

**St. John Paul II Parish
Adams, MA
Minutes of Parish Council Meeting
on Monday, January 25, 2016**

The Parish Council of St. John Paul II (“SJP II”) Parish met in Kolbe Hall of St. Stanislaus Kostka Church on Monday, December 28, 2015.

Those present: Fr. Steven Montesanti, Kathleen Luczynski (chair) and James Loughman (Secretary) (Communications), Janet Rogge and Louise Charron (Family Life), Deborah Wooley (Finance), Chris Milesi and Barbara Wisniowski (Hospitality), Lawrence Clairmont (Property), Barbara Armata and Mary Whitman (Spiritual Life), Diane Wyman (At Large), Timothy Rougeau (Music Director) and Steven Melito (CCD Director).

In addition, five other individuals also attended to observe the meeting.

The meeting opened with a prayer by Fr. Montesanti at 7:07 p.m. and then Kathy called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Minutes: Jim submitted minutes of the Parish Council’s December 28, 2015 meeting. Barb Armata moved to accept them as submitted; Mary seconded the motion; and it passed.

Lenten Retreat: Fr. Montesanti stated Fr. Matthew Alcombricht will hold a Lenten Retreat at our Parish during Monday, February 29, 2016 through Wednesday, March 2, 2016. Once the details for the event have been finalized, our Parish will publicize it.

Year of Mercy: Fr. Montesanti announced he had decided to roll out the Parish’s Mercy Outreach card (asking parishioners to identify those who have left the Church but would welcome his personally reaching out to them) during Lent.

Fr. Montesanti reported the first monthly Mass (on the first Wednesday of the month) for the Year of Mercy on January 6, 2016 (with the theme of reconciliation within families) went well, and that the second (on addition) will take place on February 3, 2016.

Larry reported that, so far, 25 people have signed up for our Parish’s pilgrimage bus trip to Pennsylvania, and added that 30 must do so in order for the trip to be feasible. Jim suggested the flyer for the event be forwarded to the Parish webmaster Aaron Dean so that it may be posted on the Parish website.

Fr. Montesanti mentioned that the Deacons in our Deanery (for Berkshire County) are planning a special event for Divine Mercy weekend (April 2-3, 2016).

Fr. Montesanti also said that the Parish has received a good response to its request for cards listing anonymous Acts of Mercy by our parishioners.

2016 Fundraising Initiatives: The Parish Council revisited three proposals for fundraising initiatives during 2016: i.e., a pancake breakfast, a picnic at the Polanka Pavilion and a booth at the Hi-Jinks street festival.

Kathy announced that the pancake breakfast is scheduled for Sunday, April 24, 2016. Jim suggested approaching the local Knights of Columbus with help for the breakfast since they have experience in organizing such events. Dick Wisniowski (in the audience) said he had raised this proposal with the Knight's Grand Knight, Wally Boyer, who was receptive to the idea.

Kathy reported she contacted two polka bands (both of which charge about \$1,000) concerning their availability to play at a picnic at the Polanka Pavilion, and both were available at various dates during this summer, although openings in their schedules were filling in fast.

Fr. Montesanti said he understood the Parish Council had voiced reservations about the feasibility of holding a picnic at the Polanka Pavilion on Mill Street, but did not understand why.

Jim explained that there were doubts about the efficacy of such an event as a fundraiser given the costs involved (e.g., the band, police, permits, etc.), and also mentioned concerns about structural issues at the Pavilion.

Fr. Montesanti expressed the opinion that a picnic would be a worthwhile investment as a community social event even if it did not raise money for the Parish but merely broke even or even cost a modest amount (say \$3,000).

Larry elaborated that the Pavilion's roof beams are being propped up by 2" x 4"'s, and an engineering report (estimated cost of \$5,000- \$6,000) is needed before repairs can be made.

Alternatives to using the Pavilion were discussed. Ultimately, it was decided the best option would be to rope off the dance floor/dining section of the Pavilion, rent a tent, and use the fields at the Polanka grounds for the dancing and dining, while utilizing the kitchen attached to the Pavilion for food preparation, etc.

Kathy will followup with the Rymanowski Brothers Band concerning a specific date.

It was agreed that the picnic should be publicized in other areas with lots of polka fans (e.g., Pittsfield, Chicopee, Indian Orchard, Ludlow, Turners Falls).

