

St. Nicholas Parish Council

Meeting Minutes

25 July 2013

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

Clergy in attendance: Fr. George and Fr. Valery

Guests: Tom Sigler and George Nartsissov

The Meeting began at 7: 04 PM with a quorum present

All sang the Opening Prayer

Approval of Agenda

Walter A. offered the motion for approval. The agenda was approved by a unanimous vote of the Council.

Approval of May 2013 PC Meeting Minutes

The May 2013 Minutes were resubmitted for approval. Several members indicated that since there were differences from the previous version, it was decided to table the May Minutes and allow time for more comments and discussion. Ken M. asked that Council members either send their corrections in e-mail or use the correction function on the document to highlight changes.

Approval of June 2013 PC Meeting Minutes

The June 2013 Meeting Minutes were presented. Members offered several corrections. Suzanne offered the motion for approval. A second was given. The motion to approve the minutes was passed unanimously.

Fr. George's Report

Fr. George reminded everyone on the Council that church administration is a holy gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit must guide us through confession, prayer, and meditation. He said that administrative work is sometimes hard and it takes time to pray and think about spiritual life before proceeding. If our spiritual life is not good, it is not good for the community and us. We are dealing with many events during the day. We must learn to do the best with the resources we have -- to do the best we can and keep going - and not postpone. For most of the problems we face, prayer is the best tool and also prayer for each other.

Fr. Valery's Report

Fr. Valery thanked Fr. George for reminding us to keep focused on our spiritual life. We have big plans in front of us and we all need to be pulling together to get things accomplished.

Old Business

Rectory Taxes.

Claire N. has been in touch with the lawyer and the Legal and By-Laws Committee on how we are to pursue our appeal to the District Government. She has also contacted and set up a meeting with our Ward 3 DC Council Member. We are asking for removal of the penalties and tax relief as well,

Tom S. said this has been poorly handled case from the beginning and goes back four years.

Walter A. said our lawyer, Brian Thompson, had been trying for an appeal for quite a while and continuously faced bureaucratic blocks.

Claire said she decided to try new lawyers and decided the previous lawyer was not able to make any headway, plus we need to save costs on legal fees. Claire will continue to work with Tom S. as Tom has all the history. Nina Shafran recommended that we utilize the help of our DC Council ward representative as a way of getting support.

Marina P., said we had been give some tax relief and we were back on the books as nontaxable entity. Walter said the issue is how the DC Nuns used the Rectory, because it is suppose to be for minister or cleric use only.

Tom S. said this a misconception. The change in the tax assessment was a math error in the Districts tax formula. They are not willing to change this now.

Payment of Fr. John Perich and Exchange of Rectory Items.

Claire said that Michele S. had signed the payment for Fr. John P. Marina P. said he has now received the payment.

Marina P. said Fr. John P. has nothing that belongs to St. Nicholas in his possession. But we, the Cathedral, still have some items that belong to Fr. John. He can wait at this point in time and he is not immediately worried. The Metropolitan put some items of Fr. John's items into a box and the Metropolitan brought these items back to the Cathedral. We have a list of everything now. Marina added that we should all say a prayer for Fr. John P, as he will be having surgery soon.

New Business

Strategic Planning Working Group.

Ken M. indicated he is proposing that the Cathedral conduct a strategic planning project to develop priorities and determine what needs to be improved and changed as a way to answer the Metropolitan's request that we review our mission. Ken agreed to develop a high level view of how this should work.

Following that, a discussion developed among the Council Members and George N. It was thought that a three-tier process would be the best way to ensure everyone became involved. Ken M. agreed to work up a plan overview for the PC and the Metropolitan.

Fall Bazaar.

Nino B-W. said the Fall Bazaar is going well. We will have a Rummage Sale this year. Alina Abaimova and her husband will be working this area. Our next meeting is August 23rd. We will set up a Facebook page run by Natalia Caryl. Paul M. is still working on the web site and will have it up soon. So far, so good. We still need to have volunteers.

Sunday School.

Fr. George initiated last Sunday a meeting for the Sunday school program. He said we had a good meeting. Our Sunday school is based on process of the Liturgy and education. All parishioners need to work at passing on our faith to the young. We will have music component for the children as well. Susan Rudy started a good project for the children on packing things for the poor. This helps the children learn about putting the Liturgy into practice. We still need five more English speaking Sunday school teachers.

Ken M. had the Council review the recently passed Sexual Misconduct Policy and what needs to be undertaken to implement the policy. Ken also alerted the Sunday School group about the policy as well. A question emerged as to what other areas the Cathedral needs to have such policies cover? Also, who needs to have a background investigation – just the Sunday School Teachers or everyone who comes in contact with the children? Ken M. will ask Father John Vitko's advice on what we need to do.

Proposed Inspection of Cathedral and Bell Tower.

Fr. George has asked a repairman to come and look at the bell Tower to examine the Bell Tower and give an opinion and recommendation. He has worked for big projects such as the Smithsonian roof project. He can do a full inspection of the Cathedral roof and the Bell Tower.

Then the question came, what will it cost, what will it take, will we need to do a bid. Fr. George said this man is good, reputable and a good professional.

Mark P. said this proposal needs to go with the previous proposal and then we need to weigh the costs and benefits. Mark said except for the Cathedral roof, he has plans for the improvements. Mark said we need to look at the dome in the roof as well.

