

St. Nicholas Parish Council Meeting
Minutes
22 August 2013

Members in Attendance: Claire Nobles, Walter Alesevich, Sharon Osmolovsky, Nino Burjanadze-Willsea, Paul Moser, Michele Smith, Marina Poutiatine (via conference call), Peter Vlasov, Mark Pietrzykoski, John Stepanchuk, and Ken Mitchell

Members Absent: Suzanne Tolstoy, Elena Panomarenko, and Paul Grenier (Deputy)

Clergy in Attendance: Fr. George Kokhno and Fr. Valery Shemchuk

Guests: Ksenia Panomarenko, Tom Sigler, and Lana Gerich

The Meeting began at 7PM with a quorum being present.

Mark P. led the Opening Prayer.

Approval of Agenda.

Claire N. presented the planned agenda and asked for approval. Michele offered the motion for approval. A second was given. The PC voted all in favor of approval.

July 2013 Minutes.

Michele offered a motion approving the July minutes with minor corrections. A second was offered. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

May 2013 Minutes.

Michele made a motion to approve the minutes. John S. seconded the motion. The vote began on the motion with 9 votes in favor and 3 abstentions. However, before the process was complete Marina P. indicated that she wanted the opportunity to offer additional corrections and input before final approval. So the motion to approve was tabled.

Metropolitan Tikhon's Report.

The Metropolitan sent his regrets about not being able to attend the PC meeting, he did, however, send the following e-mail note to the PC.

Fathers and Claire,

I am in Canada for their Archdiocesan Assembly and so I do not know if I will be able to join you for the Conference Call tomorrow. If I can't, I will try to send a few words that you could read, if that would be helpful.

I did, however, want to bring up one issue about the Sexual Misconduct Compliance:

I see from the July Minutes that the Policies, Standards and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct (PSP) were discussed at the last Council Meeting.

It is important for every member of the Council (whether they are new or not) to sign a statement to the effect that the parish accepts these Policies as normative.

I am copying Fr. George and Fr. Valery because they should have received the email around June 21 of this year from Fr. John Vitko reminding all the Archdiocesan Clergy about the need to return the Parish Compliance Form to him by September 1.

Fr. John Vitko also attached a sample document, which I am attaching here, in case you need them:

1) Commitment to comply with PSP's (to be filled out by each member of the Parish Council)

2) Sample resolution (it is important for some kind of resolution to be recorded in the official minutes concerning this matter)

3) Parish Compliance Report (to be returned to Fr. Vitko by September 1, 2013)

Let me know if you have any other questions.

Thanks

+Metropolitan Tikhon

Father George Kokhno's Report.

Thanks to the Council for all the progress we are making. We need to continue to reflect on our spiritual life and be humble about our progress. We must give our glory to God and understand the entire parish works together. We need God's grace to succeed -- it is not just one or a few of us.

Father Valery Shemchuk's Report.

Fr. Valery indicated that he fully supports what Fr. George had said.

Old Business

Rectory Taxes.

Tom Sigler presented a four-page report to ensure everyone understands the chronology and facts of this complex issue. This report is added as an attachment to the minutes.

Tom S. then went on to say the District has made their best offer to the Cathedral and added, this is the best offer the Church will receive. It offers to waive the penalties that had been assessed. Then the deal requires the Cathedral to pay the \$12,000.00 that was the original tax assessment. The city government, however, offers to drop the penalties and fines associated with all the time delays.

There was a short discussion about the fact we had hired a private management company to manage the property and collect the rent during the time we had rented it out. We had not received the full amount of funds due us from this management company that now has been bankrupted. The issue is we have to pay taxes on money we never received.

Claire N. then asked for a motion that the parish authorizes the payment of taxes to the District Government. Walter A. then put forward the following motion:

Motion: I move that the Cathedral pay the Rectory taxes as specified by the District government, and by paying the taxes, the District consents to waive the penalties levied against the parish of \$8,000.00. The motion received a second from Paul M. The vote was taken and the Council was completely unanimous in favor of the motion, so it carried.

