

## ST. DENIS PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES – OCTOBER, NOVEMBER 2014 & JANUARY 2015

*The following is a summary of the first 3 Parish Council meetings that were held here at St. Denis. We apologize for the delay in getting these to you. Due to Fr. Ernie's summer illness, September meeting was postponed to October.*

### OCTOBER 20, 2014

Members in attendance: Fr. Ernie, Deacon Mike, Wes Bushika, Gail Hickey, Kathy Archambault, Nancy Norberg, and Don Virostek (*Chair*) – Joyce Virostek (*Recorder*)

Meeting called to order at 7:15 PM. Opening Prayer and each team gave a report on their Team's activities to date.

**MISSION TEAM:** Gail Hickey and team members are working on *Parish Mission Statement*. Fr. Ernie wanted us to keep in mind that a mission statement is an organic entity which keeps changing. As liaison to the Catholic Women's Council, Gail identified several issues they would like discussed. 1. Insufficient parking- for physically challenged- at the church. Parish members who are able bodied, should be encouraged to use the parking lots. 2. No crosswalk from the Rectory to the Church. (Building/Grounds team has already rectified this issue) 3. No railing at side door facing Caswell Court. 4. "No Parking" signs at the Rectory. (B/G will look into these issues.) Mission Team discussed a Christmas ornament/card that could be handed out to all parishioners as a welcome to all in attendance. Council noted that would be a big expense for the parish. (*Mission Team made cards with the help of parishioners and donated card stock, Christmas cards were given to all parishioners at no cost to the Parish*). Gail was praised for her work in the vegetable garden for the Douglas Food Pantry.

**BUILDINGS / GROUNDS TEAM:** Wes Bushika and Team toured the church/rectory and grounds on 9/2/2014 and identified 46 open items that should be addressed over the coming year. (*See a team member or call the Rectory for a full list of items that were identified*). Safety and preventative maintenance issues have been given a high priority. An energy audit was done on 10/17/2014 and the team is getting estimates, creating repair plans and schedules. Doors of the church need to be replaced, allowing more light and the ability to be locked at night is necessary. Changing to glass doors was discussed and the team will get estimates. After inquiry, Council concluded that St. Denis Cemetery issues are the responsibility of the B/G Team. Fr. Ernie proposed removing a pew in the middle of the church to allow the flow of the communion procession to move more easily. Council agreed this could be done and will discuss uses for the pews removed. (*This would also allow an easier flow if communion is offered under both species*). Moving the organ downstairs was discussed, but space issues do not allow enough room to do this.

**LITURGY TEAM:** Nancy Norberg, in the absence of Frank Yacino, reported that meetings were held on 7/9/2014 and 8/27/2014. Topics discussed were; more training for ministries at Masses (*Altar servers, ministers of Holy Communion, Lectors*), insisting on appropriate attire for those serving on the Altar, scheduling and accountability and role modeling for all involved in Liturgy. Also discussed was a need for a sacristan that would oversee the organization of church supplies (*candles, hosts, charcoal & incense, wine, holy water, palms, Altar cloths etc.*) Discussion about the need to build up the music program and encouraging more members to join, training for possible cantors and perhaps a children's choir. Volunteers are needed to help in all areas. In October a Mass of Remembrance was planned for all parishioners who died in the past year.

**FAITH FORMATION TEAM:** Kathy Archambault reported that her team met 3 times. Discussion was centered around not only educating our children, but to also include adults in education and the strengthening of their faith. The goal is to provide opportunities for everyone to be informed and educated. They are off to a good start through parent meetings, Bible Study, Catholicism Video, RCIA (*Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – 4 possible candidates*). Eight High School Students are assisting with a newly formed **Children's Liturgy of the Word** for children attending the 10:15 AM Mass, learning about the scriptures in age-appropriate language.

**FINANCE TEAM:** Don Virostek reported that the parish is in financial difficulty and it was agreed that we would dedicate the November meeting to discuss the parish finances and possible solutions.

Next meeting set for 11/17/2014 at 7:00 PM in the Rectory and meeting was adjourned with Closing Prayer at 8:30 PM.

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**NOVEMBER 23, 2014** (*Original date set for 17<sup>th</sup> postponed due to scheduling conflict*)

Members in attendance: Fr. Ernie, Deacon Mike, Wes Bushika, Gail Hickey, Frank Yacino, Kathy Archambault, Nancy Norberg, and Don Virostek (*Chair*) – Joyce Virostek (*Recorder*) and Jerome Jussaume (*consultant*)

Meeting called to order at 6:55 PM with Opening Prayer.

Approval of minutes dated 10/20/2014 was made and seconded and voted on unanimously.

