

**Parish Council By-Laws Committee  
Meeting Minutes 4/27/05**

Attendance: Fr. Joe DiSciacca, Kim Donahue, Don Aiudi, Lisa Kean

**Summary**

This was the second meeting of the committee. At the first meeting on 4/6/05, a review of Council By-Laws in preparation for June Annual Meeting 6/5/05 established that current by-laws are outdated and no longer suited to the actual functioning of the Council. As such, a review and rewrite of these by-laws and the Council constitution will be among the primary tasks of a "renewed" Council beginning next year. This will be considered the first step in establishing a new type of Council, one that is more visionary and advisory in its focus.

The second meeting considered more specific aspects of the June Annual Meeting, including discussion and determination of an agenda and format.

**Results**

The all-parish meeting of June 5, 2005 will be referred to as the "First Annual Parish Meeting." Approximately two hours will be allotted; the meeting will take place in Guild Hall; there will be a "coffee break" about halfway through and refreshments at the close. The hall will be set with tables of 8 to facilitate small group placement and discussion. A chief facilitator will be needed to keep the meeting moving and on-track. The meeting will be recorded, either in the form of note-taking or audio, so that the Council and Pastor may have a permanent record of the proceedings.

Fr. Joe used a workbook, "Transforming Parish Life," as a guideline for discussion regarding the content and format of the June meeting. Following is a breakdown:

- **Hour One**

- 20-30 minutes

- The table setup will enable a kind of "self-selection" of discussion groups. Each small group will require its own facilitator to guide the discussion. It is hoped that these facilitators will be drawn from the ranks of those who participated as interviewers for the "In-Reach" survey (including at least one Spanish-speaking).

- Four to five questions will be prepared in advance (perhaps based on those actually used for In-Reach) and presented to each small group for discussion. Participants may be given a few minutes to look over the questions and jot down anything that comes to mind. It will be the responsibility of the facilitator to guide the discussion so that no one person or issue dominates.

- Ground rules will be laid out, including that everyone may have a reasonable chance to speak, but no one may comment (positively or negatively) about what someone else has to say. Notes of the discussion will be recorded in anticipation of reporting to the larger group.

- 20 minutes

- Small groups will break. A small group "reporter" will be chosen to report the group's discussion results to the larger group (the facilitator may be the reporter, but not necessarily). Issues will be raised and aired but not necessarily addressed on the spot. This section of the meeting is intended to be more information gathering in its nature, rather than interactive.

*Note: If, at the conclusion of the reporter's remarks, the group facilitator feels that some issue or concern may have been overlooked, s/he will have the option of adding that information to the record.*

#### 10 minutes

The chief facilitator will invite comments and questions on the information that has been reported. A discussion will follow. Again, no one person or issue will be allowed to dominate.

***The purpose of Hour One is to enable parishioners to raise issues and concerns for FUTURE discussion. Everyone should be made to feel that all concerns are legitimate and no issue is too large or too small. It is hoped that this format will model for parishioners the regular work of the Parish Council.***

#### **Hour Two**

A presentation regarding the role of the Pastoral Council will be made. The Pastor will also make a brief presentation regarding his "vision" for the parish. There will follow an invitation for new Council members.

There will be a brief review of Council history to illustrate that the current and proposed future work of the Council will differ from its past, emphasizing the advisory/visionary role and de-emphasizing the committee oversight role. Former Council members will be encouraged to return.

There will be specific information regarding the logistics of meetings and the expectations for future Council members. This will include:

- a time commitment of either a one- or two-year term
- meetings to be held the second Monday of each month, Sept. – May, except December and possibly Easter season
- meetings to be optimally about 90 minutes in length
- members will be expected to prepare in advance for meetings, once the agenda and any associated materials are disseminated, so that they come ready to discuss pertinent issues

The request will be for 12 to 15 new members who will "self-select" by indicating their willingness to make the necessary commitments. There will be a simple show of hands and recording of names of those who express interest either for a one-year or two-year term.

Those who show interest but are not yet ready to commit will be encouraged to attend meetings to observe and ask questions.

Those who indicate their desire to think or pray about their decision prior to making a commitment will also be encouraged to attend meetings to help in their personal discernment process.

If more than 15 people express a willingness to make a commitment, some sort of election process will need to be undertaken prior to the close of the meeting.

***The outcome of the Annual Meeting should be to provide a guideline for the future work of the Parish Council.***

### **Action Items**

At the next regular Council meeting of 5/9/05 assignments will need to be made to accomplish the logistics of the Annual Meeting. These will be:

- Opening & Closing Prayer (Fr. Joe)
- Chief Facilitator & Presenter
- Facilities management (tables, supplies & equipment)
- Refreshments
- Agenda development & execution
- Discussion questions, guidelines, ground rules
- Solicitation & "training" of small group facilitators
- Establish recording protocol (either written or audio)
- Publicity
  - include School & Spanish communities
  - bulletin notice every week
  - one-page bulletin insert with more specifics
  - posters
  - announcement at all masses
  - those who head up ministries (religious ed, music, etc.) to offer personal invitations to those with whom they regularly work

***There will be a final meeting of all principal participants on Wednesday, June 1, 2005 at 7:00pm in the Parish Center dining room. The purpose of this meeting will be to "tie up loose ends" and be sure that preparations are complete prior to Sunday's meeting.***