Rescheduled Question and Answer Session with the Metropolitan.

Claire N. said we have asked to reschedule the session with the Metropolitan, but we have not heard back from him as yet. Walter A. asked if the format was to be the same. Claire answered yes it would be the same format and we may add additional questions. We plan to allow five minutes time for questions from the floor. We wanted to have all his questions ahead of time so he could prepare.

Walter A. said five minutes is not a lot of time. Claire said yes, but we might likely have more questions sessions in the future. The Metropolitan will be having small group dinners where small numbers of parishioners will have the chance to meet, talk, and interact with him – one-on-one. The Metropolitan is very comfortable talking in this type of setting.

Sexual Misconduct.

Ken M. indicated that the Council had recently received further guidance, based upon our last PC Meeting's discussion on the OCA's Policies, Standards and Procedures. Included below is the guidance from Fr. John Vitko, the Archdiocese Secretary and Metropolitan Council representative. These are in addition to the Metropolitan's comments above.

And I thank you for taking the PSPs so seriously as to ask the questions you did. I think the questions you are asking fall in a 'grey area' that are not explicitly covered by the PSPs, so I will give you my best judgment but am also copying Fr. Gregory Safchuk on this should he see things differently.

The PSPs call for screening of everyone having more than incidental contact with minors (Section 11.02). And in this Archdiocese we have been applying that to volunteers as well as to paid staff. Given these general guidelines, I would then recommend that you screen your church schoolteachers and those assistant teachers who have a fairly regular presence in the classroom. As for more incidental contact. E.g. the very occasional assistant, those who put on parties, Easter egg hunts and the like – I don't think you need to have them screened – but you should follow the two person rule for any youth activity. (Fr. Gregory, please chime in if you see things differently – and I will clearly defer to you).

Again, your question about the adult men and the altar servers is a good one. While this is not explicitly addressed by the PSPs, I think it would be appropriate to proceed with background checks for these, since (1) the PSPs call for screening of all who have more than incidental contact with children; and (2) those who serve in the altar are often seen as having more authority and we must be especially vigilant to see that this 'authority' is not misused.

Based on this, Ken M. said he would work with everyone to complete the documentation work required and ensure the required documents are submitted to Father John Vitko.

New Business

Fall Bazaar.

Nino B. said we have secured the participation of a well-known Georgian Artist who paints icons and makes children's books. Natalie is doing job promoting around town and is talking to the Washington Post about doing a free add for us. We will also place an advertisement. Everything is moving forward.

Nino B. asks the questions if we are ready with all permits and documents that are required to conduct the Bazaar? She asked help from the Legal and By-laws Committee to develop requirements. It was noted that it is too late this year to get an alcohol permit from the city. Alcohol requires fences and security guards. It is a complex set of requirements to serve alcohol as well as being restaurant. Is it really worth the investment to do this for the Cathedral several asked? Security guards charge \$30.00 dollars for an hour of time. It requires 180 days in advance to do the paperwork for a permit. John S. said in the past we have not done that, but we never sold liquor --we basically gave it away.

Sunday School and Budget.

Ksenia P. spoke on the Sunday school. We now have added four English teachers to the staff, but we still need assistants. The school kicks off on September 8th. We will start with a lecture from Fr. George and then we will have service project to pack backpacks for needy and poor children with supplies. Susan Rudy will lead this project. Classes begin on September 15th. She will meet with the teachers before classes start to provide necessary guidance and plans.

Ksenia P. asked the Council to reaffirm the approval of the Sunday school budget. Sharon O. mentioned we have a lot of material up in the attic related to the Sunday school program. At this point the budget is as follows. There has been a donation of \$1000 plus the Council's budget gives \$1000. Michele S. followed up saying there are expenses throughout the year. Some years there is a surplus, and some cases the money not spent reverted back. In some cases the money did not revert back. Claire N. said she hoped we would do more for the Sunday school. The Council was fine with the budget.

