

**Minutes and Conclusions of St. Michael Parish Meeting
Sunday, February 18, 2007**

Concerning the future of St. Michael parish

Father Borowiak and the St. Michael Building Committee met with parishioners during a parish meeting Sunday, February 18, 2007. The 1 p.m. meeting was attended by more than 80 parishioners. Father Borowiak opened the meeting with a prayer. He asked parishioners to keep the religious and spiritual dimension of the project in the forefront of all activities.

Father introduced the members of the Building Committee: Carol Widhalm, Jenny Ackerman, Marilyn Maney, Loran Stara, Pat Gilles and Mark Mainelli.

Father began the meeting by explaining the work of the Building Committee to this point. He explained how the committee was formed and how discussions with Bishop Bruskewitz and the Diocesan Building Commission led to a decision to begin planning for relocating the parish and building a new plant.

Father discussed how the site for the new parish, in the Woodlands Development, was selected. Using maps of the parish, the city and land usage maps from the City of Lincoln Department of Planning, he described how the site works into the demographical and geographical needs of the parish.

Pat Gilles next explained how parish demographic numbers have been used to chart past and future projected growth. He outlined actual parish statistical numbers from the past seven years and projected growth numbers from the City of Lincoln for the next ten years. He explained how these numbers have been brought together to give the parish an idea of what growth will be in parish families, school age children, etc. He used these numbers to predict what school and worship needs would be along a time line.

The next speaker was Carol Widhalm. Carol took the numbers which Pat arrived at and translated them into what the space needs of a preschool through eighth grade school would be. In a PowerPoint presentation, Carol outlined the elements of a school and what the square footage needs would be.

Loran Stara then gave a brief overview of some of the visits the Building Committee has made to newly constructed schools and churches in Lincoln and Omaha. Using Lincoln's three newest Churches he described the strengths and weaknesses of each. He also listed what parishioners of new St. Michael Church might like to see in a new Church.

Mark Mainelli conducted the listening session portion of the meeting. This part of the meeting allowed parishioners to comment on, provide input, or to ask any questions about the meeting or the process to date. Parishioners raised twenty-two questions or issues. They are listed in priority of the number of times they were raised. Those areas receiving the same number of responses or input are not necessarily listed in any order of priority or importance.

1. **How do we get all parishioners on board for the project of building a new school and Church?**

This subject was raised four times. St. Michael parish has 380 registered families. In 2006 a full one third of families did not financially support the parish. Most of them had no activity in terms of attending Mass or being involved in parish activities. Father Borowiak said it is going to be crucial that all families be contacted and encouraged to participate in the parish's future needs. Father said he plans to mail communications about ongoing plans for the new parish to all parishioners.

2. **How will a new church and school change the rural/urban makeup of St. Michael parish?**

This was asked three times. One thing many people like about St. Michael parish is its "smallness," with a sense of belonging and identity. Parishioners have told Father Borowiak that if possible they want to keep that sense of identity as much as possible. Some long time parishioners said it is inevitable that growth will change the small parish feel of St. Michael.

3. **As planned, will a first phase of a preschool – eighth grade school be big enough when it is opened?**

Three people asked about this. Building committee members said they are working with the best estimates they have to arrive at numbers in planning for a new school. Variables, such as building growth, number of Catholic families in new developments, interest in the school, will all be factors relating to how quickly a school's enrollment grows. It is difficult to say.

4. **Will a church automatically be the second phase of a construction project?** Three questions were directed to this topic. Father and Building Committee members said there are many unknown variables concerning how quickly a school would fill up and what immediate and longer term needs are in the area of education. Based on these variables, Father said there could be no guarantees that a church would automatically be the second phase of a building project and very possibly a second section of a school could be built before a church. That is, it is possible that the school could be added onto before a church is built.

5. **Will all grades of the school, preschool – 8th be opened all at once or will grades be phased in?** Two people asked this question. At the present time St. Michael parish is paying, on average, \$3,000 per child for educational costs above and beyond tuition. That translates into \$300,000 this academic year. Father said both options are being studied, but that it could be very possible that all grades would be instituted at once. He noted that it would be very difficult for children to leave one school and attend a new St. Michael school. Father said if this approach were adopted that parents would be given as much advance notice as possible. He also said that if all grades were implemented at a St. Michael school, then the parish would no longer pay the \$3,000 per child to other schools if the parents elect to leave their children in those schools.

6. **Will a St. Michael School have a school bus system?** Two parishioners inquired about this. It was noted that school busses are very expensive and there are a number of issues involved with operating them. A school bus system is unlikely.

7. **When will St. Michael parish have to give the current property to the Diocese?** This was the subject of two questions. Father said that at the present time it is a mutual understanding that when St. Michael becomes established in its new location and is finished with the present property, there will be a mutual trade of titles.

The following questions/feedback were asked once. Some were simply areas to consider. When an answer was available it was given.

- 1. Give ample study and consideration to traffic flow patterns in and around a church and school.**
- 2. Can rooms be provided for special needs children?** E.g. speech therapy
- 3. Have growth patterns in construction been taken into consideration in projecting future growth?**
They have. The most conservative numbers in growth have been used to arrive at future numbers. Also, recent slow downs in housing starts have been considered.
- 4. Will a day care and pre school be included in a new St. Michael school?**
Both elements are being considered.
- 5. Will there be a before school and after school program?**
These areas are being studied.
- 6. Can a St. Michael Scrip program be started now?**
Plans are underway to get one established.
- 7. Make sure there are enough meeting rooms available for all of the parish organizations.**
- 8. Has an adult day care/education program been considered?** No
- 9. Would a Phase One need to be completely paid for before Phase Two is begun?**
Every aspect of the construction project would have to be examined to answer that. That would include what annual operational needs are, number of parish families, what a second phase would cost, how much external debt would be need to be serviced, etc. As there can be many variables, it is difficult to answer this definitely.
- 10. Have other parishes stopped allowing St. Michael parishioners to belong to those parishes?**
Father is working with neighboring pastors to try and maintain parish boundaries.
- 11. Will a rectory be part of Phase One?**
Most likely.
- 12. Will there be women religious teaching in a St. Michael School?**
Father is in contact with a number of orders of women religious. There are so few women religious today that no guarantees can be made.
- 13. How much input will the Diocese have in our project?**
The Diocesan Building Commission comprised of priests knowledgeable about and having experience in construction projects, work in tandem with parishes to ensure that the best possible project is undertaken. Also, the Bishop has the final oversight of all building projects and gladly works with pastors and parishioners to achieve the best possible worship and educational needs of a parish. The Bishop and Building Commission has been informed of every aspect of our project and have been very complimentary of the process.
- 14. How long will a 700 seat capacity Church meet the needs of our parish?**
Indefinitely. When the number of parishioners exceeds the number of Masses, which can be celebrated on a weekend, and when the parish becomes too large, likely a new parish would be created at that time.
- 15. Is there talk about a new parish in the future in proximity to ours?**
No, that would largely be driven by growth patterns and educational and worship needs in the future.