

**St. Francis Parish Council Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting; online via Zoom**  
**Tuesday, September 8, 2020**

Fred Bermudez, absent  
Ed Condon, present  
Francine Freitas, present  
Jo Gonsalves, present  
Darrin Greer, vice chair, present  
Margaret Healy, excused  
Linda Hill, present  
Melba Hinojosa, present  
Sue Kenney, present

Patrick Mahan, present  
Emer McKenna, present  
Kent Meyers, absent  
Gary Myrick, present  
Fr. Desmond O'Reilly, present  
Bob Reid, chair, present  
Janet Vitt, secretary, present

Also attending were J.D. Warrick of the parish staff and parish member Peter Detwiler.

Chair Bob Reid opened the meeting at 6:04 p.m., and Patrick Mahan led a prayer.

The minutes of the August 11, 2020, regular council meeting were reviewed and upon motion by Patrick Mahan, seconded by Francine Freitas, were approved unanimously. They will be posted on the parish website.

**Pastor's Report:** Fr. Des made the following points:

- On Sundays when air quality and weather permit, there will be outdoor Masses at 7:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. in the Parish Center Courtyard. Physical distancing and masking will be observed. The 9:30 Mass will continue to be streamed in any event.
- Students at St. Francis Elementary School have attended outdoor orientation to meet one-on-one with teachers and to see the indoor areas where they will have classes once in-school teaching is allowed. At present, all the schools in the diocese have had to limit classwork to online learning, but the diocese is applying for a state waiver to allow in-school classes. Criteria must be met to earn a waiver. No Catholic school in the diocese has had to close for good, while across the country, about 150 Catholic schools have been permanently shuttered.
- The parish will make another round of donations to area food banks and to some other charities that serve the homeless and/or poor.
- He recommends that the parish gala organizing committee proceed with plans to partner with the school for a March 27 joint gala. The gala was to be further discussed later in the council meeting.

- A service contract is in the works for a bookkeeper. Until it goes into effect, Amanda Evans has been working temporarily as the parish bookkeeper.
- As the November elections approach, we are reminded that the U.S. bishops encourage us to be faithful citizens, but that the church itself will not and should not be partisan, but rather Christ-centered. In his sermons, Fr. Des has tried to speak about the injustices that are being protested and challenged this summer. The parish Pathways to Justice group has prepared weekly bulletin inserts regarding the U.S. Bishops' Pastoral Letter Open Wide Our Hearts as an invitation to face the sin of racism and make changes. Sue Kenney recommended a podcast that recently dealt with the topic: Tuesdays with Merton with Fr. Dan Horan, OFM.

**Chair's Report:** Bob Reid summarized the following topics:

- Work has begun to clean up parish membership list so that a postcard can be mailed to members as outreach during the Covid19. Council members has volunteered to label and put stamps on the postcards once Fr. Des has prepared the text for the communication. More communication effort will be discussed in the future. Ed Condon suggested that the postcard be targeted to the Feast Day of St. Francis, which this year falls on a Sunday.
- The Outreach Working Group is hearing from guest speakers about programs that other churches and non-profits are doing in Midtown and Downtown. The group is considering collaborating with ongoing effort to serve our homeless and poor neighbors.

**Gala 2021** – Janet Vitt provided a few details about the collaboration for a possible joint gala for the parish and the school on March 27, 2021, at the Golden One Center. After discussion, the council gave its enthusiastic approval for the parish gala committee to proceed with plans. Council members expressed willingness to attend the gala in whatever form it ends up – in person or virtual.

**Parishioner Comment** – Peter Detwiler expressed concern about any decline that the pandemic might have caused in Parish finances and wondered what individual members could do. Fr. Des explained that St. Francis Parish is relatively in good shape with about 70 percent of normal donations because members have supported it financially despite the pandemic. Fr. Des indicated the parish finances could be shared on the website, and he referred Mr. Detwiler to the parish Finance Committee.

**Council member comment** – Gary Myrick said he noticed how nice the landscaping around the church and parish center has been looking and that Manny Dabay should be commended for it.

### **Committee Reports**

- LGBT Ministry - Ed Condon spoke of the need for outreach by this ministry to those served by it.

- Membership Committee - Darrin Greer. All council member terms have been extended for the remainder of the year because of the pandemic.
- Liaison to Liturgy Committee - Francine Freitas & Fr. Des said Pope Francis will be going to Assisi in person to observe the Oct. 4 feast day of St. Francis. That Mass will be streamed. As was done for the transitus of St. Clare, the parish will conduct an online service that can accommodate up to 300 persons to mark the transitus of St. Francis.
- Faith Formation - Emer McKenna said a couple of religious education platforms are being evaluated. One will be selected for this year's instructions and will start in October.

The next council meeting will be at 6 p.m., Tuesday, October 13, 2020, most likely by Zoom. The Chair will let council members know the details. Francine Freitas and Sue Kenney will provide the opening and closing prayers, respectively.

There being no more business, Melba Hinojosa led the Council in a closing prayer, and Fr. Des said a benediction. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Janet Vitt, secretary