

St. Nicholas Parish Council Meeting

Recorded Minutes

26 September 2013

Members in Attendance: Claire Nobles, Sharon Osmolovsky, Elena Panomarenko, Paul Moser, Michele Smith, Marina Poutiatine (via conference call), Mark Pietrzykoski, Suzanne Tolstoy, and Ken Mitchell

Members Absent: Walter Alesevich, Nino Burjanadze-Willsea, Peter Vlasov, John Stepanchuk, and Paul Grenier (Deputy)

Clergy in attendance: Fr. George and Fr. Valery

Visitors: George Nartsissov

The Meeting began at 7:03PM with a quorum present.

All sang the Opening Prayer.

Approval of Agenda.

Claire N. asked for approval of the meeting's agenda for this evening. Michele S. gave a motion recommending approval. A 2nd to the motion was offered by Sharon O. The Council approved the motion with a unanimous vote.

Approval of Meeting Minutes.

Claire then asked for a motion on the May 2013 Council Minutes, which had been tabled since the June 2013 Council Meeting. Ken M. offered the motion to approve the May Minutes. A second was offered. The motion was passed with all those who were eligible to vote from the previous Parish Council voting in favor – which was seven votes in favor.

Claire then asked for a motion to approve the August 2013 Council Minutes. Michel S. put forward the motion for approval of the minutes. Paul M. seconded the motion. The vote was eight in favor of the motion. There was one abstention, because this one was not at the August meeting.

Metropolitan Tikhon's Report.

Claire indicated that the Metropolitan was not able to attend this evening due to a schedule conflict. But he sent his blessings and support for the work the Council continues to do.

Father George Kokhno's Report.

Fr George attended with Claire N., the previous Saturday, a meeting of the Washington, DC Diocese Council leaders. Michele had previously attended an earlier meeting of the parish treasurers. Father George and Claire N. communicated on behalf of the Cathedral to the Diocese about our financial condition. We were able to give them the true picture and expressed our concerns on the topic of money owed back to the Cathedral. The full Diocese Council is scheduled to meet in the middle of November as the Diocese Assembly. The leadership will take

our recommendations to the full assembly where it will be discussed and decided. Claire N. will speak about this more in her report.

Father Valery Shemchuk's Report.

Father indicated he now feels like he is always doing baptisms. Usually we are doing one or two on a weekly basis. However, In August he had 12. In September we had already two weddings with two more to go. We had five baptisms in September, plus one chrismation. The baptisms are mostly children, but there are some adults. There is a preparation process before they can be baptized. Today he visited two homebound individuals and he will continue to visit others. One lady in particular at Manassas, VA, is in prison.

Mark P. at this point indicated he can offer the Cathedral an opportunity to post a digital picture of the Cathedral during advertising week in New York City, where we could put up a digital add on the screens that decorate Time Square.

Parish President's Report.

Claire N. spoke on several activities involving the parish. First, she thanked our two clergy for helping to keep the activities of the church going well at this point. She said she was happy about the performance of the Sunday school so far with Ksenia Panomarenko and pleased with Nino B.'s work with the Fall Bazaar. She also said the education backpack project led by Susan Rudy was a great success.

Claire stated that last month we voted on paying the Rectory Taxes we owed to the District. Now those taxes have been paid. We relied on Tom Sigler's guidance to get us through the process. As it turns out, the Archdiocese of Washington will pay us about \$14,000.00 over the next three years, which, was money owned to us for our expenses with the previous Metropolitan. It did take a fair amount of effort and time to convince them we were owed this money. We will still have to go the Archdiocese meeting in November for a final decision.

We stopped paying dues last December to the Archdiocese because we were due a credit from them for \$38,000.00 due to paying bills for the previous Metropolitan. So we stopped paying our assessment dues. And as a result, both our financial books and the Archdiocese books along with Syosset have become out of balance. As a means to reconcile all the financial books, our agreement with the Archdiocese is that we now are starting to pay dues again. The Archdiocese will give us back \$14,000.00 in cash. The rest of the difference of the \$38,000 will be made up to us, based on our payment of assessment schedule to the Archdiocese. Over a three-year period we will be even on this owed credit from the Archdiocese.

