

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH COUNCIL AGENDA

7:30pm March 26, 2009

Present: Gerry Bezzina, Fr. Murray, Gail Mackay, Karen Owens, Cherylann Grace, Mark Van Den Bossche, Mary Taylor

Regrets: Butch Cavender, Greg Denomme, Langoya Johnson, Emma Markle, Filomena Palmieri, Natalie Simek, Pam Beker, Fr. John, John Coderre

7:32 pm Opening Prayer

7:48 pm Agenda - Acceptance/Amendments
Agenda Accepted

7:41 pm Minutes of past meeting - Acceptance/Amendments

7:45 pm Refugee Committee – Sr Maria

“Sponsorship of a Refugee Family” passed out. The Parish would need to be able to address particular needs to the family, i.e. health problems. The Parish would accept 50% of the funds required to support the sponsorship. Frequently people from the parish try to bring in new refugees, many of these potential refugees do not qualify for refugee status, but they must be considered. Refugees sponsored by the parish should, where applicable, have a Canadian connection. The Church only needs to cover the family for 1 year. After this year the parish may choose to continue to support the family, but they are not responsible. Bus tickets, financial support for education are things the parish would want to help the family with after the year.

Special circumstances ultimately decide how long the parish supports the family, but legally the parish must sponsor the family for one year.

A Columbian family seems the most likely candidate. 3/4ths of the money has already been raised, Columbian families seem to adapt more quickly to this environment.

2 sisters in Rwanda are also being considered, but this would be after the aforementioned the family (about a year between sponsorships). These sisters are related to a parishioner.

for the Columbian family their visas are already approved, legally, everything is in order.

Gerry raises the issue that this money has been raised for a different family, which could upset certain people and may prove to be a liability. The defense for the switch is that the fund is listed as the "Refugee Fund" and is not family or nationality specific. IF someone complains about changing the family, the parish would be willing to return money to those who donated.

Mark raises the issue we haven't been given a refugee story. We are looking at this family not necessarily for their story, but because they government have approved them for refugee status. This goes against the parish's own criteria as outlined by the "Sponsorship of a Refugee Family" handout. Since the refugees have come to light through the visa office, we can't know their story.

The First family was chosen and approved in January 2008

No decision could be made because there was no majority of council present. The decision, however, has been deemed urgent. It will be addressed at the next council meeting.

8:24

Sr. Maria leaves

Karen opens follow-up discussion. Karen believes that we're rushing into making a decision to sponsor this new family. It seems that Parish Council for the most part has been left out of this decision making process. The idea of simply choosing another family because the first family fell through doesn't sit well with Karen, Mark, or Gerry.

Father says that there are many problems within our own parish that we need to address, but Council has already approved funding a refugee family.

Karen says children in our area especially need support that the church should address.

8:40 pm

Updates:

- **Parish Team:**

- **Mary**

Lenten series went well about 40 people were present. Evening prayer went very well also. The Marriage support program was also very fulfilling. The RCIA is preparing to be received into the church within the next week. The newsletter went out without envelopes, but these envelopes are being sent out in a separate mail out.

- **Fr Murray**

The council decided to send out a separate letter with the ministry hours, confession hours, and the envelopes. Parish debt has reduced to \$14 000.

First communion interviews finished last night. Holy Thursday evening the church holds a washing of the feet. Father did an evaluation of the parish the members of the seminary. The meeting determined the church needs more presence and more involvement. Father also had a meeting with parishioners about New Horizon, a support group for divorcees and widows. Councillors will be meeting every Tuesday evening, it is a new group for our parish. Father was having dinner with Father Brian and Father Murray suggested that the church could benefit from a liturgical director who would be in charge of music, servers, etc. Father also showed a handout that is available at Visitation Parish

8:54 pm

Other Business:

- Parish Nursing Discussion-Cont'd – All

John Coderre has left a table that he invites the council to look at and review. One area not noted in this table is information about the refugee committee and people with disabilities. Further discussion of this topic was moved to next meeting.

8:57 pm

Good news from the pews

Cards from St. Michaels will be given out to the visitors at St. Michael's. The card is essentially a prayer of blessing and thanks for attending St. Michael's that day.

9:03 pm

Closing Prayer

NEXT MEETING- Thursday, April 16, 2009