

St. Thomas Aquinas Pastoral Stewardship Council Report

Facilities Ministry

Mission Statement:

To coordinate and integrate three existing facilities related sub-committees' efforts: (Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee; Facilities Use Committee; and Safety Committee). The Facilities committee serves as a communication link to the pastor, the Parish Stewardship Council, and other parish strategic planning committees on all issues dealing with or affecting the parish's real property.

REPORT DATED 6-10-2009

Many things have been addressed since the last report to this body. First of all, there has been a change in personnel. Mr. Bud McKenna was termed out on the PSC Council and has replaced Mr. James McLaughlin at Chair of the Building and Equipment Maintenance Ministry. Mr. McLaughlin, the previous chair, was recommended to be Bud's replacement on the PSC. This was accomplished at the May PSC meeting.

The Building and Equipment Maintenance Ministry enrolled a new member last month. He is a long time parish member by the name of Mr. Daniel Keehn. He is a welcome addition to our group.

New Activities:

1. Mr. Chuck Tully and I are 2 of 3 representatives on a St. Elizabeth Seton School committee evaluating an addition to the school. A donor has provided funds for the building of a Pre-Kinder-garden facility at the school. An architect has been hired to provide a cost analysis for the project. Funds for this first step are being provided by the donation funds, and not taken from either the school or parish budget. This will be a continuing project until a decision has been reached regarding feasibility. Although this is reported on in this presentation, it is not yet a project under review by the Facilities Committee or Finance Committee.
2. This committee met at the Thomas House basement for the regular May meeting. We met with the representatives of the St. Thomas Aquinas Church Site Interior Committee working on preparing a list of things needed for the upgrade of the church interior. The group was well prepared and organized and presented a list of things the group would like to do. This list was discussed and will be part of a continuing evaluation by the Maintenance Committee.

One thing stood out and needed immediate consideration by this Maintenance committee and that was the repainting of the interior of the church. This issue has been on the committee do list for some time and was anticipated to begin this summer. The STA committee wished us to delay this action plan until they complete their study of the total needs of the site. The committee agreed to hold off this repainting and pew restoration project pending further input from this study group.

This site study group agreed to return to the next Maintenance committee meeting and update us on the current status.

3. Ace Fire Equipment Company, our contractor for Fire Extinguishers at parish sites, provided instruction in the use of the extinguishers for 13 parish staff members. This type of activity complies with the diocese safety plans.
4. A basic disaster first aid class was presented by the City of Palo Alto Fire Department to key parish members. Again, this complies with the diocese plan for parishes.
5. Mr. Chuck Tully, Godofredo and Santiago are enrolled in the diocese planned CalOsha training program.
6. Mr. James Abler, a member of this committee, has begun the project to develop a site map for each parish building that will show pictorially where exits are, the location of first aid kits, fire alarm, fire extinguishers, fire sprinkler controls, telephones and the location of the controls for lights, water, and electricity. Each map will be posted at the each specific site in multiple locations, so that parishioners can see where these special items are located during an emergency or disaster.
7. This council had suggested that the architect for the Thomas House be instructed to consider "Green" wherever possible when preparing the plans for the remodeling of the building. This has been done.
8. The bells are again ringing at St. Thomas Aquinas Church site. The access to the pull rope has been upgraded to provide a margin of safety to the pullers, and the bell has been tolling. A request from the site committee to investigate the possibility of automating this activity rather than pulling the bell rope. This request will be reviewed by the committee for feasibility.
9. The Thomas House Project is underway with the Architect and regular meetings with Mr. Chuck Tully the committee/parish representative continues Thus far. the projected completion date of January 2010 seems achievable.

Previous Action Items:

1. The Science Lab at St. Elizabeth Seton School obtained their final occupancy permit from the City of Palo Alto and is now in full operation. The students, parents and teachers are very enthusiastic.
2. The City of Palo Alto planted 3 European Hackberry trees for the STA sidewalk-parking strip. Also, they planted 3 Autumn Purple Ash trees at the SAG site. These trees were assigned by the city and meet the citywide plan.
3. Repairs to the walkways at the SAG/SESS and ISP school asphalt were started and will be completed by June 15¹.
4. Bids to repair the defective fire alarm system at STA Church have been received and plans are now underway for completion.
5. Tool kits, including basic hand tools, have been provided each worship site. Small repairs that can be accomplished immediately on site can be done without requested a work order from the Pastoral Center. Hopefully, the site committee will provide a safe place for the tools and make the readily available when needed.
6. The carpet on the first floor of the Pastoral Center, has been replaced thus eliminating "trips and falls" from torn and taped portions.
7. The cleaning and removal of old and no longer usable "junk" from our building sites is underway. The retention of this material take up considerable space and contribute to deterioration of the sites. Site committees have been helping with this project and will inventory and mark items that are to be saved. The parish will have "junk" removed in the near future.
8. A diocese contractor inspected the chimney at St. Elizabeth Seton School, once used for an incinerator, which is no longer in use, for seismic safety. Removal to the roofline is more economical than strapping for stability and therefore action will be taken to remove the chimney to the roofline.
9. The summer projects of painting the wood window trip at the old St. Albert convent and Rectory, repairing and resealing the asphalt at the St. Albert site including the back of the school will be done when school is out for the summer. However, the third project of interior painting of the STA church is on hold for now.

CONCLUSION:

The committees that I am representing acknowledge that there are more desires than we have assets to achieve. However, working with other parish ministries and with the specialized diocese agencies, we can prioritize needs and move toward having a safe environment for our rental tenants to live in, and our employees to work in and for parishioners to worship in. We also acknowledge that more work needs to be done and specialized help in developing plans to accomplish these goals is needed. One in particular continues to stand out.

We need people who have specialized education and/or training to volunteer on the Safety Committee. We need to flesh out procedures for our parish that will serve as reminders to all of us on how to protect ourselves from accidents, area disasters and from special hazards like the flue epidemic. The diocese has provided an outline, but we need to develop plans and procedures that fit our parish needs.

Presented by James McLaughlin
Chair STA Facilities Ministry.