Michele said this is an important issue. It seems the Archdiocese had a plan to manage this issue, but ignored our input about the \$38,000.00 credit. But, now the rules around assessment for the Archdiocese have changed for the parishes. Instead of the previous assessment based on a head tax, we now have a 2.71% tax on collected revenue. The Metropolitan wants all the Washington Archdiocese parishes to come together as one and implement this new approach of percentage giving to show the rest of the OCA the example. Marina asked if the Archdiocese has in its by-laws, rules about collecting – are they within their rights to change the assessment process? We need to try and get a copy of the Diocesan Bylaws. The answer to the question is not fully known

but OCA headquarters has been working on this idea based on the decision from the All-American Council. The OCA assessment cannot change until the OCA Statute regulating assessments is amended, voted on and passed at an All-American Council.

Claire N. said she attended a DC Neighborhood Security meeting with the two clergy fathers. About 20 people from the neighbor community met at Christ Church. A. DC safety representative and a police officer talked about the current situation on crime in the area. Crime is not really going up, but in selected neighborhoods there have been spikes of criminal activity in our specific area. Recently, eight or nine breakins to garages have occurred. There has been one serious incident with one woman experiencing a burglary. Someone entered her second floor and took some valuables. The burglar was caught however. It maybe the same criminal who has committed a few other of the previous burglaries around the area. Everyone needs to take some more precautions. As of now one criminal has been caught. Please note that we had a theft right here in the Cathedral during a recent coffee hour. Someone lost a wallet out of her purse. We need to take care and secure the Sunday school children.

Lastly, Claire talked about the recent Unity Walk held here up and down Massachusetts Ave. a few Sundays ago to honor those who were involved in the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Sharon O., Ken. M., and Claire worked at the church that day to welcome the Unity walkers. We had over 200 visitors to our church on that day. We gave out information packets on our church, talked with those interested about our church and provided water. It was a big success.

Old Business

Rescheduled Question & Answer Session with the Metropolitan.

Claire N. stated that we have scheduled for the Saturday evening after the Fall Bazaar, a dinner for the Metropolitan and the workers from Christ House. This will be the first of several small dinners that the Metropolitan will host. Michele has volunteered to provide the meals. Then the next day, Sunday, October 20th, we will have one Divine Liturgy, followed by a Q&A session with the Metropolitan for anyone who wants to attend. We will give another opportunity to parishioners to submit additional questions. Sharon O. added that we need to ask the Metropolitan to confirm he will be coming on those dates.

New Business

Fall Bazaar.

Claire N. said we have raised over \$8,700.00 for the Fall Bazaar so far. All seems to be going well at this point and all is going well on the plans. Mark P. asked for the chairs to submit for their volunteer needs and requirements -- as we need more volunteers, especially food preparers. George N said Sasha couldn't get tables from his Temple this year. He suggested we purchase some. Elena P. said we are renting more tables and chairs.

Strategic Planning Working Group.

Ken M. indicated the plan for the project was in place and provided his suggestions on who should be serving on the Working Group. Michele said the Council should have a vote on authorizing and approving the Working Group and indicate the time frame for its work. Council

Members gave additional suggestions about who should be considered for the group to ensure all interests as possible are represented. Ken M. agreed and agreed to submit an updated plan with a motion for the PC.

Report on Cooperation with Saint Sophia Cathedral on Activities.

Ken M. reported we had a successful meeting with the Parish Priest, President, and Youth Director at St. Sophia the previous Sunday. A final agreement was reached on cooperation between the two Cathedrals on a Teenage Youth Program.

Committee Reports

Stewardship.

Marina P. said we have an additional check for \$2,500.00 for Ksenia Popova.

Claire N. asked about letter to the church members on the upcoming pledges. Marina questioned the timing about this. It might be confusing if we send out requests for next year right now, versus closer to the 2014 calendar year beginning. We tend to assume we can cash a check once it is given, rather than discern exactly what it is for. Michele said, we need to fix all our dues issues before we decide on the date to mail out for next year's pledges. Michele said likely after Thanksgiving holidays would be a good time.

Personnel.

Claire said she is working on the *pro bono* issue with John Morris

Budget and Finance.

Michele talked about the meeting minutes from the last committee meeting. Here are some of the highlights.

- transferring to on line software product
- the icon program - committee agreed to take it on and has an approach
 - working on getting the unsponsored icons first.
- OCA dioceses assessments discussed
 - Dues owed \$28,000 -- we got a better deal than expected
- Discretionary Fund account -- vote on this in December
- budget process – need to have an estimate for capital expenses for the coming year
 - to have an accurate forecast in the budget need to decide and vote on budget in November
- Clergy compensation report discussed
 - Fr. George will check with the Metropolitan's wishes on the budget with a Dean or no Dean
- Fr. George said we have no procedures for discretionary fund management and auditing. The OCA has no clear guidelines on how to decide if donations go to operation budget or discretionary fund -- no clarity on how money comes in and is distributed. Need to come up with clear policies to manage it.

