

IHM Parish Council Minutes  
October 23, 2019

Present were: Father Bob Sims; Council members John Bannister, John Creamer, Ellen Healey, Beth Leonard, and JoJo Murphy; Jim Elias, Finance Council; Anna Harvey, Business Manager, and Ronda Swartz, School Principal. Present as guests were Brock Roseberry and Stacy Anderson, Facilities Commission, and Scott Lowe.

Beth Leonard opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. She offered the opening prayer.

Brock Roseberry and Stacy Anderson, of Ratio Architects, presented plans for the Welcoming Space and Parish Office relocation. Brock explained that the building committee, made up of various parishioners, consulted carefully with users of the space. He first showed existing use of the building, (originally the rectory), more recently housing parish offices. He then presented proposed redesign of the space. First floor would include a Welcome Center just inside the front door, faced by a small office with two staff members. The fireplace would remain and bookshelves added. A meeting area was also included. Kitchen and storage areas would be the same. The former walkway to the church will be completely redesigned, retaining a ramp for access; a multi-purpose area occupies the east side. A restroom just before entrance to the church would be added. Upstairs would contain five individual offices for parish staff, plus an open space for staff meetings or other uses. Stacy Anderson then showed 3-D pictures, which provided visual detail of all areas.

Discussion followed. John Creamer suggested that a covering might be added to the porch as protection from rain for anyone waiting at the door. John Bannister wondered about open space on the upper floor instead of separate offices, in the event of additional staff members. Anna Harvey explained the necessity for privacy in ministry work. She noted that the open space could be reformatted, or some space in the St. John Bosco might accommodate the youth minister.

Brock asked that the Council recommend to Father Bob that the plans be approved. The vote was unanimous in favor. Brock planned to work with contractors immediately and to start construction in February or March, with a completion date before school starts in the Fall of 2020.

Father Bob spoke of the necessity to expand ministry opportunities involving more parishioners. A motivational speaker might be sponsored. United Catholic Appeal will be launched on the weekend of November 16-17. Steve Robinson of the Stewardship Commission will be in charge.

Illumination fundraising event plans are in place. Together with funds for the Fall Fest, the security need for improved gates to the parking lot are to be funded with the proceeds of Illumination

Jim Elias stated that the Finance Council met on October 21 and approved the September financial statements for Parish, School, PTO and Athletics. He noted that total revenue for the school is projected to be less than budgeted by a small amount for the year. This is primarily due to slightly lower enrollment. He was confident that other sources of revenue or expense savings will cover the shortfall. Sunday collections are currently running sixteen percent below budget figures. He and the Parish staff are looking at monthly data for several years to identify trends and to make projections for the year. Results of the study will not be available until after December 31, given the significance of Christmas and year-end giving. Anna Harvey is already looking at ways to address the problem.

Beth added thoughts on connecting more volunteers to Parish activities. A program from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops called "Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium" suggests how parishioners can help the parish in four ways: holiness, community, mission and ministry, and Christian maturity. Each of the four categories is fully described in the program along with challenges parishes face in these areas. The program also suggests questions for discussion and reflection. The link is: <http://www.usccb.org/about/laity-marriage-family-life-and-youth/laity/called-and-gifted-for-the-third-millennium.cfm> Beth and Father Bob will be meeting to see if this fits the needs of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish and how we might roll it out to create enthusiasm.

John Creamer noted that there are already a great many volunteers working in various areas and that it might be helpful to determine just how many there are. He volunteered to pursue this information and report to the Council in January. He put forth an idea such as featuring a Volunteer of the Week in the bulletin to publicize work being done and varied opportunities available.

Minutes of the September meeting were approved.

Ronda Swartz noted that of the 362 schools nationwide that applied for recognition as a Blue Ribbon school by the United States Department of Education, only fifty were selected including IHM. A celebration is scheduled for November 22, 2019 at 1:30 pm. U. S. Representative Susan Brooks will be in attendance. The school has received the award once in the past, in 2005. Another application cannot be made for five years. St. Thomas Aquinas School nearby also received the honor this year. Their area was for improvement, while IHM's was for academic achievement, which also rates very high in the state of Indiana. A tour of the White House is in the works. Ronda noted that recently she has more inquiries than usual, showing increased interest in attending IHM School.

Strategic planning will be pursued by a group currently made up of James Gilroy, Beth, Anna, and Jim. Anyone interested is welcome to join the group.

Ellen Healey listed Faith Formation Commission projects including discussion of "Letter to a Suffering Church," distribution of "Rediscovering the Saints" at Christmas Masses, Holocaust presentation by Tibor Klopfer in January and a lecture series in Advent. The Guess Who's Coming to Dinner event in October was a success, with a second one tentatively scheduled for May 2, 2020.

Scott Lowe spoke of the desirability of achieving more lasting effect with outreach activities so that a real difference can be made in the lives of those affected. The new program of St. Vincent de Paul stressing a hand-up instead of a hand-out is an example of this approach. Scott will invite others to join in planning which looks to partnerships with other groups aiming for systemic change. St. Luke Methodist Church and Christian Theological Seminary are examples. More details will be available in this week's bulletin.

Meeting dates for the first half of 2020 were established. All are at 7:00 in the library.

January 22

February 19

March 18

April 22

May 20

A June meeting might not be necessary if budget approval is accomplished at the May meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50.

Respectfully submitted

Ellen Healey, Secretary

**NEXT MEETING: WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 20, 2019, 7:00 PM IN THE LIBRARY**