

Diocesan Council Meeting of 22 October 2020

29 October 2020

Attendees:

Archbishop Mark	Fr. Timothy Hojnicky	Sebastian Crews
Fr. Martin Brown	Fr. Seraphim Reynolds	Danalisa Radu
Fr. Victor Gorodenchuk	Deacon John Shingara	Mark Linnehan
Fr. Nicholas Solak	Deacon Peter Staller	

The meeting was called to order by Archbishop Mark and opened with the prayer “O Heavenly King...”

Sale of Holy Trinity Church – Catasauqua, PA – The Diocese received 3 offers on the property and buildings referred to as Holy Trinity Church in Catasauqua (see Appendix). Prior to the meeting the proposals / offers were sent via email to the members of the diocesan council for review. All offers were discussed in the meeting. Offers 1 & 3 seemed to require too much due diligence on the part of the buyer. Deacon John made a motion that we accept offer #2 and his motion was seconded by Deacon Peter Staller. **The motion passed unanimously.** It was then motioned (motion by Fr. Victor with a 2nd by Fr. Seraphim) that Archbishop Mark be given the power to handle all matters relating to the sale of Holy Trinity. **The motion passed unanimously.** Protodeacon Peter Skoog was charged with providing a letter stating that the Diocesan Council has given Archbishop Mark authority to handle all matters relating to the sale of Holy Trinity. The upcoming sale of Holy Trinity will necessitate the removal of all exterior crosses from the edifice. The estimated cost will be \$5,000. Fr. Timothy made a motion, seconded by Deacon Peter Staller, that the money be allocated for the removal of the crosses. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Charity

- A request by Fr. Stephen Vernak for a \$500 donation to OCF was read to the assembly by Fr. Timothy.
- A request to donate \$4,000 to Holy Transfiguration Monastery was made by Fr. Martin. This will satisfy the wishes of Holy Ascension prior to their closing.

A motion was made by Fr. Seraphim, seconded by Mark Linnehan, that these donations be made. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Tax Exempt Status of the Diocesan Center – Documents from the presiding judge were read and discussed. Essentially, 50% of the diocesan center property was deemed tax exempt by the court. The Diocesan Council has decided, based on this favorable decision, to not pursue the matter any further. It was suggested that attorney Fox be contacted and asked to reach out to the local zoning board to see if they will appeal the ruling. Archbishop Mark is to contact attorney Fox.

Letter from Michael Klesh – Michael Klesh is a “parishioner” at Holy Trinity, McAdoo. He wrote His Eminence stating that he’s owed in excess of \$7,600 by the diocese (see Appendix 2). Unfortunately, Mr. Klesh also seems to have appropriated an \$1,800 insurance rebate that was supposed to be part of the assets related to the closure of Holy Trinity as part of his \$7,600 claim. After some discussion on how to handle Mr. Klesh’s claim, a motion was made stating that *if* Mr. Klesh could provide any written financial proof of his claim, it would be considered. The diocese will not take legal action regarding the \$1,800; if no financial paper trail is provided by Mr. Klesh, the diocese will consider the matter closed and no further monies will be provided. Mark Linnehan made the above motion and it was seconded by Deacon John. His Eminence will write a letter to Mr. Klesh.

Honoraria – For their efforts and labors in overseeing and facilitating the smooth closure of the churches in Lykens, McAdoo and Catasauqua a motion was made by Deacon John that Mark Linnehan and Fr. Timothy receive \$500 each as an expression of the Diocese’s gratitude. The motion was seconded by Fr. Nicholas. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Action Items

- Protodeacon Peter Skoog was charged with providing a letter stating that the Diocesan Council has given Archbishop Mark authority to handle all matters relating to the sale of Holy Trinity.
- Archbishop Mark is to contact attorney Fox to have him reach out to the zoning board regarding a possible appeal of the ruling on the tax-exempt status of the Diocesan Center.
- Archbishop Mark will provide written notification to Mr. Michael Klesh regarding his claim against the diocese for \$7,645.45. Wording is to be based on the motion made by Mark Linnehan

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Skoog". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Protodeacon Peter N. Skoog

Appendix 1

Offer #1

\$300,000

\$9,000 in Seller Concession towards closing costs

\$15,000 Initial Deposit

Settlement on 12/30/2020

45 Day Due Diligence Period

Financing Contingency

Zoning Approval Contingency

This specific offer would be dual agency, meaning commission would be reduced to 4%

Revised Offer #1

Buyer was able to make the following changes

Offering \$309,500

with Seller Credit of 3%

Max interest rate on loan increased to 6%

Offer #2

\$300,000 cash offer

\$5,000 Initial Deposit

30 days Due Diligence Period

Settlement on 11/30/2020

They would like to get in, to view once again (both church and residential) to get things moving along faster, and if ok with the church, close even sooner.

Converting to Residential

Offer #3

\$300,000 Cash offer

\$10,000 Initial Deposit

60-day Due Diligence period (please see additional terms on the last page of the contract where it was noted)

Settlement of 12/31/2020

Appendix 2

901 Tresckow Road
McAdoo, Pennsylvania 18237

Your Eminence Most Rev. Archbishop Mark

Members of the Diocesan Council of the Diocese
of Philadelphia And Eastern Pennsylvania
325 N. Walnut St.
Bath, Pennsylvania 18014

Christ Is In Our Midst:

Concerning a matter of a refund on an insurance policy covering the buildings of Holy Trinity Church in McAdoo, I submit the following for your consideration.

I believe the \$1599.56 should be returned to me due to the fact that the purchase of the insurance policy was made with \$2000.00 of my personal funds and \$415.00 of church funds at the end of July for the benefit of the Diocese at the insistance of Archbishop Mark. I did this to make sure there was enough church money in the checking account to cover any outstanding checks that still might not have been cashed. Therefore to be strictly technical in addition to the refund, the Diocese still owes me a sum of \$445.45.

In addition in May of 2017 while the church was having a food sale, Priest Mircea Airnei unwittingly authorized the paving of our parking lot to a crew that showed up at the church. The parking lot did need paving badly but the church was far from ready financially to have it done. In mid afternoon the foreman of the crew came down the church basement and said we owed him \$21000.00. Of course we were shocked because we knew nothing about it and Fr. Mircea was frantic. Well I negotiated with the foreman and brought the price down to \$17000.00. Our acting secretary and treasurer Sherry Sherkness counted out \$1000.00 from the food sale and gave it to him. I went to my bank and borrowed \$16000.00 on my equity loan against my house and lent it to the church to complete paying for the paving. If you want further information on this insident contact Fr. Mircea.

The church has been payng me back each time we had food sale and at the time of the closing of Holy Trinity Church, there was a balance of \$7200.00 due. If the Diocese takes the assets of the church they must also assume the debts.

Therefore The Diocese owes me \$445.45 for the insurace I paid for in behalf of the Diocese and \$7200.00 still owed on the loan made to the church for a total of \$7645.45. Of course this is negotable. The undersigned all will verify the authencity of the above.

