed and published? Can we do a July 31 – March 31 breakdown of expenses? (We can't really do a weekly breakdown because our expenses are not tracked weekly. We may not be able to get it by Sunday, but Suzanne will get us the 9-month history, showing expenses and revenue.)
- Suzanne will make a handout and highlight points regarding the purchased services and employees to address some of the questions.

➤ COMPARISONS TO OTHER PARISHES

- What is staffing like here compared to other parishes? (We have the smallest amount of staff out of the seven parishes that Suzanne works with.)
- Isn't our situation unique because of our small size and our physical distance between worship sites? How do we compare? (Most parishes are fragile at one time or another. We are not alone.)

Everyone is trying to save their own parishes. We are the one in the most critical shape right now. Some parishes have also faced our problems and some have bounced back, while others have closed. Our rural status is not that different from the majority of our diocese. Outside of Monroe County, most parishes are rural. The diocese covers twelve counties.

➤ CMA

- Can the diocese reduce our CMA goal since we are struggling? (The diocese has already budgeted the goal money and needs to address the needs of all parishes across the twelve counties. Only two of seven churches Suzanne works with met their CMA goal. However, there is an opportunity to try to appeal the goal. Father Pat did write a letter asking for a reduction in our goal and hopes to hear back soon.)
- What is CMA based on? Are our numbers accurate for this goal? Can we find a list and purge our rolls of parishioners that are no longer here? Do CMA collections drop regular collections? (Catholics do not have to register, so they are considered our parishioners if they live within our boundaries. They are “ours” whether they are actively coming to mass or not. Information is based on the censuses that the parishes do. We do need to look at what our evangelization role is, and how we can reach out to our inactive Catholic brothers and sisters. We also need to keep in mind the mission of the church and some of the collections for ministerial outreach are needed to fund our Christian missions.)
- Do CMA collections drop regular collections?

➤ MASS ATTENDANCE AND COLLECTIONS

- Has mass attendance changed since the fiscal crisis has been announced? Is it due to the mass changes? (The mass changes have had some effect on attendance, but we cannot go back to the old schedules. Canon law does not allow a priest to do three masses per day unless a special circumstance is granted. Our attendance numbers do not justify a special circumstance for adding a mass. In addition, this is too taxing on Father Pat with his health issues. It is also important to remember that the shortage of priests is impacting everywhere. There simply are not enough priests in preparation to replace the priests that are retiring. Collections are up slightly since the fiscal crisis was announced.)
- Peter distributed a handout of the registered families and donors in our parish. (Less than 50% of our registered families are contributing on a regular basis.)
- We have an aging population and they are on fixed incomes. They cannot give any more. (Do not always assume that this is the case. While many are on fixed incomes, stewardship campaigns and education efforts have helped in many areas where it was previously assumed that it was not feasible.)
- What collection monies stay here and what happens to my donations when I attend mass elsewhere? (If cash is placed in the collection or if the checks are made out to Ss. Isidore and Maria Torribia, the monies stay here. If there is an envelope from another parish placed in the collection, it is sent to that parish. If you attend mass at another parish and use our envelopes or write a check out to us, it is sent back to us. If you attend mass at another parish and simply put cash into the collection, that money would stay with that parish.)
- Why are there so many second collections if we are struggling to fund our local parish? (Part of our vocation as a church is to adopt Christ’s model of helping others. If we maintain our Christian obligation to charity, we are faithful that the Lord will provide for us.)

➤ COMMUNICATION

- We need to get better as a whole with communication. Whether it is about using our website or bulletins more effectively, or reaching out to parishioners vocally, we have been remiss. Although announcements about our fiscal situation were in the bulletin, donations really did not increase until it was mentioned from the pulpit.

- We need to make our councils more functional. The Finance Committee, Parish Council, and Planning Committee minutes should be posted. End of year reports must be done live once per year. Members serving on these committees should rotate. We need to be more vocal in sharing information.
- Participation / Responsibilities for April 7, 2019 Town Hall Meeting at St. Joe's.
 - General:
 - Use lectern microphone for general. Is there a separate microphone to travel for questions? (We have a battery-operated microphone at St. Catherine's, but not sure if it is working. Kathy volunteered to take the microphone around for questions. If it isn't working, she will repeat parishioners' questions loudly so all can hear.)
 - Screen, laptop, power strip and projector and backup projector will be brought by Karen.
 - Backup laptop and extension cords will be brought by Peter.
 - Karen and Suzanne will create the PowerPoint and print handouts and response forms – Estimate 150.
 - Greg will meet Karen at 12:45 to help set up the table and screens. We will move the lectern to the floor and set up the screen behind it so all can see.
 - Anna will ask Rosary Society if someone will take notes and Deacon Doug will ask Art Jones.
 - Roger and Anna will distribute papers and record attendance. Roger will serve as Timekeeper and Kathy will be the microphone "repeater".
 - Mark and Theresa may not be able to attend.
 - Continue to review question compilation and send an email to Karen if questions come up.

IV. Moving Forward

- We need to continue to be solution-oriented.
- Can we complete a census of registered parishioners and try to send letters?
- Should we do a mass appeal campaign. Cost may be around \$500?
- Peter will try to get the survey that St. John Vianney parish used.
- When do we have to send a recommendation to the Bishop? (The hope is October, since we project being insolvent by February of 2020.)

V. Next Meeting

- Next Planning Council meeting will be Monday, April 29, 2019 at 6:30 pm at St. Joe's.

VI. Closing

- Closing Prayer led by Father Pat
- Meeting closed at 9:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Bailey