

CHURCH OF ST THOMAS MORE
Interior Design Team
Minutes of the Meeting of July 8, 2008

Present: Father Mike Ratajczak, Charlene Buhlert, Diana Diaz, Mario Diaz, Lorraine Doering, Ann Ericksson, Pat Goscienski, Phil Goscienski, Douglas Lynn, Sondra Parks, Kathy Quinn

Excused: Chris Smith

Resigned: Mary Castle

The meeting opened at 7:05 PM with the Prayer of Dedication.

Phil Goscienski asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the previous meeting. Since there were no corrections, they were accepted as submitted.

There was a discussion of Mary Castle's resignation from the committee. Pat Goscienski read Mary's letter of resignation aloud. There were expressions of disappointment and the hope that Mary would reconsider her decision. Douglas Lynn said it was unfortunate that both Mary Castle and Bob Wong had resigned from the committee; their knowledge and expertise are valuable. Douglas Lynn suggested we send a letter to Mary, asking her to reconsider and return to the committee. We may invite both Bob Wong and Mary Castle to attend meetings in the future.

Charlene Buhlert asked us to consider the continuity of our discussions and the possible ramifications if we invite former members of the team to attend at certain intervals after decisions have been made. There may be some difficulties. We considered inviting all former members of the team to attend Robert Habiger's presentations. There was no consensus as to this idea. Father Mike suggested we respect the decisions of former members and consider inviting them to some future meetings.

We discussed our June 28th meeting with Robert Habiger. All members expressed satisfaction and it was generally agreed that we have chosen the right consultant. Charlene Buhlert said it was a good day. There was a good exchange of information. Ann Ericksson said he was like a good teacher, easy to work with.

Douglas Lynn said our day with Robert Habiger was a fabulous day; he drew us all out; we all had a chance to speak out. He heard us. He was looking for clarification. Kathy Quinn said we have chosen the right person. Father Mike agreed with all of us. He said he is still working on finalizing Robert's contract and it should be signed in the next few days. Father Mike has arranged a meeting with Robert and Renzo in August. It will be the first time that Robert and Renzo are meeting together.

Sondra Parks said that Robert Habiger is skilled in working with people and getting us to look at what we need to see and getting us to where we need to be. Mario Diaz said he

asked us many questions and we learned from him. Diana Diaz said we hired the right person; he is easy to work with. Pat Goscienski agreed with all that was said.

In other comments, Douglas Lynn noted that Robert Habiger fully participated at 5:00 Mass that day. He watched the communion procession very carefully. Phil Goscienski said Mr. Habiger had structured flexibility; he did an excellent job at the session. Pat Goscienski noted that he respectfully finished the session promptly at 4:00 PM as he knew we had commitments.

Douglas Lynn noted that in our session we did not discuss a timeline for our tasks. He wanted to know what the next steps are. Pat Goscienski noted that this timeline was spelled out for us in the interview with Robert Habiger.

When questioned about when we might actually begin to break ground, Father Mike noted that we do not have a “timeline”, we have a “fundline”. Father Mike wanted to know when we would be meeting with Robert again; what is the next step?

We discussed the five questions left unanswered at the four hour session we had with Robert Habiger. He has asked us to send him our replies. Following is a summary of our answers to his questions:

The first question was: *What is the meaning to be conveyed when a visitor walks into the church building?*

Chris Smith was unable to attend the meeting. She submitted written answers to all the questions and they were read aloud. Her reply and the replies of others can be summarized with the words: sacred ground, permanence, tradition, home, house of God, safe, peaceful and dedicated to the worship of God.

The second question was: *How do you define excellence in art?*

A summary includes such words as: spirituality and familiarity, elegant, enduring, timeless, emotional, simplicity, a complement to the building. Charlene Buhlert mentioned that we must avoid creating a “Church of the Afterthought” – artwork in a building that could have been made better with good planning.

The third question was: *Prioritize the art elements, both devotional and liturgical.*

All agreed that the altar and crucifix were the most important elements. We discussed the difference between liturgical art and devotional art. Liturgical art is central; devotional art is on the periphery. Liturgical art is mandated; we have little choice, it must be included. Devotional art serves the center; it should not be too vibrant. In this discussion, Douglas Lynn said we need more help from Robert Habiger.

Sondra Parks was of the opinion that we may have to wait for adequate funding before we have the central crucifix we want. It is best not to settle for what is less than what we want;

rather we need to wait for the money to pay for the most worthy artwork. In this discussion we learned that the crucifix is not on the memorial list but will be placed on the list in the very near future.

In further discussion we spoke of vestments as artwork. We also talked about the outstanding tapestries at Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral in Los Angeles. Are they devotional or liturgical? We believe them to be devotional.

The fourth question was: *What would be the reason for not using a local artist?*

We are in the process of developing a parish policy that addresses the acceptance of artwork from parishioners and the possibility of hiring parishioners to create artwork for the present building and the new church.

We are unclear as to the definition of "local artist". Did Robert Habiger mean an artist who works within 100 miles of our parish? Or did he mean our present parishioners? What does the term "local" mean? Pews from Tijuana, Mexico were mentioned as were artists as far away as New Mexico and Arizona.

We agree that we should not limit our selection of artists to those who are local. Douglas Lynn explained about "blind auditions" that are common in the music world. All in all it is too soon to be concerned.

There was consensus though that the main consideration would be the excellence of the artwork, not the locality/geography of the artist.

The fifth and last question was: *What is the story of St. Thomas More Church?*

A summary of the words we used to describe the church includes music as the great unifier, community, welcoming, care for one another, a Vatican II sensibility, hospitality, different kinds of spirituality. We talked about anecdotes from the past when Mass was said in parishioners' homes; and when we gathered at the mortuary for Mass. We recalled the many scrapbooks full of photos and memories that are in our library.

Our written answers to the questions will be submitted to Robert Habiger by Phil and Pat Goscienski. The next meeting of the Interior Design Team will be held on August 12.

The meeting ended with prayer led by Father Mike at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Quinn