

**THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH & FINANCE COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, September 29, 2008**

Council Members in Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Kathy Hornschmeier, Larry Bush, Janet Tate, John Duncan, Neil Kamphaus, Jr., and Jim Conrady.

Council Members Absent: None.

Others in Attendance: Mike Gennett, Tim Dugan, David Kling, Chris White, Dee Archer, Tony Schulte, Lori Knight, Joan Cardone, John Trautmann, and Dick Schuler.

The special St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order by Fr. Bill Wager at 7:02 PM EDT with a prayer. The special meeting included the Finance Committee and selected school parents. This was the same committee that met last March to select a consulting firm for the Connector capital Project.

The goal of the meeting was to discuss the Feasibility Study results and recommend the next steps in the project.

Fr. Bill made the following points regarding the feasibility study which was conducted in June of 2008:

- 39% of our registered parishioners contribute regularly to the parish. The US average is 36% and we are doing slightly better.
- The report overall was complimentary to the parish.

There were some issues that were generated by the study regarding the connector project:

- The “connector lobby” was not well explained to the parish. We can not add classrooms or meeting space in that area. There is a sewer

line that runs underneath the walkway in the front of the gym. If we were to build a classroom or anything else in that area, the floor would have to be torn up if we had to access the sewer line. That could be costly. That is why a lobby was built rather than more meeting space.

- The elevator was appealing to 76% of the parishioners. However, they brought up a good point regarding the use of the elevator during school days due to security issues. We need to re-look at the location of the elevator.
- Some voiced concern about combining the parish and school offices. This was done for economical reasons. If we combined the offices, we could share the task and the help. We may have to look at keeping the school where they currently are. More work needs to be done on this as well.
- This is a misconception that we plan to retire the modular buildings with this project. This is not true. The third building in the back of the classrooms belongs to the state of Ohio and it would be retained after the moduls are no longer here. The thought process currently includes using the moduls for large meeting rooms. There is an actual gain of 5 classrooms if we continue to use the moduls. Many were under the impression there was a net gain of just one classroom which is not true.

Fr. Bill said, "Should we begin a capital campaign now?" His current reaction was NO. However, a campaign needs the support of the parish leadership. If leadership felt we needed to move ahead, he was open to the idea. How did everyone feel? In Fr. Bill's opinion, a one year or two delay can:

- Help fix and communicate the design issues
- Gives us time to see how the economy works itself out
- The report came in too late to get started this fall.
- A 6 month delay would help us to adequately plan the project next spring with a kickoff in early fall.

Fr. Bill then asked those present to comment regarding this project. Some of the feedback included:

- “A late report may be God working in our favor. Look what has happened to the economy alone today and this month.”
- “We need to look at this again in six months. We don’t want to wait too long or the data won’t be valid.”
- “A six month delay would be prudent. It would get the election behind us. We do need to keep this in front of the parish.”
- “In the meantime we need to get more people to contribute to the Vision 2000 collection so we can apply it to the current debt levels.”
- “We need to take the lobby out to save some money. Everyone is so nervous with the financials right now.”
- “The School enrollment numbers need to be taken into consideration. Tuition affordability and the current economy may hinder school enrollment.”
- “This project is not just about the school. It is about the parish and the need for space in general.”

Fr. Bill asked, “Does anyone want to proceed right now?” No one offered to start a capital campaign now. Then he asked, “Should we table the project for six months?” Everyone voted in the affirmative to table the project.

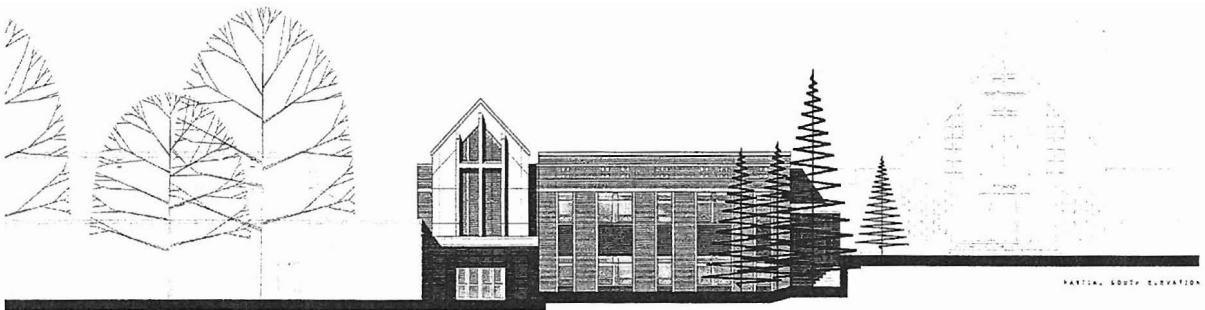
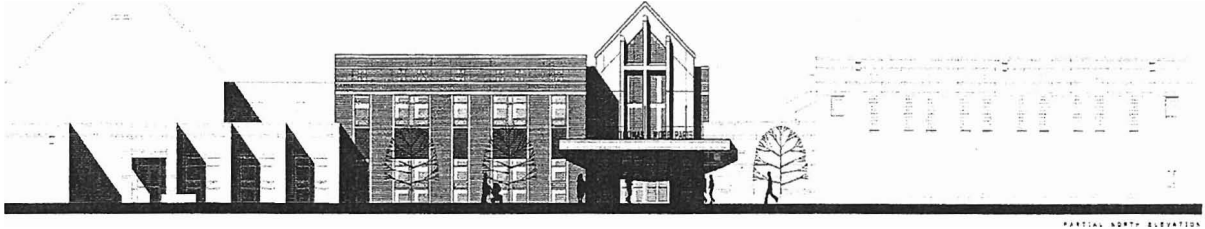
The connector project was tabled for six months until the spring of 2009.

