

St. Cecilia Church Parish and School Development (PSD) Committee Spring 2009 Town Hall Meeting

Date/Time of Meeting: Sunday, May 3rd, 2009. 1:30pm

Implementation Team: Image Building & Outreach (IB&O)

Contacts: Barb Johnson (co-chair)
Rob Lancia (co-chair)
Jim Martin (Director, Parish Strategic Development)

Minutes in Red

Approximate Attendees - 48

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1. Meeting Kickoff (Michael Bruening)

Thank you to all who have attended. The idea to hold these biannual meeting came from parish feedback and input a couple of years ago in the Parish Self Study. Introduced format & first speaker. There will be comment cards available after the session as usual. There is also a list available for any

2. Prayer & Opening Remarks (Fr. Craig Eilerman)

Re-emphasized reason for this meeting as a communication vehicle.

3. New Governance Model: *Work In Progress!* (Jim Martin)

This is a work in progress! Developing a proposal for our incoming Pastor to update our current governance model for the parish to provide coordination & contact points across all parish groups and be able to advise the Pastor and parish staff regarding all strategic and tactical plans and programs underway in the parish. Final decision on whether or not we pursue this work will be solely at the discretion of our new Pastor.

This will not mean many if any day-to-day changes for most of the current parish groups, but will include consolidating the current PSD group and Parish Pastoral Council into one Executive Advisory Council and establishing several sub committees to provide coordination & communication across the entire parish. School board elections will still occur this year, but we will not hold Parish pastoral council elections until next year. Current council members have agreed to stay on for one more year to enable leadership consistency until these plans are finalized and decided on by our new pastor.

You are all cordially invited to our ongoing planning meetings – the first Wednesday of each month, the next one being this Wednesday at 7:00 PM in Meeting rooms A & B.

4. Finance committee highlights (Scott Campbell)

Shared information regarding benefit dinner and golf outing (June 19 & 21) for Brad Brown as he has been recently diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. More details forthcoming on the website & via the bulletin.

Financial snapshot of St. Cecilia. Considering the financial climate in our country & state right now, the Parish financial contributions are down since last year. Bingo receipts, however, are up this year, which has been a blessing in terms of meeting our budget. From an expense standpoint, we did put plans in place just prior to the fiscal year have paid off, allowing us to be in a fairly good position relative to expenses so far this fiscal year. Plummeting fuel prices have helped, as we planned for more expanses in this area than have been realized. . There have been some facility expenses (air conditioning units, etc.) that we have had to absorb.

Question – any correlation between mass attendance and financial contributions? Not sure what is contributing to attendance decline, but it is an issue we will be looking into.

Question – when does budget process start? It has started, and plans to be completed at the end of June in preparation for the coming fiscal year. We will continue to be very conservative in terms of expenses to hopefully keep us out of the red. In Scott's view, this economic downturn is not over, and the effects of impacts from the auto industry challenges are still to be felt. Having said that, it took us as a country awhile to get into this situation, and it will take awhile to get out. We need to continue to keep our individual commitments to our faith & church.

There will be a two page report available in writing for everyone as they leave today.

5. TRIP Program (Kim Jackson)

TRIP program was rolled out to the parish as a whole this past fall and has been very successful. YE 2008 we generated over \$33,000!! It continues to be a fabulous way for the parish to earn 'free' money – by parishioners spending no more money than they do today! By using giftcards they purchase through TRIP at 5:00, 9:30 and 12:00 mass, then utilizing those giftcards instead of a cash or check at the businesses they would patronize anyway, the parish earns a percentage of these purchases.

We are still in need of volunteers, so contact Kim Jackson if you can help out. We plan to continue offering giftcards through the summer.

There has been a change in the Kroger program, and information has been distributed through the bulletin. The new program utilizes the current Kroger plus card to track the total of your purchases to determine St. Cecilia's distribution. This requires a one time registration to St. Cecilia on their website or through the paper form we will distribute today. It will also be available in the bulletin and News from the Pews. Kim will need to know, if you do not want the funds to go to the parish general fund, which parish group you want the Kroger donation to be distributed. Just send her a one-time e-mail with your choice.

