

St. Jerome Building and Grounds Committee Minutes for October 26, 2010

In attendance: Father David Blanchfield, Ray Cassidy, John Davis (chairperson), Dan Loch (Finance Committee representative), John Ostrowski, and Georgia Smith

Fr. David began the meeting at 7:35 pm with a prayer for the parish and for the work of the committee.

Introduction

John Davis began the meeting with a brief explanation of the purpose of the committee: to construct a Five Year Plan for the parish to encompass parish building and grounds, maintenance, utilities, and future projects. This plan will be presented for approval to the Pastoral Council and to the Finance Committee. The supervision of all current and future work will be the responsibility of the Building & Grounds Committee.

Parish Areas Considered

BUILDINGS

- School roof – The school roof was re-roofed a few years ago. There are companies that will pay for use of a large roof on which to place solar panels to generate electricity. The parish would receive a fee, but not the solar power. The school roof is suitable for this, but not the church roof. John O. volunteered to research solar panels.
- Security system – The diocese mandated the current security doors and voice-buzzer entry system in the school building used as the Busy Bodies daycare facility. Security cameras were installed inside the church this year.
- Church roof – The church roof leaks. At present the leaks are repaired by Mr. Tavella, a roofer and husband of Lisa LaBlanc, head of Busy Bodies Daycare. The committee recommended getting three bids for repairs and/or re-roofing. John O. mentioned he routinely would get five bids for work at St. Clement's Church in Stamford.
- Church lighting and sound – The church lights were redone this summer and replaced with energy efficient lighting. The fuse box in the sacristy that was incorrectly used as the on-off switches was replaced with actual on-off switches, dimmers, and timers. The church sound system also was redone this summer, by John Davis who installed modern computerized sound and audio-visual control consoles in the back of the church.

- Church interior – Some sprucing-up may be in order, possibly placing the Stations of the Cross on acoustic panels.
- Rectory – A renovation done in 1999 modernized the rectory. At present a mold problem remains, likely due to an air conditioning water leak in the attic.

John O. volunteered to research mold solutions.

- Church hall hallway – The hall itself was refurbished and repainted two years ago. The hallway from the church to the church hall needs re-doing, especially the ceiling panels.
- Kitchen in church hall – The kitchen was modernized in the past several years.
- School windows – These are the original windows dating from the 1970s. A number are in near-term need of repair and all may need attention.

UTILITIES

- Heating and air-conditioning – A major problem and expense for the parish has been the pneumatic controls installed in 1964 for the church, school, and hall. Johnson Controls is a reliable, but expensive company (a \$1,900 service contract plus high repair costs each visit) and is frequently needed to service and repair the controls. Johnson possibly may be the only company servicing pneumatic controls.

Ray volunteered to research alternatives to Johnson Controls as a heating and air-conditioning service company.

The ultimate goal would be to replace the pneumatic controls with standard low-voltage electrical controls. This would involve very substantial cost and involve stringing a new electrical control system behind many walls. There are some 20 thermostats in the church (2), school (each classroom), and church hall (3).

- Electrical – The fuse box in the hallway of the church hall now is used incorrectly as the hall lighting on-off switches. This system must be replaced with actual on-off switches.
- Septic system – The septic system behind the rectory services the church, school, hall, and rectory. Major work was needed and done on the septic system last year to remove blockages.

Still, the tank needs pumping out once a quarter at a cost of \$1,100. This strongly hints at a problem with the green fields (leaching fields) and needs to be addressed. Fr. David will provide the septic plans to the committee.

At the least, suitable chemicals need to be administered regularly to encourage decomposition of sewage collected in the tank.

In addition, the church hall kitchen needs to have a grease trap installed so grease will not clog the septic system.

It needs to be determined if the parish can hook up to the city sewer system and if the city will allow it.

- Oil tanks – The parish has two in-ground oil tanks, one for the church and school, and a second for the rectory. The committee must investigate replacing them with above ground oil tanks. This could involve costly ground contamination testing and rectification.

GROUNDS AND LANDSCAPING

- Grounds Improvement Plan – This spring Regina Flaherty, current chair of the Pastoral Council, solicited a bid from a landscape architect to improve the parish grounds and parking lots. His \$200,000 plan was not affordable, but the Finance Committee approved an alternate, short-term, \$5,000 plan to clear out and improve the appearance of the cluttered, overgrown strip of land alongside East Rocks Road. The work will be done at cost by John Kuczo, Jr.'s landscaping firm.
- Grass cutting and appearance – At present lawn cutting, seasonal planting, and leaf removal is handled and done well by John Kuczo, Jr.'s landscaping firm.
- Snow removal – At present the parish has a contract with F&G Construction (Mr. Tavella) to plow the parish parking lots and walkways for \$265 a plowing. This company has worked well and is a great improvement over the walkway shoveling Frs. David and Joe once were obliged to do. John O. volunteered to research mold solutions.
- Custodian – At present the parish part-time custodian, Tony Fusco, is working a 30-hour week with benefits for him and his wife. The Building & Grounds Committee should assume supervisory responsibility of the custodian.
- Supplies – For some twenty-plus years Russ Jones has delivered supplies monthly to the parish. Busy Bodies Daycare provides its own supplies, but the parish supplies the bathrooms. The committee asked Fr. David to give it a list of the supplies the parish needs weekly, monthly, and yearly. John O. volunteered to research names of other suppliers.

CONTRACTS AND INSURANCE

- Contracts – Fr. David needs to provide the committee with all current suppliers' services, bills, and contracts for review.
- Insurance – It was strongly suggested that any contractor for the parish present an insurance contract, and that the parish be named as an additional insured on any ongoing contractor's certificate of insurance, or that the parish on its own insurance policy have a rider to insure any contractor without an insurance certificate.

As to cost considerations for the contractor, John O. mentioned that he pays \$700 yearly for a \$4 million liability policy for his construction business.

FUTURE PLANS

- A larger church hall – At one point, the Pastoral Council approved plans for extending the church hall over the blacktopped area just outside the hall and before the parking lot to obtain an additional 1,000 square feet of space for a church hall large enough to be able to host various large (i.e., over 120 person), highly-desirable parish educational and social programs. The downward economy since 2008 has forced those plans to be put on hold, but they still are a parish goal.

The meeting ended at 9:05 pm.

The next meeting is Tuesday, November 16, at 7:30 pm in school Room 5.

Submitted by:

Dan Loch, Building & Grounds Committee Secretary

November 15, 2010