

MINUTES OF SPECIAL PARISH ASSEMBLY, JUNE 7, 1991

The meeting was called to order at 7:55 by the Chairman, Joanne Torigian. Der Arnak led us in prayer. The meeting was assembled as directed by the Parish Assembly in February, to establish a charter and budget for the building maintenance and capital improvements programs, and to update the parish on the Priest Search Committee's progress.

Joanne introduced the members of the Architectural and Facilities Management Committee: Moses Kazanjian, Richard Keurajian, Antranig Ouzoonian, Puzant Torigian, and Albert Victoria. She explained that in December of 1990, the Building Committee disbanded. In February of 1991, this new Committee was formed by the Parish Assembly. She welcomed Moses Kazanjian, chairman of the Committee, to the podium to present the charter that they propose. (The charter is attached.) He read the charter and opened the floor to questions.

George Mekenian asked how members will be chosen. Moses said he isn't sure. Either current members choose their replacements, or the Assembly chooses. Leon Nigohosian asked if this body has the authority to award contracts without any other approvals, without any caps. Moses said yes. Leon then asked what the intention of item F2 of the charter. Moses said that after the Committee assessed long range plans, they established this as a way to ensure that they will always have the funds for maintenance. Leon noted that with this provision, this Committee is autonomous and not allowing the Assembly to adjust its budget in a reduction or less than a 10% increase. George Mekenian asked how the Committee will get the money it needs, and what the procedures will be for spending it. Moses responded that the maintenance funds will come from the Parish Council. The capital for improvements and enhancements will be allocated annually. Leon Nigohosian asked what kind of budget the Committee is anticipating. Moses said that because it has been 4 years since any major work has been done, that the Committee will need a large amount initially, perhaps \$50,000. And they have anticipated that they will need to establish \$20,000 as an annual maintenance budget. Andy Ouzoonian asked Moses to clarify the term maintenance. Moses said maintenance involves issues and systems which require annual and continuing attention, including: air conditioning/heating/ventilation, plumbing, electrical, roof, paint, landscaping. Leon asked if there is any maintenance or repair that this Committee will not be responsible for. Moses said that the Committee will give the Parish Council a list of schedules and assignments of all that needs to be done and the Parish Council will be responsible for carrying out these plans with the annual allocation.

George notes that the proposed charter has two aspects: aesthetic and managing funds. Andy points out that a similar proposal was made in 1977. He said that we could do better in taking care of this complex. and he encourages this Assembly to support this charter and pass it. Michel Izmirly asked who and how will funds

be obtained. Moses said that we, all of the parish, will have to put our heads together and raise the funds. Ed Parseghian asked why the Parish Council treasury can't pay for the complex's needs. Moses responded that if the money stays in the treasury it will be used for other things. Having the funds allocated to this specific Committee's treasury guarantees that it will be available for these needs. Ed said he feels that the money should be controlled by the Parish Council. Charles Doudoukjian suggests that we ask the parish to start a fund for this purpose. Puzant Torigian recommends that expenditures over a certain amount must be approved by 80% of the members of the Committee. Peter Ajemian would like to see all general maintenance and capital spending in the hands of this committee. He feels that this type of Committee is more permanent than a Parish Council, which has natural turnover every year. Yeretzgin Violet would like to see large expenditures approved by the Parish Assembly. John Armen suggests that large improvements be required to have 3 bids submitted. Paul Kahaumjian feels that this Committee should bring all its plans to the Parish Council to approve. Susan Stoneson suggests we start endowments for these funds.

Moses points out that the parsonage needs work now, possibly a \$50-75,000 expense. Joanne notes that this Assembly can authorize the Committee to plan for this work and allocate these funds now. Vay Najarian congratulated the Committee on the work they have done to date, and suggests that the members stay on until February. He then made a motion to accept this report (the charter) as presented. Shakae Shahinian seconded the motion. George Mekenian made a motion to amend section C of the charter, and add that members of this Committee be appointed by the Parish Council. Alyce Parseghian seconded the motion to amend. Then Alyce Parseghian made a motion to amend the charter further, to read that for an expense of \$10,000 or more, there should be required approval from all members of the Committee as well as the Parish Council. (There was no second.) Ron Kenderian suggests we review and accept each section of the charter at a time. Sirvart Bedrosian called the question to stop discussion. The vote was 53 to stop discussion, 28 to continue discussion.

