

# Cluster 22 Planning Committee

Holy Cross Parish, South Portland; Saint Bartholomew Parish, Cape Elizabeth; Saint John the Evangelist Parish, South Portland; Saint Maximilian Kolbe Parish, Scarborough

## Notes from the January 19, 2006 meeting

**Present:** Donna Brassard, Beth Carmody, Chris Crawford, Scott Ewing, Bob Falconer, Fr. Michael Gendreau, Steve Harnois, Msgr. Michael Henchal, Laurie Kelly, Pam Koonz Canarie, Eileen McDonald, Fr. James Morrison, Sybil Riemensnider, Dick Sawyer, Michelle Sirois, Kathleen Sparda, Michael Tranfaglia, Jim Welch

**Absent:** John Brennan, Peter Cianchette, Sheila McDonough, Kathy Williamson

We met at Sybil Riemensnider's home. Eileen opened the meeting with a prayer.

Since our December meeting three subcommittees have been formed to help us divide up the work that we need to do.

### **Education and Social Justice**

Scott Ewing, Bob Falconer, Steve Harnois, Laurie Kelly, Fr. James Morrison, Michelle Sirois (chairperson), Kathy Williamson

### **Finance and Administration**

Donna Brassard, Pam Koonz Canarie, Chris Crawford, Fr. Michael Gendreau, Sybil Riemensnider (chairperson), Dick Sawyer, Jim Welch

### **Worship and Spiritual Life**

Beth Carmody, Peter Cianchette, Msgr. Michael Henchal, Sheila McDonough, Kathleen Sparda, Michael Tranfaglia (chairperson), Deacon John Brennan (non-voting member of the full committee)

Eileen noted that all three subcommittees have met at least once since our last monthly meeting. The new format for our monthly cluster meetings will be to allow one hour for each subcommittee to meet, and then we'll rejoin to hear updates from each subcommittee and have further discussion/determination of next steps. Subcommittees are asked to meet at least once between the monthly meetings.

The notes from the December meeting were approved as is.

Eileen passed out information about another session with Brother Sofield on April 8-- time and place to be determined. Scott recommended that the cluster members plan to attend.

The three subcommittees were set up in separate rooms with instructions to articulate/present:

1. The "charge" or general purpose of each subcommittee
2. The goals of the subcommittee

3. What data/information the subcommittee needs to accomplish their goals, and 4. what the subcommittee has accomplished so far and plans to accomplish.

Scott asked the subcommittees to begin to consider each model in order to speculate on how it might work, or fit our needs. For this meeting, Scott asked the subcommittees to consider Model 1 to see if it fits what we want/our needs. We need to begin to move in the direction to recommend a model and make a case for it—due in five months.

After one hour, the group reconvened together to hear the reports from each subcommittee.

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### **Finance and Administration, Sybil Riemensnider, chairperson**

The subcommittee met once prior to this meeting. See meeting notes from their January 16 meeting.

The Finance subcommittee has determined its purpose to be: finding/managing the resources to support the people and places we need in order to provide the evangelization of our cluster.

The subcommittee has consensus on some priorities of the cluster.

- Keep all four worship sites open
- Holy Cross School is a high priority, and is the responsibility of the cluster and not just Holy Cross parish
- The cluster is comprised of five entities: four parishes and the school.
- In order to function, the cluster needs qualified and trained staff
- Church does not equal building—how do we communicate that?
- If we don't merge, one or more of the entities may not be able to survive financially.
- If we do merge, then we can pool resources to deliver better services, and we can recognize joint assets.

The subcommittee has determined that we need data/information about

- Current staffing—can we get payroll records?
- Net assets and liabilities of each parish now and projected five years out.
- Allocation of expenses as a percent of income.
- What kind of service outreach do we do/need to do that we need to fund—youth, elderly, poor?

If we are successful

- We will be able to provide more services, and better quality of service within the cluster.
- We will have a healthier fiscal situation in the cluster

- We all will have a better sense of ownership within our community of faith, and a great sense of our responsibility toward it.
- Although we may lose attendance at first, we will eventually increase mass attendance.

Next steps for this subcommittee:

- Gather information as to how each income dollar is now spent (allocation of expense as a percentage of income), in order to present a clear message of how the income is being spent now. Then, project how the spending (allocation of it) may change with the cluster model. We'll create a "before" and "after" pie chart.
- Gather information on assets and liabilities.
- Make inventory of current staffing, job descriptions, pay scale, labor hours used.
- Review plans to pay down the debts.
- Next meeting on February 6<sup>th</sup> at St. John's.

### **Education/Social Justice, Michelle Sirois, chairperson**

This committee met once prior to this meeting. See meeting notes from their January 17 meeting.

They took an inventory of what each parish in the cluster is doing in religious education and found that all four are using the same texts/programs for sacramental prep, First Faith and K-5 faith formation. The areas of youth ministry and adult education present many opportunities for collaboration between the parishes.

The subcommittee needs to do more work to determine the "inventory" of social justice work and outreach that is happening with the parishes now—prison ministry, food cupboard, for example.

The committee wants to meet with Deacon Steve to talk about the role of the school.

They have also identified that adult education and lay training are areas where needs are not being met at this time.

### **Worship/Spiritual Life, Mike Tranfaglia, chairperson**

The subcommittee has met and has recommended that we move forward with a model that keeps all four worship sites open. Given that, and the availability of two priests within the cluster, the subcommittee wants to address what the mass schedule may look like in the new model. The subcommittee suggested that the cluster hold its first "town meeting" in March in order to present a draft of two possible mass schedules to the cluster parishioners. In addition, the subcommittee needs updated "head counts" at all masses and asked for help from the cluster members to take on the "counting."

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This prompted a lengthy discussion regarding our plans for a “town meeting” within the cluster. Consensus from the discussion determined that tackling the mass schedule at this point may be premature.

**We agreed to set up a “town meeting” for the entire cluster on March 26 from 2 to 4 pm at St. Max’s.** The agenda for the meeting will be to share the good news and positive implications about the cluster: what’s working now and how it will improve with the cluster.

The Worship/Spiritual Life subcommittee will make a plan to begin “head counts” at masses.

In the meantime, we need to be sure that the elements of the communication plan are being carried out in each parish. Sybil said that printing out copies of the cluster meeting minutes and having them available after masses has been very successful. The suggestion box (have it on hand during Coffee n Donuts) at each parish has yet to be implemented. The communication subcommittee will meet again to draft copy for the bulletins, and tighten up our communication plan. Donna suggested that all communication be consistent in its message and tone.

We closed with a prayer and thanks to Sybil for hosting the meeting.

Our next meeting is February 16<sup>th</sup> at St. Bart’s.