Jerome Jussaume, parish volunteer and also an employee for the Diocese of Worcester in the Office of Fiscal Affairs, was asked to report on the Parish financial situation. For the last fiscal year ending 8/31/2014 the offertory brought approx.. \$220,000 into the parish, however, parish expenses are about \$250,000 (*approx.. \$600/week deficit*). There is \$20,000 in outstanding expenses. We are currently reducing that indebtedness at the rate of \$200/week which will result in a \$10,000 reduction after one year. The Maintenance Fund deficit is nearly taken care of. We had been covering the operating expense deficit over the last 2 years with savings which have now been exhausted. The Council was asked to consider some ideas proposed by the Finance Team to explore ways for the Parish to save money in all areas of the Church ministry. Each team will continue to explore options in their areas. The Finance Team will develop a proposal at their next meeting and submit it to the Parish Council for approval and to the Pastor for final approval. The Finance Team will prepare and then present, to the parishioners, the final proposal for increase revenue to St. Denis Parish at all Masses in the coming months.

Members, Fr. Ernie, Deacon Mike and Don, met with the Catholic Women's Council Board of Directors to ask for their help in any way possible.

Parish Council was supportive of the initiative to refresh the Parish Census in order to keep current and accurate information on all our active parishioners and invite a new level of active participation and stewardship. New Forms will be mailed to all registered parishioners in the coming months.

Don will also work on getting a list of businesses in Town to solicit for advertising in our weekly bulletins.

Next meeting set for 1/19/2015 at 6:30 PM in the Rectory and meeting was adjourned with Closing Prayer at 8:55 PM.

**JANUARY 19, 2015**

Members in attendance: Fr. Ernie, Deacon Mike, Wes Bushika, Gail Hickey, Frank Yacino, Kathy Archambault, Nancy Norberg, and Don Virostek (*Chair*) – Joyce Virostek (*Recorder*)

Meeting called to order at 6:40 PM with Opening Prayer.

Approval of minutes dated 11/23/2014 was made and seconded and voted on unanimously.

The Finance Team put together a proposal for parishioners and will be presented the weekend of February 21/22. (*Actual presentation took place on the weekend of February 28/March 1*) All members of the Team will be present for all Masses and present their proposals for increased revenue for St. Denis along with a letter to be handed to all parishioners after Mass. (*This letter is available on our website*). Team members agreed to be available for question/answer after all Masses.

New Census Forms will be mailed to all registered households during the month of February. Also, there will be an opportunity for parishioners to become more involved in our parish community through the volunteer ministries. Follow-up consideration will be given to families not regularly attending weekly Mass to emphasize the importance of their involvement/participation in the church with their time, talents and treasure.

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Providing a Religious Education Program to the youth of our parish is part of our mission as a church. Parents are charged a fee to help defray the cost, to the parish, of providing this service to our youth. Kathy has compared fees with other surrounding parishes with a comparable population. After discussion, it was voted to raise the fee this year to \$50/child with a maximum of \$125/ registered family. Future consideration is being discussed for increased fees for any family who is not contributing/participating in our parish community.

Parish Council discussed and accepted the proposal to hold weekday Masses in the new addition during the winter months to save on heating costs. Church will remain at the minimum temperature except on weekends and for Funerals or Holy Days.

The Buildings/Grounds Team presented the Mass Save Proposal from National Grid's Direct Install Program. Their energy audit identified potential upgrades to all facilities. National Grid will pay 70% of the installed cost of the project. The Council accepted this proposal, agreeing to pay \$157.96 per month for 24 months. The payoff is less than 1 year. We would only incur extra costs if any areas are not up to code. (*Details of the Energy Savings Plan is available from a Buildings/Grounds Team member or from the Rectory*).

### OTHER BUSINESS:

The Mission Team has completed a final proposal for the SAINT DENIS MISSION STATEMENT. This mission statement will be included on the front of our weekly bulletin, our website ([www.saintdenischurch.com](http://www.saintdenischurch.com)), the vestibule of the church, and on the wall in the Douglas Food Pantry. The Mission Team also reported that a TRIVIA NIGHT is planned for 1/31/2014 and talks of a YARD SALE in conjunction with the Boy Scouts is being considered in May.

The Buildings/Grounds Team continues to get estimates for various projects/repairs needed for the church and Rectory with consideration of Solar panels for the Rectory.

Fr. Ernie has created a letter, and it has gone out to the local Funeral Home Directors, for parish families to consider a donation to St. Denis Parish in lieu of flowers when a loved one passes.

Kathy, along with a few parishioners, attended a workshop to train small group facilitators. In the coming months, parishioners will see more, small group discussion groups forming with the goal of providing an opportunity to build our faith community into a loving, caring environment of people who care about each other.

Next meeting set for 3/30/2015 at 6:30 PM in the Rectory and meeting was adjourned with Closing Prayer at 8:00 PM.