



MINUTES OF MEETING

PARKDALE MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Thursday, June 12, 2008 Diocesan Centre 135 Adelaide St. East.

Attending:

Roy Schatz; *St. Anne's*

Ken Borrett, Dorothy Peers, Anne Barcham; *Epiphany & St. Marks*

Joe Medeiros, Max Woolaver, *St. George the Martyr*

Brian Clarke (chair) Heather McGregor, Harold Nahabediam; *St. Mary Magdalene*

Jeffry Kenedy, Catherine Dennison; *St. Matthias*

St. Stephen's – no representative

Kevin Toyne; *St. Thomas*

Philip Poole; *Bishop, York Credit Valley*

Norah Bolton; *Secretary to the Council*

Regrets: Philip Cooper, Eleanor Emmel

1. Welcome, opening prayers and reflection

Brian Clarke welcomed those present. Philip Poole led in prayer and in a reflection on the life and work of St. Barnabas. He spoke about the stewardship of both money and church buildings, reminded of a quote from an article by the late David Busby describing buildings as “stored faithfulness”. As a prelude to the topics of conversation, he challenged those present to think about what kind of risks they are prepared to take, both as individuals and as parishes.

2. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of minutes of previous meeting and business arising

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved (Motion: McGregor, Kennedy) In response to Max Woolaver's request for directors for the St. George's Housing project, Ken Borrett, Brian Clarke and Joe Medeiros agreed to serve. The chair noted that there may be other needs for the project as well as other opportunities for service and suggested that the matter be brought forward again. (ACTION Woolaver, Board members)

4. Tabled motions from Working Groups

Evangelism Working Group

Catherine Dennison spoke briefly to the motions, noting that the picnic arrangements are now in hand. It was known that St. Mary Magdalene was considering the Natural Church Development Programme and the Diocesan staff officer, Dave Robison, had made a presentation. Philip Poole noted that the programme had become very popular and that there might be a delay in entry until more volunteer trainers and staff were available. For the third motion, shared study groups, there were precedents such as joint preparation for baptism. Kevin Toyne noted that a programme for 20-30 year olds was under consideration at St. Thomas's and hoped that other parishes could provide members for informal discussions in an informal setting. Reaction was positive. The tabled motions passed unanimously (Dennison/ Borrett)

Administration working Group

Heather McGregor spoke to the motions noting that #2-4 were straightforward. The funding for the first motion is currently an unknown. A common receptionist would provide a welcoming presence. Among the advantages, messages would be more current, calls could be taken and follow up would be more consistent. A rough survey indicated that several parishes have no paid administrative support; work is currently done by either the clergy or volunteers and it may be hard for parishioners to see the benefit.

In response to the question of funds, Philip Poole replied that the Area Council administers 5% of the Faithworks proceeds. Most projects they have funded are in the \$5,000 – 10,000 range and usually involve joint projects. A job description would be a requirement; there would probably need to be some contribution from other sources. A matching grant might be an option.

There was a brief discussion of other possibilities for funding ending with the question of whether the concept was worthwhile. Four parishes expressed interest. The first motion was amended to include a job description in consultation with the parishes. It was also agreed that the task force would develop a draft job description and meet afterwards with the parishes for reaction and input.

It was also noted that no parish appeared to have storage space for bulk supplies; the committee now recommended seeking a group discount from a company such as Grand & Toy that could also provide delivery to the individual churches

The amended motions passed. (McGregor/Schatz).
ACTION RE MOTION: Task force and parishes

5. Continuation of discussion re consolidated finances

Several points were made in a review of the total expenses shown on the statements

- We wondered how our ratios of church populations to census populations compared to those of other parts of the Diocese

- We noted very large costs of buildings especially when operations and capital expenses were added
- We are reaching out to the community and the figures don't show this; the reality is that when we do so, we don't have a lot of resources to come and go
- Some ministries are not quantifiable in financial terms – e.g. hospital ministries
- The returns don't give us an accurate picture of actual church use
- While the big picture suggests that we are in the black, that is not how we live parish to parish; we are not all living in the same house
- The figures don't represent operating reality; since their collection is actually for the purpose of determining assessments, we should not spend a lot of time discussing them
- We are building heavy and the state of the buildings is also an issue
- The reports provide some statement of where we are – building heavy in the older part of downtown
- The actual percent of our buildings spent on people is low compared to other institutions – but they are basically serving 628 people for Sunday worship
- Where are the others in a population of approximately 158,000 and how do we minister to them?
- We need to take some risks
- It would be helpful to see the trends
- What can we do collectively facing the same realities and similar demographics?
- The proposals we are coming up with to date are modest; we can do a lot more.

The chairman noted the lateness of the hour, but the consensus of the meeting was that we should continue.

6. Use of our properties

Several points were made during the discussion, including the following:

- Several of our buildings are frequently empty and closed
- There have been several robberies
- We have benefited from research on community agencies but not explored how we might be useful to them in providing space
- Some properties have more potential than others for alternative use
- Infill housing, where possible, would be a good use of space
- Our vision is frequently constrained by what we think we can afford; a better question may be, “What do we want to do”? Then we find the money
- When we rent our buildings, we often can no longer use them for our own purposes; the rent we can gain is frequently well below market value
- What are our buildings for? What are creative uses of our space?
- The sale of buildings such as rectories does provide some banked funds, but use of them is restricted
- The functionality of our space is an issue; in every case it was built for the needs of another era

- Some of our activities are not necessarily site specific; there are some things that could transcend our locations
- What do we want to preserve? What do we want to do that is new and different?
- There are partnerships we could engage in, such as the Art Crawl, September 13-14, where adjacent churches could serve as temporary galleries
- Do we have to give up something in order to do something better?
- We need to look at all the properties as a unit and not consider them in a piecemeal fashion
- We are caught in models that aren't working for us; at some point do we want worship centres on every site?
- The City of Toronto is committed to affordable housing and developers are interested.
- A brand new design of a bright modern multi-purpose building is one technicolour dream
- Housing a number of Anglo Catholic liturgies in historic buildings - however much we love them - may not be the only way to reach the people of Parkdale
- We are stewards of our buildings for the Dioceses rather than owners of them; this is an understanding needed by all parishes – not just those recently breaking away
- Buildings matter; people matter; use matters; - the challenge is to find a middle ground

The discussion concluded with consensus that it would be useful to follow up on some of the building issues over the summer. Heather McGregor was aware of a development consultant who might be willing to do some informal assessment. The Bishop also had some contacts that might do the same. (ACTION McGregor, Poole).

7. Other business and announcements

Catherine Dennison reminded all present to promote the Picnic on June 22.

The Trinity Divinity Associates Conference takes place June 23-25 with Walter Deller as Keynote Speaker

Phil Cooper had researched a Magnetic Church Workshop with an urban focus. The speaker's fee is \$2,600 US plus expenses expected to be in the \$800-1,200 range) and a request for 80 confirmed attendees. It was agreed that a fall date would not allow sufficient time for planning and promotion, but that spring dates should be explored and the matter be reviewed by the Council in the fall. Other parishes and other denominations could be encouraged to attend.

Max Woolaver announced the Canadian Urban Institute conference, Planning of Sacred Space, which he was planning to attend. A summary for the blog would be helpful (ACTION: Max, Norah)

8. Closing prayers and adjournment

The Bishop led in closing prayers and the meeting adjourned at 9:30

