

**St. Michael the Archangel Catholic School**  
**Parent and Teacher Organization General Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, January 23, 2008**

The third general meeting of the 2007-2008 St. Michael School Parent and Teacher Organization was held in the Parish Center on Wednesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 7pm. School Principal Dr. Sarah Wannemuehler, Assistant Principal Molly Carlin, PTO President Marylynn Fitzgerald, President-Elect Peggy Thompson, VP of Fundraising Colleen Ueland, VP-Elect of Volunteers Robin Evans, VP of Education Cheryl Reid, Secretary Laura Usher, Monsignor Tim O'Connor, and Building Committee Members, Mike Oliver, Peter Heath, and Tom Karpus, along with over eighty school parents and teachers attended this meeting.

Dr. Wannemuehler opened the meeting with a prayer.

**PTO Update by Marylynn Fitzgerald and Peggy Thompson:**

Mrs. Fitzgerald began by welcoming everyone to the meeting, especially Monsignor Tim and the Building Committee representatives. She acknowledged the success of the two December fundraisers, The Jingle Bell Run and the Christmas Tree and Wreath Sale. Over 450 runners participated in the second annual Jingle Bell Run and a profit of ~\$8000 was made. The net profits from the Tree Sale totaled ~\$2500, with 200 trees being sold. Mrs. Fitzgerald thanked all those who volunteered to make these events both fun and profitable. The Angel Bucks Program continues to be an incredible success. All those who have not yet participated are encouraged to give it a try. Not only does our school benefit, but you directly benefit from the tuition rebate program. This year's Bingo Night is SOLD OUT for Saturday, February 2. Planning continues for the St. Michael School Auction and Gala to be held on March 15<sup>th</sup> at Prestonwood Country Club. Tickets will go on sale February 15<sup>th</sup>, and anyone interested in volunteering should contact one of the co-chairs, Maria Young or Mary Manley. The nomination process for new PTO officers has begun, with Jennifer Butler heading the committee. Please consider running or nominating someone for a position. Mrs. Fitzgerald expressed that she personally has had a great experience serving as President.

Mrs. Thompson presented four proposals of by-law changes to be voted on at this meeting. The first three were to change the length of the terms served by the President, VP of Fundraising, and VP of Volunteers. It was proposed to shorten the term of President and VP of Fundraising from two years to eighteen months, with a six month shadowing period to take place in the fall. It was also proposed to decrease the term of VP of Volunteers from two years to one year, with a transition period of two months taking place in the spring. There is the hope that by decreasing the time commitments for these three positions more people would be interested in serving on the PTO Board. The final proposal was to allow the board the right to vote changes of plus or minus 5% to a budget area without bringing it to a vote at a general meeting. The group voted by a show of hands in favor of these by-law changes.

## **Building Project Presentation**

### **Project Introduction: Mike Oliver**

Mr. Oliver is a chair of the Parish Finance Council and is serving as a member of the Building Project Committee, along with Msgr. Tim, Tom Karpus, Peter Heath, Jason Curtis, Wayne Cusher, Dr. Sarah Wannemuehler, Tom Milmo, Travis Davey and Ann Leuth. Mr. Oliver is also a member of the Strategic Planning Task Force, which was formed to identify and prioritize needs of the parish. The task force determined there is a need for additional facilities, and that the impact of the future Green Hope Church would not have a negative effect on our parish. The building of a new church for the Green Hope Community would not take place in the near future primarily because there is no priest available to serve there. Therefore, the focus is on the completion of the school's facilities.

### **Financial Review: Peter Heath**

Mr. Heath reviewed the previous capital campaign, God's Work Our Challenge, and tried to clear up any misconceptions people may still have about this campaign. This program initially started as a Diocese campaign but items kept being added to it, such as the purchase of the Pastoral Center property, the Honduras Ministry, and miscellaneous school projects, which led to a goal of raising \$12 million. Unfortunately, the campaign was not represented in this way and many people were led to believe the school was the priority. Of the \$12 million, only \$7 million or 59% was pledged, and as of today only \$3,299,000 of the pledges have been collected. Although pledges are still coming in, they are so far behind the goal our parish is making payments to the Diocese to satisfy commitments not fulfilled by GWOC. A more exact breakdown of numbers is represented on pages 6 and 7 of the Building Project Presentation.

### **Project Development Process: Mike Oliver**

Mr. Oliver assured us that this campaign would be different in that the completion of the school is the only project involved. Due to Diocesan rules, all fundraising must cease during the Bishop's Annual Appeal; therefore, no money can be raised for this project until after March 2, 2008. All parish families will be asked to give their support for this project because the building will be intended for both parish and school use. All funds that are received will go into an escrow account held at the Diocese. A "Go/No Go" date will be established and communicated at the beginning of the program. On that date, we will evaluate where we stand, and all money will be returned to donors in the event the project does not move forward. Mr. Oliver stated this is a firm project, with a firm deadline, and therefore there is no risk to funds donated. The church will pay any expenses such as architectural fees if the project is a NO GO.