The vote on the amendment to have the Parish Council appoint members was clearly in favor. The amendment carries.

The vote on the motion to accept this report (charter) as presented was: 44 For, 36 Against. The motion carries.

Puzant Torigian made a motion to revise this charter at the next Assembly. Michel Izmirly seconded the motion. No vote was taken. Puzant then made a motion that the Parish Council allocate the \$15,000 now budgeted to 1991 Church Building Expenses Reserves to this Committee now. The Chairman objected. Discussion on this topic ended.

Joanne Torigian introduced the members of the Priest Search Committee as: Dr. Harout Mekhjian, chairman, herself, George Mekenian, Paul Kahaumjian, and Ara Martaian. Joanne reported that the Committee has made contact with 15 priests and personally interviewed 5. The committee found Fr. Garabed Kochakian to be their prime choice, but because of educational commitments, he is unavailable to us until June of 1992. Another candidate the committee was interested in, Fr. Nerses Jebejian, presides over a vast area of Texas. The Primate would hesitate on bringing either of these priests to St. Thomas. Recently, the Committee met with Fr. Papken Anoushian. He will be here to celebrate Badarak on June 16. The Primate recommended him from the beginning of the search, and the Committee took it under advisement. Now the Primate has said that he would like Fr. Papken to become the Pastor of St. Thomas. The Primate also told the Committee that he would remove Fr. Papken if it didn't work out.

Alyce Parseghian asked who the other candidates were that the Committee met with, other than Fr. Garabed and Fr. Nerses. Joanne responded that they had pursued Fr. Untzag from Trumbull, Ct. His wife did not want to move here for personal reasons. Also, the Committee spoke with Fr. Yepram from Hartford, Ct. and he and his wife also had personal reasons for not wanting to come to New Jersey. John Armen stated that he feels Fr. Papken is qualified and suitable for our parish. He'd like to know what Der Arnak thinks. Der Arnak did not want to comment. Joanne said that she has asked Der Arnak what he thinks, and he told her he is supportive. Ed Parseghian asked if the Parish Council wasn't unanimously supportive, what were their objections. Puzant Torigian said that we shouldn't listen to heresay. Dr. Mekhjian said that no one had specific objections, but some members of the Committee and the Parish Council had reservations. Fr. Papken is also a lawyer, but primarily he is a priest. He'd like to take one to two days per week to practice law. Dr. Mekhjian also said that we won't get to know him by having a few conversations. He is the Primate's choice for us. George Mekenian said that Fr. Papken asked to be elected to St. Thomas for 5 years, but that will not be done.

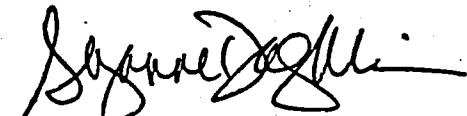
Adrienne Tenbekjian asked if because he'll be practicing law, will he require a smaller salary. Dr. Mekhjian responded no, that he is not practicing law to make more money. Adrienne also recalled that it had been discussed at previous meetings that if we were to hire a celibate priest, that we would consider splitting the parsonage and renting half. Joanne said that Fr. Papken would want to live in the parsonage alone. Dikris Malool asked for a review of Fr. Papken's background, and Joanne answered with details. Dick Turnamian strongly suggests that we take the Primate's recommendation. Violet Ouzoonian said that she attended a baptism Fr. Papken presided over, and she liked him. Ed Parseghian asked if we will discuss salary now, and Joanne said no, it is too soon.

Shakae Shahinian asked about Fr. Papken's attitude toward youth and how he will deal with the young parishioners. Joanne responded that young people relate to young priests. John Vanishkian asked if the Committee spoke with any priests from the Western Diocese, and Joanne said yes. He also said we shouldn't be stampeded; that we should get the right person and be lucky enough to have someone else for 28 years. Joanne said that she believes the majority of people don't want someone for 28 years. Peter Kalemkerian wondered if the Committee asked Fr. Garabed to consider transferring his schooling to this area. George Mekenian responded yes, but that he didn't want to lose credits or prolong his degree any further. Michel Izmirly thanked the Committee for the good job they have done. Ed Parseghian asked if the Committee had taken a vote on Fr. Papken yet. Dr. Mekhjian said yes, and the vote was 4 for out of 5.

Joanne said that the Parish Council still has to work out the financial package and all other details.

George Mekenian made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Michel Izmirly seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40.

Respectfully submitted,



Suzanne Daghlian  
Secretary