St. Rita Parish Pastoral Council
Tuesday, September 12, 2023
Church Narthex

Members in attendance: Fr. Michael, Bill Greinke, Ellie Hammond, Bob Mitchell, Pat Rossman, Mark Schmitz, Anna Marie Smetana and Jean Weaver. Also in attendance were Trustees Dennis Collins and Sharon Gierhan.

Excused: Dave Eberle and Myra Fox.

Guests: Suzanne Kroes, Dave Smetana, Carol Derga, Marilyn Butler, PFC members: Michelle Remfry, Chris Allessia, Mike Kroes and Kevin McCabe

The opening prayer was led by Father Michael at 7:00 p.m.

Retirement Gathering for Suzanne Kroes: Father Michael, the PPC and PFC thanked Suzanne for her years of service to St. Rita's Parish. Father mentioned that he is very grateful for all her dedication and what joy she was to work with. We all expressed appreciation for her work with the daily list of items, but also for her help with the festival and special committees. The PPC and PFC gave her a bouquet of flowers and a gift card to Sebastian's. Suzanne thanked all of us and she stated that she enjoyed her time at St. Rita. After a brief fellowship time the PFC members, along with Carol and Marilyn, took Suzanne over to Buca's for a relaxing beverage.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Bob Mitchell to accept the July 11, 2023 minutes as read and it was seconded by Mark Schmitz.

Pastor's Report: Father reported that now that the festival is over it looks like we did do better this year than last. Hopefully, we should make about $60k. Dennis did mention that we do have some more bills to pay before the final totals are in.

The CHISC committee continues to do their research on Casia Hall as it is a desire of our community to check out all avenues. This committee will list the cost of each of the avenues when the research is completed: either to renovate the building for use by others or by the parish, raze the building, or sell it. He emphasized that we must keep the finances in mind.

Father announced that he has received an application & resume from a person interested the Business Manager position and that he is attempting to contact her without success so far. He stated that we need to determine what the salary will be for the new hire. Also, he asked for suggestions on how to determine proper additional compensation for Karen Tuinstra, who will be working in the interim and overseeing a number of daily jobs that Suzanne's does. A discussion followed. One solution, mentioned by Father, is that the Archdioceses is suggesting for the smaller parishes on the northside of Racine is to share a business manager. Father did receive a call from St. Richard's regarding this, but their business manager works 40 hrs. per week at this time so such an arrangement would not work between our two parishes. Karen serves as secretary to the

Religious Education director, and she also puts the bulletin together every week. At this time, she is not interested in Suzanne's job but will help out until a new business manager is hired. While Karen is doing the job of business manager, it was decided to pay her the difference between her hourly rate and Suzanne's wage. A method of compensation will be determined; likely as a bonus.

It has been brought to Father's attention that the flagpole in front of the school needs replacement. The situation was brought about when a group of volunteers tried to make repairs. Seina School System wanted to replace it and Father said no; that replacing the flagpole would be a nonessential expense to the parish and not necessary for a school. A group of Veterans has offered to replace that flagpole and they will pay for it. After further discussion, it was suggested to Father that Siena should be allowed to make the repair. Father agreed with two stipulations. First, that the parish be reimbursed it's 11% portion of the replacement expense by the Veterans; and second, that a Papal flag also be purchased to fly with the American flag on that pole.

Seina Board of Trustees Meeting: This meeting will be held on September 29th and Dennis Collins will be joining Fr. Michael to present a financial option to Siena regarding the tiered system they now have in place to determine our yearly subsidy of the Seina School System, per the existing Agreement. Dennis reminded the Council members that the current method is based on a percent of the annual collections obtained by the parish. He pointed out that the sum of all the subsidies collected from the parishes in Racine represents only 4% of the total. Siena gets the rest of their funds from grants, school choice payments, tuition and so on.

Dennis said that this year's rate assigned to the parish is 17.5%. Facing a reoccurring budget deficit, projected to be over $84k, Father has requested consideration and a reduction to 10%. Father's appeals to his fellow Pastors composing the Board of Trustees (the Body that determines the subsidy rates) and to the Deanery of the Archdiocese have been denied. As a result, Dennis reported, the Trustees and PFC Chair have signed the required proxy, but at a 0% rating. It should be noted that no negotiations have ever taken place. between us and Siena.

