

PARISH COUNCIL

*Armenian Church of Houston*

1111 BERING DRIVE  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77027

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MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF NOVEMBER 28 th, 1966

This meeting was held under the presidency of His Grace the Rt. Rev. Bishop Torcom Manoogian. The members present made known to his Grace their devotion and thankfulness for all his efforts and guidance.

Were also present at this meeting the Rev. Father Levon Arakelian, the Chairman of the Parish Council Mr. Stephen Saxonian and the following other members of the Parish Council, Anton Hagopian, H.C. Bardoony, Johannes Hekimian, Mike Sanjakian, Zaven Kirksharian. Members of the Ladies Auxillary Mrs. Rose Sanjakian, Anna Harrison, Sona Kirksharian, Vanoush Ohanian. Were also present Mr. K.S. Gregory, treasurer of the Bldg Fund and also as guests Messrs. Leon Harrison and Jani Ohanian.

The meeting started with a prayer by Serpazan Hayr. The following report concerning our funds raised so far on the occasion of the Church consecration was presented. Although the amounts are not to be considered final, we have collected \$ 38.30 for candles, \$ 65.57 collections plates, \$ 459.00 for dinner tickets, \$ 80.00 for Requiem services and Baptism donations, ~~totalling~~ \$ 8,050.00 was the amount raised for pledges and donations at the conclusion of the buffet dinner. Thus we have been able to raise an approximate total amount of \$ 8,687.87 through generous contributions and specially due to the efforts of Rev. Father Levon Arakelian and above all the moral support and guidance of His Grace. We are all very thankful.

The Primate stressed the fact that this was our last meeting and he had some final instructions that should be carried out accordingly.

Houston is part of the Diocese of the North America, this comprises the area ~~in~~ and outside Houston and Texas and an organized body of Armenians should operate accordingly. As a Parish it should be governed by the rules of the Armenian Church. Therefore, we should realize that we are not isolated but forming a part of a large body, one of the 43 parishes of the Church.

The duties of the Chairman of the Parish are to conduct the meeting. A prayer should be recited at the beginning and the end of each meeting. Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting, questions asked about any corrections, any omission or additions and then minutes declared approved. Items should be written on the agenda of the meeting and discussed. Everything should be approved by motion and this should be recorded ad verbatim, written down word by word, and then seconded. Treasurers should have their book ready and they should read their report at each meeting.

*Z. Kirksharian*

( to be continued )

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11

At this time, the Primate explained that due to the limited number of Armenian families in our Parish in comparison with larger groups of the Diocese, he would appoint again the officers of the Parish Council for a new term of one year.

These are  
Stephen Saxonian, Chairman  
H.C. Baroony, Vice Chairman  
Zaven Kirksharian, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Secretary  
Anton Hagopian, Treasurer  
Yohannes Hekimian, Chairman Stewardship

committee. He is authorized to appoint his own helpers. His task is to raise funds by donations either on monthly or annual basis. These contributions should be known as donations and not pledges. He should always present his report to the Parish Council for approval.

Mike Sanjakian

Responsible for social or religious activities. He should also get approval from the Parish Council.

Jani Ohanian

Responsible for cultural events. To get approval from the Parish Council.

The following are the most important activities during the year.

- 1 - Armenian Christmas gathering = social & cultural event.
  - 2 - in February, Vartanantz Day. This occasion should be used to bring Armenians together.
  - 3 - Easter
  - 4 - April 24, the Day of the Martyrs.
  - 5 - Picnic
  - 6 - Bazaar
  - 7 - Raffle
- in these three last events and in general, we should not overburden a few. We should get as many people as possible to help us.
- 8 - Cultural program in October
  - 9 - Anniversary of the Parish in November.
  - 10 - New Year Family Dinner.

At least the above activities should be on the program of the Parish Council. We could have more if possible. Also, an event to remember, and which should be appropriate due to the name of our Church, would be Saint George day.

Due to the fact that we do not have a permanent pastor and also because Church services could probably be held only twice or three times a year for the beginning, we should devote ourselves to these other activities. The Chapel part will be used only on those few occasions but the rest of the facilities should be used always for other events and these for the benefit of all.

*Z. Kirksharian*

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111

The right name to be used for our organization is accepted as Saint George Armenian Church & Center. An appropriate sign should be used and erected under this name in Armenian and English languages.

All the contributions should be designated as donations and not as rent or pledges. Various church services are known to be free technically but a minimum should be expected as follows:

Baptism \$ 15.00 Wedding \$ 25.00 Funeral \$ 25.00 Use of Hall \$ 50.00

In case of an emergency we could approach the clergy of Orthodox Eastern Churches, Father Skaaf of the Syrian Orthodox Church, for example, would be a good choice. In an emergency the approval of the Primate should be obtained beforehand. The Church services to be performed always in our Chapel.

