

Elmira Planning Team
Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2017

Present: Lorie Brink, Fr. John DeSocio, Fr. Rick Farrell, Amy Finnerty, Armand Fusco, Melissa Kalec, Fr. Scott Kubinski, , Ed Looney, Bill McCarthy, Mary Montanarella, Philomena Mrkus, David Quinn, Karen Rinefierd, Deacon Paul Sartori, Mike Smith, Jeff Schmidt, Chuck Nocera (Catholic Charities)

Excused: Tom Kubus

Action Items	Who	By When
• Ensure each church is counting Mass attendance weekly	Pastors	Ongoing
• Bulletin Articles	Karen	Ongoing
• Benchmark other parishes	Tom	Done
• Identify what spaces we need to serve the Elmira community, prioritize expected salability of all buildings other than churches, develop scenarios for building usage connected to each building being sold	Dave, Jeff, Armand	Before March Meeting
• Send Mass schedule & location possibilities to Karen	All	Done
• Reflect on the questions about how to handle 2017-2018 Pastoral Council and Finance Councils	All	Done
• Pastoral councils and finance councils to discuss the results of the ministries assessment survey, complete the worksheet, and return it to Karen	Pastors, pastoral council/finance council reps on planning team	Done
New Items from February Meeting		
• For March parishioner church hall meeting: email list of roles to the planning team and will ask for volunteers; draft PP presentation before March 21 council meeting	Karen	March 21 council meeting
• Discuss with chairs for each pastoral council the pastoral council's recommendation for filling four spots on a combined council for the clustered parishes, and the need for new bylaws for the new council (to be prepared before September)	Karen	?
• Set forth pros/cons of the Mass schedule options	All	3/21
• Ministries survey results to be discussed at next meeting	All	3/21
• Invite Bishop Matano to come to preside at a special Mass after the clustering of the parishes.	New pastor, Karen	July

Meeting commenced at 7:01

Opening Prayer by Fr. Scott

Housekeeping items

- Chuck Nocera from Catholic Charities joined the meeting today – introductions around the room.
- Fr. John indicated that his request for senior status was formally accepted by the Bishop.

- A concern was expressed regarding communication – are the avenues that we are using reaching all parishioners? Perhaps there should be a letter to all parishioners of record once things are fairly well settled. Letter would come from local level, not the Bishop. It would be nice if the Bishop would come for a special Mass after clustering; we will need to take steps to make this happen.
- Setting dates for April and May planning team meeting: April 5th ; May 10th.
- For March 27 parishioner meetings – Karen to email list of roles to the planning team and ask for volunteers; also draft PP presentation before March 21 meeting
- Bishop will appoint Pastor and Parochial Vicar to begin on June 27th. There was discussion on, and agreement that, there should be one pastoral council after the clustering and appointment of priests. Each pastoral council will pare down to four members (it is suggested to have: a seasoned member; the council chair; a new member; and a member of this pastoral planning team) – it will be up to the pastoral council chairs to work with their council members to choose the 4 people. This new combined pastoral council would be for only one year commitment – it will then be up to the new group to discuss how to proceed with new members and terms. The new council will also need to put together the bylaws (at least temporary ones for the transitional year), which should be done before September. Karen will talk off-line with chairs for each pastoral council.
- Finance councils – canon law dictates that each parish have one as long as the parish is separate but they may meet together ordinarily and just meet separately when the business of one of the parishes is being considered. There was agreement that, until the parishes merge (canonically and civilly), the three finance councils (Blessed Sacrament, Christ the Redeemer, St. Mary's) will remain intact. The three councils will meet together periodically (quarterly), and meet separately as usually scheduled. This will be a temporary arrangement until the parishes merge.

Carry-over from last time

- Karen raised several questions for reflection and eventual decision in light of the likely clustering of the three parishes in June:
 - What structures and practices will allow the priest appointed pastor to do well during the first year?
 - Planning team members should think about these questions and talk with others so that we can discuss this topic at the February meeting.
- **Reminder on: parishioner church hall meetings:** These will have a different purpose than the October ones: 1) getting parishioner feedback on several possible Mass schedules, 2) answering questions about the possible merger of the three parishes and getting some initial input. Monday, March 27 at St. Charles Borromeo at 2:00-4:00 pm and 6:30-8:30 pm.