Dennis is planning to present a proposal based on a graduated tier system that sets the subsidy rate on amore realistic basis instead of the system now in place that originated 8 years ago at the startup of the Seina idea. (See the chart at attachment which he shared with the Members.)
Mark asked the question of how many families with kids in school belong to the church and contribute? Father stated that when he talks to the kids or families, he tells them that he doesn't want their money, but he wants to see them in the pews. We are getting some response from the school families after Dan Schrank gave a presentation at the school association regarding his roles as head of the Festival, Head Usher, and member of CHISC. In his presentation, Dan did make the point that we need them and they need us. We need to see their participation in the pew, the festival and other church events. We had 2 families who are new to the 10:30 mass and the kids go to St. Rita. We have a start. Bill sent a message to Zach Prideaux (the Royal Parent Association Leader) telling him that we need to have a line of communication open between us and Mr. Prideaux agrees. Bill asked if we paid the 10% last year versus the 20%, and if the difference was being carried forward as debt by Seina. they wanted. Father responded that we paid $47k of the $77k they assigned but that he is not aware of any carried forward amount. Mark asked if there's a contract between us. The Subsidy Agreement acts as such. Further discussion centered on the lack of ability

to negotiate our situation with Seina. We should not just be told what we owe. Dennis plans to discuss these issues when he attends the meeting on the 29th.
Father stated that we will give 10%, and only 10%, this year and moving forward. Father still has the unsigned subsidy agreement for this year on his desk. We are hoping that, with Dr. Sue now Seina President. things will change for the better. Bob Mitchell suggested that we should consider hiring legal counsel to review the legality of the subsidy agreements. Father suggested that we call Dean Landry as he worked on this when he was a trustee at St. Rita and he is an attorney.

CHISC Report: Myra sends her apologies as she is returning from a swim meet and will not be able to attend. There is a steering committee meeting tomorrow night, and Bill commented that it is becoming evident that the Archdiocese will be playing more of a role in the ultimate outcome of the monastery situation.

Parish Safety and Security: Bill thanked Dave Smetana for taking on this committee on behalf of St. Rita. Awhile back Bill, Dan Schrank and Dave sat down and went over a few things and especially a critical incident policy/procedure for the church. Dave mentioned that there is a great deal going on in the county regarding this issue. The local organization that is leading this is Racine Area Church Safety Network. This a formal group was initiated by people from Grace church but includes all denominations. What they do is put policies/procedures together and they have meetings several times a year with liaisons from the different parishes in Racine. The training we had here a couple of years ago (?) lead into the critical incident action plan. Trying to come up with an all-hazard plan instead of just one. Dave was able to get some model policies from them to include action plans for: severe weather, fire and smoke alarm, evacuation, shelter-in-place, and service disruption. Dave is in the process of organizing his committee and has begun using the model policies to develop plans pertinent to or needs. He reported that he has reached out to Chris Bosch, Caledonia Chief of Police and to the fire chief. He asked both of them to poll their people to see if there are a member of SR or any interested parties to be involved in this committee. With the development of each policy more people will be needed. This committee will also be looking at other parish events regarding safety such as: the fish fry's, festival, activities in the school and Casia Hall, this really broadens the spectrum of those all-hazards policy.

Dave also, pointed out our need to procure & train on the use of such items as: first aid kits, trauma kits, AED's, weather radios, posted wayfinding maps, water & food stashes PA systems, and key & phone procedures; just to mention a few.

Dave will be reaching out for SR volunteers with public safety, medical or security backgrounds via the bulletin and all SR communications platforms. Anna Marie mentioned that both of their sons (who are police officers) have offered their assistance in getting this committee up and running.

Planning Committee Update: As newly appointed Leader of the Committee, Jean reported a broadened membership perspective by adding new members representative of the parish's diversity. New members include: Mark Schmitz, Bob Bartholomew, Anthony Schmitt and Nino Martinez; bringing membership to seven.

The committee continues to work on a strategic 3-yr plan for the parish. This effort includes revision of the mission statement and development of a vision statement. The latter being the basis on which the others are built. Their last meeting was last week and it was decided instead of focus groups they will be sending out surveys 3 times a year -- fall, winter and spring. They are aiming for October to get the first survey out to parish via email and mail. The survey, along with introduction letters are being finalized. The first survey will occur in mid-October with a completion date of November 5th. The survey itself will be produced in both printed and computerized formats to address respondents preference; but all responses will ultimately be computerized and entered into a survey program providing multiple reviews of the accumulated data. If there is an email address on-record, the survey will be sent via email. Otherwise, it will be mailed. Surveys will be available on the parish website and handed-out in printed form in the narthex after each mass. Assistance will also be provided at that time to those needing help completing the survey. The survey is not just for the head of household. All parishioners, of all ages are invited to participate so, multiple copies of the survey will be included in the mailings. There will be a link on our Facebook page and we'll have a QR code put into the bulletin. This first survey will ask the participant to rate by importance the top 3 of 6 key focuses of the PPC with options to write-in others and to give comment. The purpose of the survey is to find out what the parishioners are really concerned about.