In the future the Parish is to take care of the expenses of the visiting priests. The Church building could be used and the existing facilities are sufficient to accommodate for the lodging of a priest if some other items were added.

All Church groups can use the facilities for their special events and the funds raised on such occasions belong ultimately to the Parish Council. On these occasions the Center that is all other parts of the property except the Chapel are to be used. Under no circumstances, this decision should be altered. Due respect is expected to be shown for the Chapel such as the prohibition of smoking etc. etc. Other outside groups can also use the center by giving donations. For example, the Houston Armenian Women's Association, are allowed to use by a symbolic donation for their monthly meetings, or without dues, if the Parish Council approves. This only with the purpose of a promotion in mind for future participation in more substantial donations and also because of the fact that this is an Armenian organization.

The existing groups of the Church are :

The Ladies Auxiliary

Chairman = Rose Sanjakian  
Secretary = Sona Kirksharian  
Treasurer = Emma Hagopian  
Members = Vanous Ohanian, Aghavni Hogasabian, Anna Harrison  
Marie Tasian.

The Bldg Committee

Chairman = H.C. Baroony  
Vice Chairman = Rose Sanjakian  
Treasurer = K.S. Gregory  
Secretary = Anahid Harrison  
Members = Emma Hagopian, G. Bedevian, Edw. Hovas.

*Z. Kirksharian*  
The renovation of the Center, specially part of the Back Building, was not approved although discussed by the Bldg Committee.  
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1v

As regard the expenses incurred so far, the Bldg committee had not up to date figures and could not present actual figures as to general cost. This situation should be remedied the soonest possible and the cost submitted to the Parish Council.

On this occasion the question of the earlier commitments made by some members of the Bldg committee was discussed. These members had said that they were going to take care of all expenses due to the fact that our treasury was not in a position to make any payment. Said members having said that there had been a misunderstanding, it was agreed to overlook this question.

The Primate emphasized once more that we should all forget our past differences and work together and coordinate all our efforts for the success of our projects.

Mr. Y. Hekimian is to check on the tractor which needs slight repairs. He will take same to his shop for a tune up. He is undertaking the task of the cutting of the grass of the property. The publicity in favor of our parish is an important factor. We should try to benefit from this and since Mrs. Reynaud volunteered and seems to be an able person to act as parish reporter we could assign her to this position.

A monthly letter of the parish should be published describing parish activities and goals. The editor for our monthly paper which could be called "St. George Armenian Church & Center Newsletter" will be Mr. Leon Harrison who is nominated to that position and who will have as secretary Mrs. Anahid Harrison. The Calendar of the Church activities will be under the supervision of Zaven Kirksharian. All Church and Center events should be recorded in order to avoid confusion on the dates.

A bulletin board will be also ordered. This will help to inform members of the Parish on important events.

The keys of the property ~~will be~~ are with Messrs. Saxenian, Kirksharian and Sanjakian.

Any future alteration or renovation of the Bldg should be done after obtaining estimates that will have to be approved by the Parish Council. We could study a project for the accomodation of 200 people in the back building, or a bridge uniting the two buildings.

As regard the funds raised, we should pay as much as we can for the amortization of the mortgage. An amount of \$ 7,000.00 should be used for that purpose. The rest partially between our parish fund which is being used for the payment of the monthly installments of the loan and also a new account which should be opened, savings account. This last account could get an initial investment of \$ 1,000.00. All payments of the Parish Council should be made by checks. We should also contribute monthly in the amount of \$ 15.00 to the New York Diocese.

*Z. Kirksharian*

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V

It is hoped that we could make a suitable arrangement with the amortization plan of the mortgage, reducing thus our monthly installments substantially. The archives of the New York Diocese have the records of the original transaction and we could get the necessary information from there, also, about the balance of the mortgage.

Mr. Leon Harrison and Dr. Anna Harrison are to take care of Church School on Sundays. At this occasion a breakfast on Sunday mornings could be served, the expenses to be taken care of by the Parish Council.

The Primate expressed the wish that we nominate Mr. Hagop Bedevian as our Deacon. The position of the Choirmaster should be given to somebody else. Another person should be approached for the position of Choirmaster. Mr. K.S. Gregory discussed his possibilities to that effect. It was suggested that he could at least organize and supervise a choir for popular and folkloric armenian music. In the future nevertheless, for the time being, we could go on as before, trusting that Mr. Bedevian will be able to teach and supervise the choir trying to improve its quality.

In order to acquaint ourselves with the Armenian popular music, the book to that effect published by His Grace the Primate will be most welcome. Some copies would be useful in as much as the correct musical sounds should be performed by the reading of the musical notes.

The meeting ended with a prayer by Serpazan Hayr who expressed also the wish that everybody concerned will forget about past differences and work together as one body for the success of our project.

*Z. Kirsharian*