Quick Updates:

- **Staff Realignment** – is in progress. Tom Kubus did some benchmarking with other parishes to see what other places have done in terms of staff – almost done, and will be shared here when it is done (likely April meeting) **[Since the meeting Karen learned that because the benchmarking document includes some information about other parishes that is not public, it will only be shared with the pastors and Dave Quinn.]** Purpose is to align staff size – Tammy Sylvester, diocesan Director of Human Resources, will work with Pastors to create staff positions that balance our needs with the financial resources available – meeting in March. Dave was asked: how much do we spend on staff now, and what can we afford in the future? April – June will be hiring timeframe. Donna Bennett will retire in June. This activity is on track. Hoping to have priest assignments made public at the April Convocation of priests and pastoral administrators (last year it was in June).
- **Status of St. Charles Borromeo:** purchase offer was very low; we countered; Wesleyans did not accept the counter offer, and made no further offer. Next steps are being considered.
- **Building Usage Subcommittee work:** The subcommittee reported that it added Mary Montanarella for her experience in building usage. The subcommittee met January 24th 2017,

made much progress, and is finalizing its recommendations – to be sent to Karen before the March meeting. The subcommittee reported that it took the approach of looking at each of the buildings with an eye toward “what can we do without and still carry out the mission of the Catholic Church?” This activity looked at what could be done with the activities currently housed in buildings that may be considered for sale. Report to follow by the March meeting.

Work on Determining a new weekend Mass schedule (to include church building locations)

Discussion/Comments by individual members of the planning team

- It was suggested that when deciding Mass schedules, building costs should at least be a factor. Comments were made concerning maintenance costs and needed capital improvements for some of the current church buildings.
- There was a consensus that there is no way to avoid all unhappiness, and any schedule will not be seen as fair by all. Nonetheless, it was suggested that one church from each parish should be utilized regularly at weekend Masses, and that the schedule should not be rotated or changed during the first year – of course this is not a permanent schedule and can be adjusted as merger goes forward or conditions change.
- Currently, the 4:00/4:30 Masses are well attended. It was suggested that we continue these times as there are a lot of elderly who are sensitive to change. There was also a concern for having Mass too late on Saturday. Thus, want to keep times close to early side, and therefore, too close together to have at one location. We need to make it clear that 4:00 is earliest that Mass can start on Saturday. If the schedule requires two priests anyway, then why not have two 4:00 masses?
- We should recognize that Mass schedules chosen may be temporary, and there are likely to be further changes down the road. Adjustments will need to be made if buildings sell. The Mass attendance numbers will change as the Mass schedule and building locations change and, thus, later adjustments are likely.
- Mass time of 12/12:30 was discussed: should this be in an air conditioned building because of heat in summer? This time is likely to be lightly attended. There is one well attended Mass at this late Sunday morning time in Rochester, but it is in an area with a high young adult population.
- We should plan the Mass schedule for the year around the two active priests, not the exception that one could do the entire schedule.
- The possibility of a Mass even later than 5 on Sunday was discussed. Are we too focused on keeping the status quo and, thus, not getting representation from a segment that is not even here (youth, young adults, families with teens)? If we develop a later Sunday Mass, and young people attend, they will be around a lot longer. If you never offer it, you will not know. If it is offered and attendance is light, then what is the harm -- at least we reached some. There are other late Masses in the diocese, but usually no later than 6 or so.
- Mass schedule/churches should be decided today to give parishioners time to think about the options before the March 27 meetings.
- St. Mary’s has a fairly well received youth (K-8) Mass, and doesn’t want to disturb that too much.
- What is presented to the community may not be what is the end result after the parishioner meetings; things may change on this schedule as well.

Reaching agreement on possible Saturday evening schedules to present to parishioners – with worship sites added

- Option 1: 4:00 pm (St. Peter & Paul) and 4:00 pm (St. Mary)
- Option 2: 4:00 pm (St. Mary) and 4:30 pm (St. Peter & Paul)

- Put question to those who come to March 27 meetings: what are the pros and cons of these Sat. evening times?

Reaching agreement on possible Sunday schedules to present to parishioners (assumption is that the 5:00 pm Sunday regional Mass continues at St. Patrick) – with worship sites added.

- Option 1: 8:00 am (St. Casimir), 9:00 am (Our Lady of Lourdes), 10:00 am (St. Mary), 11:00 pm (St. Patrick)
- Option 2A: 8:00 am (St. Patrick), 9:30 am (Our Lady of Lourdes), 11:00 am (St. Mary), 7:30 pm (St. Casimir)
- Option 2B: 8:00 am (St. Casimir), 9:30 am (Our Lady of Lourdes), 11:00 am (St. Mary), 7:30 pm (St. Patrick)

Homework in preparation for next meeting: Planning Team members to review Ministries survey results and be prepared to discuss at March meeting.

Upcoming meetings: March 21st, April 5th, May 10th