There will be a raffle, brought to you by TRIP at the end of the program.

6. School Advisory Board (Cara Wolfram Evans)

A reminder that the School Board has started a quarterly newsletter, which is available through the school website.

This year a Buddy Dinner was started to bring together students and families

Also – we have created a grant committee this year to make our teachers aware of grants that may be available and helping them and the

Planning a School gala for alumni, school families and parishioners as a fund raiser.

Also sent a questionnaire to local principals to ask for ideas about what they have done to improve their school, retain enrollment etc. to see if there are any plans/programs out there which we might implement. That information is being gathered now to be evaluated by the school board.

Scott Williams – has worked on a subcommittee to develop a volunteer website for school families to find volunteer opportunities and event coordinators a place to locate available volunteers. This has been launched, and volunteer opportunities as well as coordinator contact information are available. The website is located at www.saintceciliavolunteer.org, where you will go to create an account with a username and password including you basic contact information (phone & email), occupation, interests & hobbies as well as available days & times. You may also indicate any groups in which you are interested. Once you sign up for a volunteer opportunity – the coordinator of that event will receive an e-mail to contact you with details. Once you create your account and volunteer, there will be a calendar function available to remind you of any opportunities you have forthcoming. If you are in charge of an event and want to post an opportunity – you may 'Contact us' on the website – and you will be given access to post that event online.

7. Vacation Bible School (Kathy Maggied)

We still need lots of volunteers for VBS, to be held June 15th-19th from 9 AM -12 PM each day at a cost of \$25 per student. It has been publicized in the News for the Pews and through the bulletin. The program is fully Catholic, through Ligor publications, and references the CCC. The theme this year is from 1 John – "...behold, see what love God has bestowed on us so we may be

called the children of God.” Any child age 4 through 4th grade can participate, and they will be grouped by age. Last year we had 90 attendees, with 45 young adult and 20 adult volunteers. All sessions reinforce the bible reading for that day. All children will be able to purchase a t-shirt for \$5 to wear each day with the same screen print, with different colors per age group. Registration information will be distributed to PSR and Parish School families very soon.

8. Prison Ministry (Tony Stout)

This is the 15th year for Prison Ministry at St. Cecilia, which is the largest and longest running Prison Ministry program held weekly at CRC (a clearing house for all prisoners entering the prison system in Ohio), each Saturday morning from 8:30 to 10:00 AM. Volunteers serve once a month on one of 4 teams, and each team makes up their weekly lesson plan. Training is available for volunteers, and information will be forthcoming in the bulletin. Please contact the parish office or Tony Stout if you are interested.

Question – can women be a part of this? Yes – first week of the month is all female volunteers from St. Cecilia, and is very successful. The diocese does have a prison ministry for the Women’s prison in Marysville if you are interested.

Question – in the 15 years have you ever felt threatened or afraid entering the prison? No, this is a wonderful experience and not one volunteer has felt uncomfortable or threatened. The volunteers are trained and prisoners are very aware of behavior guidelines.

9. School Happenings (Marge Moretti)

Terra Nova scores are available for each grade in the school, and we are at or above the diocesan average in almost all areas and always above the national averages. There are improvements we can make in science scores in the upper grade levels, and plans are underway to address this challenge.

We are constantly working on keeping school tuition low, and continue to rely on the parish for financial support.

Kindergarten next year will go from part to full time, and we may hire an aide based on tuition.

We will continue to utilize and aide part time to help with students with special needs. We share this resource with OLPH.

Band will be offered to grades 5-8 next year, instead of 4 – 8 in an effort to reduce cost.

SPICE has received a grant through the Catholic Foundation to provide our instructors Orten-Gillingham training (phonic reading teaching skills). This is an excellent program and we are happy to be able to be participating. The SPICE committee will provide additional funds to completely cover this cost.

Protecting God’s Children and fingerprinting continues to be required for volunteering for any opportunity where you will be working with children. The next session will be held May 27th here at St. Cecilia. Fingerprinting can also be completed here.