Committee Heads.

Claire sent out a list of committee heads based on the listed worked up by Marina P.

Claire then asked for a volunteer to chair the Candle Counter Committee. Mark P. recommended Svetlana Moser.

Claire asked Lana G. if she would head the Cemetery Committee. However, Lana said no, but she will try to do the wreaths. Therefore, we still need a volunteer to oversee the church's plots for sale at the Rock Creek Park property. Marina P. asked that the Council to recognize and thank Lana G. for all the work over the many years for keeping the cemetery plots and grounds around them up.

Other committee chairs are needed for the Choir, Coffee Hour, and Communications. Paul M. said he would think about the Communications, but indicated he would be busy after the Bazaar, and said he will see.

Facilities would remain under George N. and Mark. P. The Dormition Gild Flower Committee would remain under Virginia. The Library was mentioned, but we never had a committee for the Library. Claire N. said she would oversee the Outreach Committee for now, but she would look for volunteers. The Stewardship Committee would stay with Marina P.

We still need to figure out what we would do with the Sunday School Committee. We will wait until after the Bazaar to decide on how to develop the Communications Committee.

Michele said the Budget and Finance Committee have enough members for now.

Nino B. as the VP, chairs the Personnel Committee. Walter A. asked who would like to be on the personnel committee, it would need about 3-4 members. Walter A. and Michele S. said they both would serve.

Marina P. indicated that all committee heads should receive a list of volunteers who want to serve or be on the committees.

At this point Father Valery brought up the Icon Book. Fr. Valery talked to Marilyn Swezey this past week, and she had been in touch with the woman who has been helping her all these years. They plan to finish up on the book, and will update the book on the last few years in the Cathedral. The main problem is with the pictures; the pictures were made with a low-resolution camera and the photography needs to be redone in digital format. Marilyn S., in memory of her mother will donate money to publish the book. Walter A. thought other photos were taken after Father Michael left. Marilyn S. did not mention about this according to Fr. Valery. During that time a lift was brought in to take all the icons. Yuri ? is a possibility who can take photos. Walter A. asked if the text is really ready to go. The quality of the pictures is the main thing. Lana G. said there is a large set of icons that were in the church and later moved to the Rectory. The same person who did the church icons took those pictures. Marilyn S. had indicated she wanted these in the books. They may now be in the Rectory, and should be recorded.

Thanks are given to Andre Gerich, because he gave Fr. Valery a list of frescos that were sponsored and not sponsored at the Cathedral. There remain a large number of frescos that are not sponsored. Fr. Valery said he recently spoke to one parishioner who wanted to remember his dead son, and Fr. Valery offered him a fresco. It was suggested that we create a list of unsponsored frescos that can then be offered for financial gifts. We should create one and then add with the list of unsponsored frescos that parishioners can then sponsor. Claire said we need to have a list of the cost of each icon. Fr. George said we should appeal to new generation, just not to limit to the ones already sponsored. Mark P. said we should create a committee to develop a plan to do this. Michele suggested Budget and Finance committee and everyone agreed.

Benevolent Fund - report on aid to Ksenia Papkov.

Marina P. has sent a notice to the committee of an update on the money collected for Ksenia P. We gave \$1,162.00 and with \$1,500.00 match, there was a total of \$2,662.00. She is out of the hospital and had a condition requiring three surgeries. She must remain in Moscow for now. We are contacting Fr. Gregory, at St. Mark for help from other parishes to ask for additional collections. Claire said we should put a notice in the bulletin to let everyone know that we have helped some on in need.

Strategic Planning Working Group.

Ken M. presented a set of slides outlining how the overall process for strategic planning would move forward. He is still working on putting together the volunteers for the first phase, which will be the Working Group. His plan is submitted as an attachment to the minutes.

Committee Reports

Stewardship.

