

Parish Facilities Meeting Notes June 10, 2018

Presenters: Fr. Steve Dublinski, Kevin Owens

Prayer: Our Father

Attendance: 53 people

Fr. Steve opened the meeting with remarks: some new information has been collected and he wanted a meeting to give the Parish an update. It is important that we keep moving forward. He then introduced Kevin Owens. Kevin gave us a presentation on the facilities plans.

The main Church was built in 1935 and the Annex added ~ 20 years later in 1958, and after another ~ 20 years the Social Hall was finished in 1984. The house that contains the Pastoral Office was built in 1915 and is 103 years old.

Over the last thirty years national statistics show people who identify as Catholic has been steadily increasing but those who are actually attending Mass has decreased over that same period. In the last few years attendance has stayed about the same while the number of Catholics continues to increase. For Sacred Heart the gross numbers of weekend attendance for the last 30 years shows a one-third decline with a major dip during the Diocesan Chapter 11 with a small rebound following. The last few years have gone up and down erratically.

The annual income (Sunday collection of plate and envelopes) over the same scale of years shows a steady increase with no decreases during the lawsuit and bankruptcy time. The increase is identical to the average rate of inflation.

The population of Pullman (includes the students – 2/3 of the population) in 1960 was 12,000 and at the end of last year it was 33,000. In the next 20 years it is projected to reach 40,000. WSU predicts a 1 ½ - 2 % annual growth. So, while the population of Pullman has increased by 7,000, Mass attendance has decreased by one-third. Will future growth in Pullman lead to an increase in Mass attendance? The statistics would indicate that it will not.

The 2015 Exploratory Committee identified several deficiencies in the current facilities. (See the next slide set). They are primarily dealing with safety, accessibility, electrical, plumbing, and other structural problems. Audience questions and comments were discussed and answered throughout. In one example, to fix the wiring for one light in the sanctuary, it would cost ~ \$10,000. It was also stressed, that a decent estimate on costs cannot be ascertained easily. Fr. has been trying to get an engineer from Coeur d'Alene or Boise to give us an estimate on correcting some safety concerns. There is no one locally who will do it.

The parking lot, is an issue, as we know, and there are not enough handicapped spaces. Social Hall is cramped. Kitchen is inadequate for large events, a split sanctuary is not a cohesive community. Fr. Steve has done a great job getting some work done by volunteers.

Conclusions from the data of 3 years ago estimated \$ 8-10 million for all options. There is no breakdown in costs because it is a guess. It is impossible to know what costs will be until walls are opened and we can see what needs to be done. For fire safety for the classrooms, we would have to dig out the foundation and lower the window wells for egress. In two rooms there is no outside window. Three proposals: Fix what we have, Build somewhere else, Build on current site. The property from option 2 of 3 years ago is not available. Kevin has talked to city planner & supervisor. The slide of the map of Pullman shows the orange and red sections are already in development. The yellow sections we would have to pay for roads and utilities to be put in. Other areas would need variation on zoning or permission from neighbors to build. Even in this neighborhood developers are buying up property as it comes up for sale, for multi-density housing.

Kevin went into detail to explain the 2 phase process of building on the current site. Phase one: social hall, classrooms and offices with parking underneath. Phase two: new church sanctuary on the same level as the parish hall. Kevin had asked some parishioners who have left, why and they responded that the Parish was dying and not growing. New facilities would give hope and interest. Could invite the community for larger events with a new larger social hall. Could we buy some of the surrounding property? Currently, lots with a building are selling for \$400,000.

Fr. has received \$30,000 from a farmer who wants the process to get moving, so we can get an architect to make concrete plans. Do we raise money first and then proceed? Fr. thinks we have to do both, you need a rough plan with a cost estimate so you can approach people and see if they will support the plan. There is concern about raising the money.

Next weekend there will be a survey in the pews and an online version. And it was suggested to have mailing as well. Discussion about the survey. Would some people vote in 2 places?

Fr. is not against some debt. Other options, such as a loan from other Churches is more difficult since the Diocesan Chapter 11. Borrowing from a bank is possible but we must be careful about interest.

Conclusion: Need to proceed or the building will be condemned at some point and we will not have a Church. We need to stop kicking the can down the road & deal with the situation.

Sue McNamara