

**Elmira Planning Team
Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2016**

Present: Fr. John DeSocio, Fr. Rick Farrell, Amy Finnerty, Armand Fusco, Melissa Kalec, Fr. Scott Kubinski, Tom Kubus, Bill McCarthy, Mary Montanarella, Philomena Mrkus, Dave Quinn, Karen Rinefierd, Jeff Schmidt, Michael Smith

Excused: Laurie Brink, Ed Looney

Action Items	Who	By When
• Ensure each church is counting Mass attendance weekly	Pastors	Ongoing
• Bulletin Articles	Karen	Ongoing
• Respond re. which roles can take at 10/17 meetings	All	Done
• Complete pilot survey & email input	All	Done
• Finalize survey and post on website	Karen	Done
• Determine options for seniors who are not computer literate to take the survey at each parish	Pastors, pastoral council reps with Pastoral Councils	Done
• Create a survey for ministerial staff to assess the ministries	Karen	10/31
• Each parish's finance council and pastoral council to compile advantages and disadvantages of each model of possible priest appointment/parish configuration	Pastors, parish representatives	11/30
• Give Karen the dates of November pastoral and finance council meetings	Fr. John, Fr. Scott	Done
• Provide building usage for Blessed Sacrament and Christ the Redeemer	Anne Bremer	Done
• Provide building usage for St. Mary's	Mary	Done
New Items from November Meeting		
• Invite Deacons to be involved on the Planning Team	Fr. Rick	
• Ask Kelly to add Prayer for Wisdom to the bulletin	Karen	ASAP
• Create bulletin insert with 10/17 highlights, Q & A	Karen	
• Send out maps of where parishioners live	Karen	
• Confirm who rents Lourdes gym on Sunday mornings	???	
• Enter all hard copy surveys into Survey Monkey	Each parish	12/4
• Send minutes from November pastoral/finance council meetings to Karen	Each parish	12/4
• Finish Homework that went out 10/31	All	
• Collect Mass data from Anne or Kelly	Tom	11/17
• Benchmark other parishes	Tom	12/2

Meeting opened at 7:10. Opening prayer and intercessions: Fr. John DeSocio

Follow up to 10/17 parishioner church hall meetings

- Any comments? Insights?
 - Evening session fired up about doing something. Need to pay attention on how to involve them.

- Number of questions around what Evangelicals are doing to attract Catholics. No altar, no lectionary, no icons, but have sound system and stage to be entertained by the “production.” (Comment meant respectfully.) Prefer the Catholic quiet. Several churches in our diocese have been trying to address these challenges. The books Rebuilt and Great Catholic Parishes describe what other parishes across the US have been doing.
- Written comments: Married and women priests.
- Questions for Q and A bulletin insert – Please send additional input to Karen as soon as possible.
 - Some thought we might get into the configuration process at that meeting. We should add to the Q&A.
 - Old way of paying for school should be addressed in Q&A.
- Should we add a deacon to the planning team as Fr. Walt suggested?
 - Decision was reached to add a deacon to the planning team.
 - It was an oversight not to include one originally, and we appreciate Fr. Walt’s comment.
 - Fr. Rick will check with the deacons to see if any of them are interested and they can figure out who will serve on the planning team
- We will add Prayer for Wisdom to the bulletin. Karen will ask Kelly Randall.

Discuss and agree on principles and practical considerations that need to be met by the new Mass schedule --*comments/discussion*

- Much more effective to decide on criteria to use for decision first vs. make a decision and then try to justify it.
- Distance shouldn’t affect us but it does. Pretty insignificant around here as parishioners from all parishes live all over Elmira/Horseheads area. Karen will send out maps of where parishioners live.
- Acknowledge that some families will want to attend Mass and have children attend faith formation classes on Sunday mornings while recognizing that we also offer other options.
- Need to ensure that the two full-time priests assigned to Elmira could actually preside at 4 Masses each on a weekend (if no retired priests were available).
- Some priests are energized by saying Mass and others aren’t.
- People would like more Mass time options and as much variety as possible.
- People liked the 9:30 option during the summer.
- Allow more time between Masses for priests to spend time with the people.
- It energized St. Patrick’s and Ss. Peter & Paul when they came together.
- Need to consider Children’s Liturgy (Family Mass). They are our future. Children need to actively participate in ministry roles.
- Maximizing Mass attendance and participation instead of avoiding disruption.
- Consider the financial impact.
- A schedule that helps unify Elmira.
- Sunday evening regional Mass needs to be maintained.

We agreed upon principles to guide development of a new weekend Mass schedule (*see attached document*).

Building usage spreadsheet—comments, observations

- Concerned that we rent our gyms and people choose the sports programs over Mass. (Someone will confirm.)
- St. Charles Borromeo is not yet relegated. This would need to happen before a purchase offer could be accepted.
- We need first to determine what parish configuration will look like. Then we can figure out how many buildings we will need.
- Three rectories for 3 priests, how many are necessary?
- How much of our property is saleable?

- Some buildings may need to be torn down.

Visioning: beginning to discuss and create a picture or description of what the Elmira Catholic Community should look like in 5 years

- Tabled

November planning activities

- Parishioners are completing ministries assessment survey
 - 112 have taken the ministry survey already.
 - Hard copies are coming in.
 - Through one-to-one contact and via pulpit announcements, we need to encourage parishioners, especially teens, to complete the survey.
 - Hard copy and online deadline is 11/27.
 - Hard copies need to be entered by 12/4.
- Each pastoral council and finance council is meeting to review models for priest appointment and parish configuration in order to identify advantages and disadvantages of each.
 - Minutes need to be very complete and thorough.
 - Send the minutes to Karen as soon as possible after each meeting.
- Staff members have already reviewed the models for priest appointment and parish configuration, and identified advantages and disadvantages of each.

10/29 South Deanery meeting

- Presentation and notes are on the Office of Pastoral Resources and Planning website: <http://opr.p.dor.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/October-29-South-Deanery-Councils-and-Staff.pdf>
- There will be combined pastoral and finance council meetings in January to review the results of the ministries assessment survey; staff will do the same at a January staff meeting.

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 14, 7:00-9:00 pm

Potential agenda items

- Discuss input from pastoral councils, finance councils and staff re. models, and work toward a planning team preference
- Review results of ministries assessment survey
- Review Mass attendance data and other information; possibly begin brainstorming potential Mass schedules
 - Finish homework that went out this week
 - Tom will collect Mass data from Anne or Kelly
 - Tom will benchmark other parishes regarding staffing

Closing prayer: Prayer for Wisdom

Meeting adjourned at 8:55.