10. General Q&A (moderator: Michael Bruening)

Question – for Kim Jackson – Can we announce in the bulleting when TRIP will not be available at the masses? Yes – we can look into how we could best communicate this in the bulletin.

Question – for Kim Jackson – Is Kroger sign up just in Columbus locations? No – any Kroger location. Ask your out of town friends and family to sign up!!

Question – for Kim Jackson – can you change the parish group where your TRIP distribution can be made? Yes – on quarterly basis, just contact Kim Jackson. You can also sign up more than one Kroger card on the website.

Question – for Scott Williams – Who maintains the volunteer calendar? Each group/event coordinator will maintain the calendar, and will be available to send e-mail to the volunteers for there event. Conflicts will need to resolve any conflicts on their own.

Question – for Scott Williams – how do folks who do not have internet access volunteer? All of the traditional manual/paper methods will continue.

Question – for Scott Williams – is there a way to change your availability on the volunteer website? Yes – you can manage that yourself with your account on the website.

Question for Marge Moretti – how does retention look for next year? Enrollment looks good for next year, we have lost some, but it looks like we will have a large kindergarten class, at least 25 students and maybe more. We did anticipate a drop in enrollment due to the economy, but the drop has not been as great as expected. There are two families in the PSR program who are transferring to the parish school, which is great. Marge will be speaking at a non-Catholic church, as a parent who is not a Catholic but is impressed with our education and the religious education program, has asked her to talk with their parish about the educational opportunities here. We are a Catholic school first, but do have non-Catholic students whose parents are interested in a private school experience. The curriculum is, of course, the same for them.

Question – for Marge Moretti - What are we doing to retain students – The School Board has this as a major goal each year, and one of the things we are looking at is the principal survey discussed earlier. This year we also had Spring into School – for pre-school and kindergarten parents, with kids from the student council participating to tour families through the school. We got very good feedback on this event. We have established a policy with the state of Ohio that we do not take 7th & 8th grade students into the parish school unless they are transferring from another Catholic school.

Question – for Marge Moretti & Kathy Maggied- How many non-Catholic students attend the parish school? - No an exact number, but out of 195 there are probably 6 non-Catholic students. Non-Catholic students can attend Vacation Bible School. Kathy has not had anyone ask if a non-Catholic child could attend PSR, but she would be open to talking about this. There is a challenge with this, especially for students who are preparing to receive sacraments such as First Communion. Reconciliation and Confirmation- as they would not be eligible for this sacrament as they are not baptized. It is something we could talk about further in the future.

Question – for Scott Williams - Does each person in the household need an account and will additional volunteer opportunities be available? It is easier to maintain separate calendars and hours of availability if everyone has their own account. Additional volunteer opportunities will be added, as the website was just launched a week ago.

Question – for Fr. Eilerman – have you received a new assignment and do you know who the new Pastor will be? Not yet, and do not know when this information will be available, but hopefully soon. All of these changes have to be coordinated across the diocese at the same time by the Bishop, and it is always challenging due to the limited number of clergy available. There will be a transition process for the new Pastor that many in the parish will be involved with. Fr. Eilerman will continue to give his full attention to St. Cecilia until he takes on his new responsibility, but there will be transition activities for him and the priest coming into the parish before the change is made. There are 10 parishes undergoing this process in the diocese – 5 in Franklin County, and some will be first time pastors. Each of these changes creates a ripple effect which is being considered. A parish audit by the diocese is part of this process to enable the new pastor to hit the ground running.

Question – for Fr. Eilerman - Is Fr. Brosmer staying?. As far as Fr. Eilerman knows, yes, but that too is up to the Bishop.

Question – From Kim Jackson – how is Kroger TRIP money distributed to the Parish? Kroger will determine based on participation how much money from their entire allocation of donations as a whole. The amount that goes to each family is also based on a percentage of the total that the Parish receives.

11. Meeting Wrapup (Michael Bruening)

Kim Jackson – Raffle drawing winners – Marge Moretti, Bev Oddi and ?? (*not sure who the last winner was*)

12. Closing Prayer (Fr. Craig Eilerman)