George N. said the water on the Tower and the Cathedral's roof get behind the limestone slabs – which are then attached to the concrete structure. The biggest damage is at the bottom at the Bell Tower. There are two roof structures on the tower. We need someone who understands masonry and stone work. It is not just an issue of the roof leaking.

Father George said his repairman understands about the water issue. Fr. George also said he agreed with Mark P. that he can interview the vendor.

Sharon O. brought up the issue that we might need some repairs and improvements to achieve our good insurance rate. What is the time frame? Marina P. questioned if this was true about the insurance. The insurance notice to us was just about suggestions we could do. Walter A. said the insurance company was making recommendations about things that need to be addressed and could impact premiums in the future. So, the issue was passed to the Facilities Committee. That Committee can make the decisions it was decided.

Communications Committee.

Claire N. asked if she should attend all committee meetings. Walter A. said the Parish President is ex officio on all committees. Fr. George and Claire should be on the mailing lists of all committees. Marina P. said she had passed out a list of the committee chairs and volunteers.

Marina P. said she had gone to our Cathedral web site. She found there were items on our web site that connected to our documents, but then there were direct links from our documents that connected directly to the Russian Church's web site. She questioned why this was so.

Fr. George said Fr. Leonid (OCA Director of Church External Affairs) asked about these links as well. It seems that Fr. Denis had some knowledge about this and was the one who had the connection. Fr. Leonid suggested we keep the links as they provide good information for questions that could be asked parishioners.

Fr. Valery said the links were connected about a year ago. Documents on the links were prepared about the year 2000, by the Russian Church. They are still valid on contemporary issues.

The new Communications Committee is similar to those who are doing the Bazaar. Marina P. talked about our idea of having an internal calendar of events and the need for such. Suzanne T. had completed some work on this already she said.

Fr. George said we need a policy in place on how we communicate and the standards required.

Fr. George said to extend the PC meeting for 15 more meetings.

Committee Reports

Stewardship.

Marina P. and Michele indicated that the Mid Year Financial Giving Reports were all sent out by mail.

Personnel.

Nino B-W. said that the Unemployment Compensation issue is still in review and that additional documentation has been filed.

Budget and Finance.

Michele reported that the Washington Archdiocese would meet in September to decide on how assessments and collections of assessment funds will be made. She also said that a meeting would be called soon of her committee to implement a capital investment plan for the Cathedral with the help of George N. and Mark P.

Tom Sigler then presented the report on the major highlights for the month of June on the Cathedral's Budget and Finances.

- As of June, 30 2013, the total balance of all Cathedral funds was \$770,551.07
- June 2013, month Pledge collections were \$2,120.00 less than budget
- June 2013 month Gift Corner collections were \$329.06 less than budget
- June 20133 month candle sales were \$718 less than budget
- June 2013 Rock Creek Park Cemetery collected \$4,000 not budgeted
- June 2013 Disbursements overall are \$5,773.75 less than budget
- June 2013 the net change in the Operating Fund year to date is \$4,758.08 positive as opposed to the \$1,069 budgeted negative so month ended \$5,827.08 better than budget
- As of June 30, 2013, the Operating Fund year to date is \$42,072.29 better than the \$6,414 budgeted loss because of the \$28,565 Pascha collection, \$8,300 in cemetery sales and \$5,207 less than the budgeted disbursements

Tom S. also provided a Operating Fund Activity Comparison between Fiscal Years 2012 and 2013 as of June 30, 2013.

- For total collections, the 2013 year to date collections are \$22,498.46 less than the same period in 2013
- For disbursements, the 2013 year is \$10,216.18 greater than 2012

- On June 30, 2012 the Operating Fund was \$68,372.93 positive on June 30, 2013 the Operating Fund was \$35,658.29 positive – this is a \$32,714.64 drop in funding this year versus last year.

Tom S. noted that part of the issue on collections is the decrease in number of steady contributors.

Tom S. also stated that it is now important for everyone to be involved in fund raising. Note that the summertime months are generally leaner and this is expected.

Michele indicated that some of the precautions that were taken in making the budget, such as a balance budget, budget reserve fund, and staff cuts have helped hold the line on the Cathedral budget.

A short discussion then took place about fund raising ideas. It was mentioned that the church presently has a number of unsponsored icons, which could be a source of revenue. George N. mentioned that there is the old idea of the "Icon Book," that was being edited by Marilyn Swezey, that the church should obtain the book from her if possible. Fr. George indicated that the photos were taken before the digital time and they will need to be upgraded before publication. Suzanne T. said that we should also consider the Hillwood Museum and the Dumbarton Oaks/Harvard University Center as places we once use to work with on past projects.

Facilities.
No report

Outreach at Christ House.

Claire said thanks to Fr. Valery and Peter V. for their work at the last outing to Christ House.

Legal and By-Laws.

The Rectory taxes issue is still ongoing. We are still working through our DC Council Member to obtain a solution.

Walter inquired about the status of the revised and approved By- Laws. As of yet we are still waiting on the Metropolitan to sign and approve.

Fr. George said that all new council members need to sign the Council Oath as soon as possible

Claire moved at 9:14 that we adjourn the meeting. There were many seconds and everyone approved.

All sang the Closing Prayer.

Next Meeting is set for 22 August 2013 7PM.

Kenneth D. Mitchell, Secretary to the Parish Council, submitted these Parish Council Minutes on 20 August 2013.

Approved:

President of the St. Nicholas Cathedral Parish

Priest in Charge of the Cathedral

Date