Michele S. talked about the parish survey -- she said we would send the survey out again. The population for the survey would include those who are pledges, those who have donated money-- though not pledged, and those who have volunteered service to the church. The survey would go out in late September. This would be done electronically, but we will also provide paper copies and leave them in the church for those who wish to submit in this fashion.

Personnel: Legal Counsel Introduction Jon Morris Jr.

Tatjana Morris's husband is a lawyer who is willing to serve for the Cathedral on the Legal and By-Laws Committee. He does *pro bono* legal counsel in the areas of international, contracts, personnel, and commercial law. Nino B. asked if we might use him as an outside legal council. Walter A. suggested he become part of the legal committee.

Budget and Finance.

Michele indicated she would continue the budget presentation format that Tom Sigler has been using to report to the PC about the monthly budget and finance activity.

Michele reported that we have now turned the corner, still doing all right when comparing the actual budget to planned budget. As of right now we are \$20,000.00 in the black. Our net income is good. Had we been forced to pay the OCA required dues, we would have wiped out \$6,000.00 and be in the hole. We are not dipping into the reserve fund as of yet, but we are not good either.

Michele indicated we now have to add the \$12,000.00 expense for the assessed city taxes on the Rectory. We are behind on disbursements for already made repairs. The Gift Corner is off about \$4,000 in revenue, likely due to moving out of the basement and then back.

At his point, the end of July, our budget financial situation looks as follows. The balance in the Operating Fund of both operating and reserve accounts is \$234,661.55. The balance in the Facilities Fund is \$269,061.58. The Gift Corner Fund stands at \$80,391.81, the Long Term Endowment is at \$56,133.74, while the combined Benevolent and Education Fund is at

\$119,493.54. Thus giving a total balance among all funds of \$759,742.22 as of the end of July 2013.

Basically, compared to last year, the financial situation has worsened. We are \$42,000 less in revenue this year compared with last year. If donations and gifts do not pick up in September, we will have to dip into the reserves. Father George said September might be good because there are several upcoming baptisms on the calendar.

Michele stated she has been in touch with the Archdiocese office in Bethesda -- they have asked for our budget documents for the last three years. We are asking for relief for the next few years. It is reasonable on their part to ask for our records.

Everyone please note: All checks need to come to Michele or Claire, Claire said. Especially for anything related to the Bazaar.

Facilities.

Mark stated plainly that any contractor who does work or brings equipment to perform work must have a valid license, be bonded, insured for at least one million dollars, provide three past references, and be vetted before the facilities committee. We need to know answers to the questions -- if damage is done, who will pay for damage? Also if wash and damage occurs, who will pay in this case? These are necessary requirements. Tom S. added a comment saying contractors will get a temporary insurance policy and then they cancel after they show it. This is an old trick. Make sure when they start work check on the validity of the insurance

Mark P. said there is a tree in the back yard of the Rectory, doing damage to the structure of the garage. The cost to take it out is \$1,700. Pepco is needed to do some upfront work prior to taking out the tree. We need to understand at this point the tree is a hazard and needs to be dealt with immediately. We need a permit to take the tree out and we will need to do this, not the contractor. But, we also have to wait for Pepco to clear the electric lines.

Legal and By-Laws: Metropolitan's Signature on By-laws.

Walter A. and Fr. George have tried to get the newly approved By-laws signed, but for the moment they are in limbo.

Claire N. thanked everyone for all the hard work. Michele S. with the budget, Nino B. with the Fall Bazaar, Ksenia P. with the Sunday school, Sharon O. with all the organizational work she does for the Church Office, Mark P. on beautification of the property, and Lana G. and Suzanne T. with the Gift Corner. And many others as well.

Lana G. said we have had many new books donated. We need to have a book sale, preferably on a Saturday. We could possibly make as much as \$1,000.00k for a one day sale.

Motion for Adjournment came at 9:05PM.

All sang the Closing Prayer.

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

These minutes have been prepared and submitted on September 25, 2013 by Council Secretary Ken Mitchell.

Approved:

President of the St. Nicholas Cathedral Parish

Priest in Charge of the Cathedral

Date