

St. Mary of Lourdes/St. James
Planning Advisory Committee
Minutes of June 18, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Gary Loertscher. Members present where: Gary Loertscher, Jim Kniffin, Jerry Jansen, Bob Hoffman, Sue Loertscher, Carla Wolf, Carol Eberhardy, Ray & Ann Legris, Mark Dohm, Gary Ziegler, Tim Blair, Pauline Fahey, Barb Wachter, Gerard Rabas, Jerry Remy, Joe Donlin, Kay Parish, Ken Klink.

Gary Loertscher recognized the Planning Committee for what they have accomplished during this two-year process. Cheesecake provided by kk was served in appreciation for all of the time and talent provided by committee members.

Results of the vote were 255 yes and 53 no. Approximately 550 ballots were sent to families and individuals who are registered members of St. Mary and St. James. Approximately a month was given to return ballots. Reminders were given at all Masses during that time and all members were given a reminder by phone during the last week.

Discussion of the vote results included the following:

- a 5 to 1 ratio of “yes” to “no” is significant
- 80-85% of funding is provided by 20% of the membership
- the St. Mary parish council was acting very cautiously when they stipulated that every “non-vote” would count as a “no vote”
- historically, people do not vote for a variety of reasons; it is impossible to conclude that everyone who did not vote would have voted “no”
- general sense that most of the non-voters do not favor building; however, many of them could be neutral and should not be discounted as potential donors for a building project
- concern that too much power has been given to the non-voters; potentially the apathetic are controlling the situation
- concern that the increased estimated cost shortly before the vote had a negative effect
- some confusion over what the vote really meant; interpreted by some as a final vote on the plan presented rather than a vote to move to the next step of the process (fundraising)
- a general feeling that there is much support and momentum for building and that we should move ahead with the process; however, the issue of the meaning of the “non-vote” stands in the way
- some discussion of why we elected to follow a “democratic process”; most church projects do not go through a “voting screen”; general feeling is that we feel it was important to do this and that it was the right thing to do.

Minutes of the April 27, 2003 meeting were distributed.

A summation of all comments from returned ballots was distributed.

A few significant patterns do seem to exist. Many are saying we need a new church and now is the time to pursue it. Although a small minority of people have expressed concern about the conceptual plan, there does not seem to be strong, widespread opposition to it.

The St. Mary parish council will meet on Monday, June 23, 2003, at 7:30 p.m. in the parish hall. They will discuss the vote results and decide what to do next. Several planning committee members, through a show of hands, indicated they would attend that meeting. It was suggested that the St. James parish council should be invited to that meeting.

A motion was made by Carol Eberhardy and seconded by Ray Legris. It stated, "Because of the very positive response of 255 yes and 53 no, a 5 to 1 ratio in favor of moving ahead, it is recommended that the parish council direct the planning committee to start the fundraising process to determine if we can build a new facility." The motion was passed unanimously.

Comments about a fundraising campaign all summarized as follows:

- we need to at least go to the next step of gathering pledges to see how committed the parishes are about funding a new facility
- pledging does not mean collecting; it is a promise of how much one would contribute if a decision is made to build
- serious thought should be given to "professional fundraising"
- the scope and scale of the building project will depend on the results of the fundraising campaign

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.