Mary announced that the Adams Events Committee, which has organized a number of local events for the past several years, is disbanding. Other community organizations have agreed to assume sponsorship of some of those events. However, so far the Hi-Jinks Street Festival has not found a new sponsor.

The Adams Events Committee will be holding a farewell dinner on Thursday, January 28, 2016, and there is a remote possibility that another group may step up to the plate and take on responsibility for the Hi-Jinks Street Festival at that time. However, unless that happens, there will not be a treet Festival, and therefore no opportunity for our Parish to have a booth there.

Parish Website: Kathy stated that, so far, the McCann Technical High School computer science students have been unavailable to provide even an outline for a redesign of our Parish's website, and suggested we may need to put the idea on hold or handle it in house, possibly with the assistance of the Markland brothers (who expressed interest in helping).

Tim mentioned that he is involved in the redesign of the website for St. Mary's Parish in Cheshire, and added that he will be happy to pass along anything he learns about the process to our own Parish Council.

In the meantime, Kathy said, the Communications Committee will be taking on greater responsibility for the website by more actively soliciting content for it. More specifically, she said another notice will appear in the Parish bulletin requesting submissions, and Committee members Donald and Carol Graves will be approaching groups (like Fall Fest and Mardi Gras).

Youth Outreach: Members of our Parish Council members will be bearing witness to their faith to our Parish's CCD classes during January 24, 2016 through February 28, 2016.

Fr. Montesanti said that the first session went very well, and that he has high hopes for the remaining ones.

Registration Drive: Tim reported that a recent survey of the CCD classes revealed that of the 95 students (from 66 families) enrolled in our CCD program, 45 (from 31 families) are not registered in our Parish. Indeed, even 3 of the CCD teachers are not so registered. He believes this is indicative of a wider phenomena among those who regularly attend Mass at our Parish but are not registered there.

Fr. Montesanti questioned "why" this would be so. Mary expressed the opinion that, at least in the case of the CCD students, they were being brought to class by their grandparents, who may be registered, even if their immediate families are not.

Tim indicated there was a broader issue - - i.e., many people do not understand what it means to be "registered" with our Parish. As an example, he cited the fact that many of the parents who completed the paperwork to enroll their children in our CCD program checked the box "yes" for "Is your family registered with our Parish" when in fact they were not.

A discussion followed, in which it was clarified precisely what it means to be registered.

Basically, someone is registered if they receive contribution envelopes or a donor's number from our Parish. Being registered with a given parish is a sign that an individual/family identifies with and is a responsible and participating member of that parish. It dovetails with the sacramental records kept by each parish.

The Parish census is conducted too infrequently to adequately address the problem of getting more of our "quasi-parishioners" to actually register. One proposal to deal with the issue was to send registration forms to the recently confirmed. Another was to address the matter through a notice in the Parish bulletin.

Finance Committee: Deb submitted a financial report comparing the Parish's finances as of December 31, 2016 with those as of December 31, 2015. Overall, the picture is generally encouraging, with our Parish slowly paying down its debt, although cash flow remains tight. The report will appear shortly in the Parish bulletin and on the Parish website.

Kathy said that the Finance Committee had reviewed parishioner concerns about making the financial report easier to read into consideration, but, after careful consideration, concluded that it would not be feasible to substantially change the format (which is fairly standardized), although some comparatively minor "tweaks" might be made.

Next Meeting: There will be no Parish Council meeting in February 2016. Our next meeting will take place in Kolbe Hall on Monday, March 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Eve: Carol Graves (in the audience) reported that she had heard from other parishioners who have been asking whether our Parish might consider (a) changing the time of the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve to (say) 10:30 p.m. and (b) alternating both the 4:00 p.m. Mass (currently held at Notre Dame church) and the Midnight Mass (which is currently held at St. Stanislaus Kostka church) on Christmas Eve between our two churches.

Fr. Montesanti replied that he did not plan on changing the time of the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and did not plan to start alternating the location of the Christmas Eve Masses, because the current format appears to be working well, and he is of the belief that one should not try to fix what is not broken.

Fr. Montesanti led the closing prayer.

Barb Armata moved to adjourn, Chris seconded the motion, and it passed. The meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Loughman (Secretary)