The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 20, 2008 at 7 PM in the School Library.

The conclusions of the Feasibility Study follow....

Feasibility Study & Fundraising Report

CONFIDENTIAL



Conclusions

The findings and conclusions were as follows:

1. The parish exhibited many fine and positive attributes during the conduct of the study. Interview candidates were gracious, thoughtful and forthcoming. The parish did an exemplary job in providing a proper demographic mix from which to draw our conclusions.
2. Father Wagner received very high marks for his pastoral leadership. This is an important element if a campaign is forthcoming, since pastoral leadership is a critical component in any effort to raise capital funds.
3. The desire to add new space is widespread. 65% believe it is essential and another 17% find it important, if not essential. This is a strong indicator that the parish has correctly perceived that the most acute need is adding classrooms space and secondarily office and meeting space.
4. There was widespread concern about the nature of the connecting building – the lobby. Nearly as many people found the building to be not important as those who found it essential. (28% versus 31%). We believe much of the



reason for such a high number of interviewees finding the connector building unimportant was the nature of the building itself. Few interviewees could suggest a daily or regular use for a lobby, for instance, especially if it appears to come at the expense of more classrooms.

5. The parish staff, the youth ministry, the school and the religious education programs all received high marks from the interviewees. It is clear that the parish is well-served by the commitment of its full-time workers and its volunteers. One constructive comment heard most often was the need for better appreciation of input from parishioners, especially parents.
6. On the question of whether they believed a capital campaign to raise \$2 million was feasible, only 23% felt it was likely to be successful. About as many felt it was not likely to be successful, 39%, as those who felt unable to offer an opinion (38%). Commonly, the numbers of interviewees who responded that they either would or wouldn't be in favor of conducting a campaign run nearly parallel to the feasibility question, meaning that virtually everyone who thinks it feasible is in favor of a campaign and those who don't think the amount feasible are not in favor of the campaign. Thus, in our case here the disparity indicates a strong desire to undergo the project, but there is much trepidation about the external economic factors that might adversely impact the success. The number of people who felt that the parish was just not capable of raising this amount of capital funding under normal circumstances was certainly smaller, less than 15% of those interviewed.
7. A solid 33% of those interviewed expressed a willingness to serve as campaign volunteers.

Thirty (30) people not on the interview list were suggested as good volunteers or potential leaders in the campaign by interviewees. In fact the lists for both were almost identical. Combined with 24 self-referrals as volunteers, this gives the parish a total of 54 individuals who might comprise a strong volunteer corps for any capital campaign. It must be cautioned that the 30 mentioned as volunteers have not been vetted, so they would have to confirm their willingness if the campaign moved forward.
8. Eight percent of those who did express support for the church project and also believed the \$2 million goal was feasible, did question the accurateness of the \$2 million cost given as sufficient to build the new facilities. While such a determination is beyond the purview of this study and our expertise, we believe the question has legitimacy and should be more fully explored.
9. There was considerable opposition to the merging of church and parish offices. Most of the concern was the disparity in the type of visitors each office, school and church, received on an average day. Another issue was security; given the proposed project, anyone entering the lobby and taking the elevator to the second floor en route to the church would have unfettered access to the classrooms on that floor.

10. Only six names were offered in answer to the question "Do you know anyone who might be able to make a gift of 10-15% of the goal?" Some other names suggested were in fact interviewees, none of whom were proposing a gift anywhere near the lead gift level.
 11. While the parish has experienced growth in recent years, the number of regular offertory supporters has not increased at the same rate. This is a common affliction of parishes across the country, since much of the growth tends to come from younger demographics that proffer church support at lower levels than the older parishioners generally. This is an important consideration since there is a tendency to project income based purely on demographic growth.
 12. There was a feeling among a noteworthy number of interviewees that the parish should be getting more classrooms for a proposed \$2,000,000 investment. Because the proposal includes retiring the modular classrooms from everyday use, the net gain in classrooms is only one.
 13. Fifty (50) of the respondents said they would personally support a campaign with a pledge and provided a likely gift amount or a range. This represents an impressive 69% of all interviewees. There were six definite refusals.
 14. The interviewees who responded as willing to support the campaign would provide pledges in a range from \$453,000 to \$558,500. This represents from 18% to nearly 26% of the proposed goal of \$2 million.
 15. A not insignificant number of people suggested retiring the debt before beginning any construction. These 14% of those interviewed felt the parish was taking on too much financial burden by running a campaign concurrent with debt repayment through the offertory.
 16. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati now requires that 100% of the funds necessary to support new construction be in hand before ground is broken. This means that absent any extraordinary gifts that would change the dynamics of the campaign, it would be five years before any construction could begin.
 17. The parish is in a community that features several other Catholic churches in close proximity. This presents both opportunity and challenge as people can easily move from one to another; we are in an era of "church-shopping" so remaining competitive requires keeping the facilities reasonably comparable to the adjoining parishes.
 18. Since the parish conducted a previous campaign to build the gymnasium, the parishioners are familiar with campaign solicitations and the distinction between capital giving and offertory, making any subsequent campaign a bit easier.
-