Liaison Reports:

Stewardship: Ellie Hammond stated that she was not in attendance at the July 20th meeting, but she can tell us what transpired. The Events Planning sub-committee discussed having a trunk or treats activity in October. This will be held in the school parking lot. They will also provide games, a costume event, and a fire pit. The Communications sub-committee discussed having Stewardship select 2 families a month and have their pictures & identity on the church monitor and in the bulletin. The Welcoming Committee will be meeting with one more new family to the church. Under New Business the Stewardship Commission had a booth at the festival and it was well received. It has not been decided if the Kringlemingles will be held quarterly or monthly. The Pastoral report will be a part of the commitment package that will be sent out towards the end of October.

Human Concerns: Jean Weaver reported that the leadership for this commission has changed from Deacon Greg to Susan Willing. This group has many committees which is run by a few volunteers. With that being said, more volunteers are needed to make things a bit easier for all. The food truck gathering during this past summer was offered by the RIC Commission. RIC is involved in a lot of activities. Social Catholic teachings were offered last year by Human Concerns. They had speakers come in a talk to us about various social justice matters that concern the Racine area. They are looking at organizing a couple speakers to come in before the end of the year. Jenny Wiesenthal is the person organizing the monthly outdoor rosary gathering.

Prayer and Worship: The next meeting for this group will be October 5th. The celebration masses for the following had been discussed at a previous meeting: All Souls Day, All Saints Day, feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mary, Advent, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years.

Formation: Religious Education will be held tomorrow night (9/13/23) and Rachel is still looking for a 5th grade teacher. If you know of any one that would be interested, please send them to Rachel. She took some kids on a mission to Fond du Lac to help people and she ran the Vacation Bible School this past summer. She is always busy.

Old/New Business:

On October 10th the Knights of Columbus will honor Father Michael with a dinner at Roma. We have many people attending from the St. Rita community.

Because of the dinner for Fr. Michael on the 10th we needed to move the PPC date from Tuesday, October 10th to Thursday, October 12th.

The PPC Booth at the Festival attracted about 75 people. They spoke with one parishioner, the vast majority were from the area, a lot of out of state people participated. They put out a scavenger hunt activity in which those successfully completing the challenge received a free popcorn and a bottle of water. The hunt consisted of locating signs posted throughout the festival grounds stating historical & current facts about the parish. Finding these signs gave answers to a question sheet each participant had to complete. Bill and Deacon Greg felt that this was very well received and will do it again next year. They would welcome participation by PPC members.

Liaison Committee Selections were announced and confirmed. Please see at attachment the revised committee assignment sheet.

Anna Marie passed along several questions she has received from parishioners. One question asked is if any thought has been given to having a 9:30 mass only on Sunday? After discussion about past attempt to make changes to the existing schedule a response was decided that at this time we are not considering any changes to the mass schedule. Another questioned having a youth representative on the PPC. This was also discussed. We used to have one a few years ago but when she left no one was interested in replacing her at that time. The have no voting power but they can express their opinion on issues. It was suggested by Father that Anna Marie contact Rachael Kroes to see if she would have anyone in mind to be a youth representative. Also, Anna Marie made a statement that we need to embellish family formation within the parish; again, she was told to go through Rachel Kroes. Her last question was regarding the parish budget and how it is put together. The answer was provided in discussion.

Marks Schmitz spoke regarding the Archdiocese training he & Anna Marie attended recently for new PPC members. One of the items he brought up was that there are 4 questions that the PPC should be asking themselves annually. They are:

- what was the most significant accomplishment of the PPC last year?
- what is the significant challenge to your parish this year?
- how will you address this challenge?
- what is the vision/mission for your parish this year?

Upcoming PPC Dates:

Thursday, October 12, 2023
Tuesday, November 14, 2023
Tuesday, December 12, 2023

The closing prayer was led by Father Michael at 9:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia Rossman
Secretary
St. Rita Parish - Parish Pastoral Council