

St. George Orthodox Church

Parish Council Meeting Minutes

September 10, 2023 - 12:55 PM

Present - Alex Ibrahim, Cynthia Long , Tony Nasr, Gary Sarkasian, Emma Ibrahim, Kerry San Chirico, Lucy Ibrahim, Maricia Ibrahim, Karen Burke , Gary Sarkasien, Jerome Burke, Father Joel Gillam

I. Call to order and prayer

II. Approval of Minutes for August PC - approved Kerry SC, second FR. Joel

III. Pastor's Report (Fr. Joel Gillam)

- Harne family welcomed into the Church -September 11
- Fr. will be away September 25-28 in Dallas Texas to attend a conference on fundraising strategies
- Fr. will also be away at Antiochian Village October 12-20 th- Fr Andrew Damick will serve liturgy on 10/15/23 at St George
- Fr proposed idea of changing date of Parish Annual Meeting from January to the late fall-discussion ensued - feeling was that presently not sufficient time to schedule for this year-may consider in the future

IV. Chairman's Report (Alex Ibrahim)

- Reminder about the Picnic on September 24. Please sign up for an item to bring.
- Thank you to Ed Donahue for purchasing a new grill for the picnic. I could use some assistance setting it up and disposing of the old grill.

V. Treasurer's Report (Tony Nasr) --see attached

VI. Committee Reports

a. Adult Education (Kerry San Chirico) – No report.

b. Choir (Karen Burke)

- Choir Rehearsals resume on Sundays after Divine Liturgy from 12:15-1:00 pm

- Karen is looking forward to meeting and singing with the Sunday School Classes in the fall.

c. Icon Committee (report by Caroline Becker and Alex Ibrahim)

- Iconographer Nick Pappas was reminded to submit his invoices
- 3 new icons have been discussed to be commissioned -- St. John Maximovich, St. Thekla, and St. Jacob of Hamatoura in addition to the double icon that Gary has already commissioned.

d. Long-Term Planning (Joseph Solomon)

- Bathrooms

- Project is complete; a few loose ends have been tied out, but a few remain.

- A step lid trash can has been put in the women's room; thank you Tony for your donation.

- Handicap railings have been suggested by parishioners and LTP in the men's room. The cost would be about \$30 to buy and we could probably self-install in the men's room stall. Joe Solomon Jr. is willing to donate the cost and time behind this item. [Addendum by Cynthia Long: also requested in the Women's Room.]

- Automatic door closers could still be installed for both men's and women's rooms if desired. The cost would be about \$70 each (\$140 total) and could likely be self-installed. - council approved funds - Joe Solomon ( younger ) volunteered to install

- Elevators and Handicap Access

- LTP explored cost options for handicap access over the past few months and can report options to Parish Council to make a decision on next steps. I will include the LTP recommendation after laying out the options

- Options:

- Elevator - a full elevator from basement to sanctuary, likely through the chapel or the narthex (TBD). The minimum cost to achieve this would be \$150K, but this cost likely would be closer to \$200K all in. LTP got quotes from a few elevator companies that quoted around \$120K for the elevator and install alone, and we got quotes from a structural engineer who said an engineer's fee alone would be another \$15-20K. That starts the price around

\$140K and does not include the cost of demolition of concrete and masonry. Yousef Dayoub believes a project like this would not even be possible, given that the only areas that would work are likely very structurally important to the church.

Key considerations also include: how to secure an outdoor entrance to this elevator, future annual maintenance of the elevator, moving handicap parking to be nearer the elevator; this solution would theoretically permanently solve handicap accessibility issues.

- Ramp - a full ADA compliant ramp would need to be upwards of 100-120 feet long. This would either wrap around the church or take up the entire front "lawn" area with the bush and sign to do several runs back and forth. The cost to install a concrete ramp would be prohibitive, but the cost to install an aluminum ramp would be around \$35K.

Key considerations: it is unclear to LTP that this actually solves our Parish's problem. Most of our handicapped parishioners appear (key word) to not be wheelchair bound, so this would just increase walking distance. Also, this would only get parishioners from the parking lot to the sanctuary and would leave the basement inaccessible, requiring future investment. Finally there is concern about maintaining and snow removal / slippage.

- "Lift" - a "chair lift" style elevator installed outside in the parking lot to raise up to the top of the steps and enter the sanctuary. Alex has quotes on this and the cost would be around \$30K to install. Yousef believes we could put the lift on the right hand side of the stairs (facing the church) in front of the utility meter as we would have enough clearance (probably want to confirm that).

Key considerations: securing the lift as it would be outdoors (could be done, but would add cost), and this would only solve access to the sanctuary and not downstairs. That would require future investment and planning.