Marina said there have been some checks to the Discretionary Fund that have come in and they were deposited in the Operating Fund. She had presented an outline, prepared by Tom Sigler, for managing a discretionary fund to the Council at the May meeting. We need to have an

offline discussion by the Budget and Finance committee. We need to settle all the questions soon.

Michele then went on to present some of the specific items in the current budget and the account balance statements.

The Balances in each account are:

Operating \$62,367.23, Reserve \$157,614.51, Combined total is \$219,981.74.

Facilities - Basement Renovation \$18,536.00, Major Repairs \$49,158.86, New Annex \$1,457.90 and Property Acquisition \$200,599.38

Note in the basement fund there still is \$18,000+ and this will be used by the end of the year for the Gift Corner.

Gift Corner \$79,896.74, Long Term Endowment \$56,136.12, Benevolent & Education \$119,293.62

Total of All Funds is \$745,060.36

The reporting in August numbers shows what came in and went out. There is a big negative number because of the payment made for the \$12,000 in DC taxes, which gave us a fairly substantial negative number for disbursements in the Operating Fund.

Note that July and August are generally slower income months for the Cathedral.

Baptisms and Marriages in particular have raised our income in the noncharitable category by some \$25,000 to date for the year. These activities have helped to offset some of the negatives, but these are to be considered a one-time gift.

There is now a line item in the balance sheet to track the financial activities associated with the Fall Bazaar.

There is \$4,162.00 raised in Special Collections for August, which is \$1,000 over last year.

We have received a donation of \$6,000.00 from the Metropolitan, but this will be in a separate statement.

On page two, the financials are shown in terms of actual and budgeted for this fiscal year – which actually tracks fairly closely. But on page three, where it shows the comparison between where we are this fiscal year versus last fiscal year -- we have suffered this year from last year -- especially in charitable income. This category is down \$34,000 from last year. Even with marriages, baptisms, and candles. At this point we are doing “ok” but not great.

Facilities.

George N. spoke on the situation with the ACHS. He said the good news is the insurance company is paying on everything but the \$1,000.00 deductible for the air conditioning problem. Our contractor will fix the system and they have a new compressor to replace the one that is broken. Claire N. needs to sign the contract and return it as soon as possible. Mark P. is working with the ?powerful? electric company, PEPCO to clear the lines on the tree behind the Rectory garage. But, it is still a difficult fight with PEPCO to get the trees cleared off the power lines. The new estimated cost is now \$1,800.00. George N. said the dying tree must go. The tree is a Norwegian Maple, and this is a special type maple and has caused an additional issue.

Legal and By-Laws.

Claire stated that the Metropolitan has now signed the new Cathedral By-Laws -- these are now on our web sight.

Other Issues.

The Outreach Committee on Christ House is now being coordinated through Vadim and Olga Yuritsky.

George N. asked that Sharon O. should be congratulated for all the help she provided to coordinate the repairs on the ACHS project repair.

A motion was quickly offered for adjournment at 9PM. Everyone All voted in favor of this motion.

All sang a Closing Prayer.

Next PC Meeting is set for 24 October 2013, at 7PM.

Addendum to the Parish Council Meeting Minutes

Ken Mitchell proposed the following motion for consideration by the St. Nicholas Parish Council. On October 14, the Parish President called for an electronic vote on the following

Motion: The Parish Council authorizes Ken Mitchell, one of its elected church officers, to develop a process and establish a Working Group to undertake a systematic effort to review the operations and activities of St. Nicholas for the purpose of updating and improving. The overall proposal has already been submitted to the Council and is posted on the Web Site under the Strategic Planning button. A selection process for members has been conducted based on criteria presented in the aforementioned proposal. The members participating are in the attached power point. The final selection has been based on Council input.

An added step of an independent and clergy review has also been added based on input from the Council. Hopefully, the strategic planning process will be completed by the end of the year. Upon completion, the Working Group will submit its proposal to the Review

Team. When the Review Team completes its analysis, the proposal and review documents will be submitted to the Council. The Council can then make a final determination on the plan, before going forward with the Focus Team Phase and an a vote by an All Parish Meeting. The Cathedral Rector and Diocesan Bishop will be briefed on the progress at selected times during this process. The Working Group is not to be considered a permanent committee of the parish at this time.

The vote count was 10 Parish Council Members voted in favor of the Motion, one vote against the motion, and two members did not vote. Therefore the motion passed.

Approved:

President of the St. Nicholas Cathedral Parish

Priest in Charge of the Cathedral

Date