### **Project Scope Summary: Tom Karpus**

Mr. Karpus presented the preliminary Architectural Drawings for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the building project. In looking at what we need now and for the future, **Phase 2** would include the following:

- \*High school size gym with retractable bleachers
- \*Elevated stage with sound system and lighting
- \*Boys/Girls locker rooms
- \*Coaches' office
- \*Athletic department storage
- \*Large general purpose meeting room(s)
- \*Six new classrooms designed for middle school use

**Phase 3** would include the following:

- \*Additional classrooms (for total of 9-12 new classrooms)
- \*Additional storage/meeting rooms
- \*Dining Area (no kitchen facilities)

All buildings that are constructed in the Town of Cary are required to have a 50-foot buffer to any wetlands, which is different from when the original plans for the school were drawn. One benefit of building Phase 3 would be the additional classrooms would enable a third tract of classes to be added and more stewardship families could be included and the class size could be reduced to the original cap of 22-25 students. Classrooms could be designed to fit the curriculum, and there could possibly be a separate Middle School Wing. The Dining Room would be large enough to serve more students at a given time, which would minimize the number of lunch rotations. Finally, it would be much more difficult and costly to construct Phase 3 after completing Phase 2.

#### **Finance Overview: Peter Heath**

Mr. Heath presented an estimate of the preliminary costs of funding this project. The project committee will seek multiple and competitive bids so the numbers could actually go down. An estimated \$4.5 million would be needed for Phase 2 alone and an estimated \$7 million would be needed for Phase 2 and 3 together. Under current diocesan guidelines, in order to start a building project 50% of the needed funds must be in the bank. A proposal will be presented to the Diocese seeking an exception to this rule. If we raise the \$2.25 million needed to start Phase 2, could we simultaneously begin Phase 3 without the additional down payment, due to the fact the more classrooms would instantly generate revenue with the added tuitions? Mr. Heath stressed the BAA goal must be met before a finance proposal will be presented to the Diocese.

#### **Plan Going Forward: Tom Karpus**

The building committee will create a summary proposal for the entire project and then present it to the Parish Finance Council for approval this month. The proposal will then be presented to the Pastoral Council in Jan/February and then to the Diocesan Finance Council in February and finally to the Diocesan Building Committee, also in February. Once the final approval is given and the BAA is complete and successful, fund raising

can begin. Anyone interested in serving on this fundraising committee is to contact Ann Leuth.

**Pastor's Remarks: Msgr. Tim**

Msgr. Tim began by stating that he is 100% supportive of this project. He asked for the initial building committee to come together, because he wants to see both Phase 2 and Phase 3 completed before he retires from the priesthood. He has always asked to be in a parish associated with a school, because he believes our children are our future. He stressed the importance of following guidelines set by the Diocese, and that our Parish must meet our BAA goal for this year and the next two years. He encouraged all of us to communicate to others who have never given to the BAA, now is the time. Msgr. Tim is sending letters to those who have never participated asking for their support. The amount that St. Michael Parish contributes is the lowest (percentage-wise) in the Diocese. This year our goal is \$400,000. After a week and a half of the campaign, \$275,000 has been pledged. Because our parish has a school, any money raised above the set goal will go directly to the school.

Msgr. Tim believes the finances are here in the Parish to support this project and we must be positive in our view and our mentality in order to accomplish our goal. The church has funds available that could be used as seed money for the down payment. Msgr. Tim also stated he will be the first to make his personal financial commitment to this project. He is preparing a letter to go out to all parishioners after the completion of the BAA, sharing his vision for this project and asking for their support.

**Questions and Answers: Moderated by Dr. Sarah Wannemuehler**

Before opening the floor to questions, Dr. Wannemuehler shared some of her views on how important this building project is to the growth of our school community.

Currently there is a significant waiting list for StMS. She feels some people may hesitate to apply because they think they have no chance of being accepted. With the addition of a third tract, the number of students in each class could be capped at an ideal 25 or lower. However, she does not want to lose the closeness that is felt in our St. Michael School family.

Some key points that were addressed during the question and answer session are as follows:

- Families of the 1100 children who use the school building for Faith Development will be asked to financially support this building campaign.
- The Town of Cary favorably welcomes the addition of more classrooms.
- Our school operates on a tuition that is set by the Governing Board. Tuition will not be increased to fund this project.
- The addition of kitchen facilities to the dining hall in Phase 3 would significantly raise the cost of the project. With access to a functional kitchen in the Parish Center, it is not needed at this time. However, the square footage of the space will be examined for the possibility of adding a kitchen at a later date.

-Dr. Wannemuehler would love to see the addition of special education classes, taught by certified specialists, for those children with diversified learning issues. With the additional classroom space, StMS could one day be a hallmark school in the Diocese by offering this type of specialized education.

-An outside firm will be hired to raise the money for this campaign. The building committee would control this process and negotiate the fees paid to the selected firm. Any money donated without the help of the firm will not be subject to their fees.

-The funds donated to this campaign would not be pledged over an extended period as it was in GWOC, because the money has to be in the bank in order to move forward.

-If only a portion of the money is raised, there would be a discussion on whether or not to build a gym only.

-If everything goes as planned, the preliminary time-line would be to begin fundraising in March and continue through the remainder of this school year, with construction starting in the fall or early 2009.

A follow-up meeting will be set to discuss in detail the plans for this building project. This gathering will be the school community and the parish community together. The next general PTO meeting will be held on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008, and a project update will be given.

Mrs. Fitzgerald expressed her gratitude to everyone who attended, and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30pm.