- o LTP recommendation: LTP recommends the Lift option for handicap access to the church. It is likely the most practical. Cost effective, has the nearest term delivery and is most likely to solve our main issues. The total near term cost would be around \$30K, maybe upwards of \$40K. Potential

future costs may be another \$30K. Parish Council can prioritize this spend versus Treasury items and other upcoming / potential capital spending (HVAC, Electric, etc.)-

Discussion followed - led by Father Joel about exploring and not ruling out the elevator option especially if a less costly LULO (Limited Use Low Occupancy) elevator could be installed - need to procure services of a structural engineer to assess feasibility. Even if more costly - elevator could provide a more permanent solution to the problem. Cynthia Long made a motion and Kerry San Chirico seconded it, that PC approve the spending of up to \$500 for a structural engineer to assess if a LULO elevator is feasible. The motion passed.

- Annex / Rectory

- o LTP is in the early stages of discussion regarding the Annex, Rectory, Sunday School and Parking. Fr. Joel was asked to arrange a tour of the Rectory in the coming weeks to help with LTP 's recommendation with proceeding forward on optimal use of available space.

e. Maintenance Committee (Gary Sarkessian / Faris Ibrahim, temporary) – No report.

f. Ministry Team (vacant) (report by Office Administrator)

Matt and Caitlin Gordon are starting a Young Family Ministry for families with children who don't yet go to Kindergarten.

g. St. Katherine Women (Cynthia Long)

- We did not meet in September.
- We invited Holy Ascension to a inter-parish picnic in Spring 2024. We also invited them to join us for lunch after the "Miracle of Christmas" play at Sight & Sound Theatre on December 2. They will respond by the end of the month.
- Some St. George Women will be joining Holy Ascension on their trip to Holy Protection Monastery in White Haven, PA on Saturday, October 14. [Addendum: this trip was cancelled by Holy Ascension in favor of the Nov. 4 AWE retreat.]

h. Stewardship Committee (Jerome Burke) – No report.

i. Sunday School (vacant) (report by Caroline Becker)

- Welcome to Peter Solomon for joining Michael in teaching the middle school class & Kaitlyn Ibrahim in joining Lucy & Naomi in working with the lower elementary class. Cynthia Long will be a substitute. Caroline Becker (Upper Elementary class) is still looking for an assistant. Please also know that Naomi Cardell has already given us 1 year advance notice of her moving out of state next school year, so we will want plan accordingly for next year.

- Thank you to Naomi Cardell for purchasing new furniture for the Library (Lower Elementary Classroom.)
- No PreK class this year due to lack of teachers.
- Lesson Topics:
  - ° Lower Elementary: their own curriculum
  - ° Upper Elementary & Middle School: Romans curriculum from the Archdiocese. (Our rough goal is to go through the 10 week series by Nativity. In the spring we hope to use the forthcoming Creative Arts Festival Curriculum and the Part II of the Romans curriculum, both forthcoming.)
  - ° High School: Romans &/or Letters of Paul
- Upcoming S.S. Dates
  - ° 9/24: first chance for students and parents to meet teachers immediately after communion in the church hall; complete student information sheets. (No separate classes; meet in Fellowship Hall). Will end when the service is over so everyone can get to the picnic easily.
  - ° 10/1: First class. Fr. Joel will officially commission/pray for the students and teachers during the service before or after his homily.
- Classrooms: Lower Elementary, Library; Upper Elementary, Stage; Middle School, Meeting Room (behind choir door); High School, Annex. [Addendum: High School will be meeting in the Rectory]

j. Teen SOYO (Alex Ibrahim)

- The backpacks with school supplies, donated to the local Highland Park Elementary School was a smashing success. Thank you to everyone who donated. The school was very appreciative.
- We are discussing doing a joint Teen SOYO / OCF event, potentially a BBQ at our house.

VII. Old Business

[From August 2023 meeting] – Make a sign with a QR code near the Candles Table to enable parishioners to pay for their candle donations via Paypal. Update: The Office Administrator will work with the pastor to implement.

VIII. New Business

Motion (full discussion/ review in previous PC meetings and review by Treasurer) by Alex Ibrahim to approve \$ 2500.00 housing stipend for Fr Joel and family beginning January 2024- seconded by Jerome Burke - unanimous approval

IX. General Business Remarks

a. Administrative Assistant (Cynthia Long)

- Greeters & Readers needed for October 8
- Updated Parish Directory: project paused until December 2023 or January 2024.

X. Adjourn and Closing prayer – 1:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Burke

*Note from Office Administrator: These Sept 2023 minutes were probably approved at the October 2023 PC Meeting; the October minutes remain pending.*