

St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Church Haverhill, MA

Special Parish Assembly

A special Parish Assembly was held on Wednesday, February 21, 1996. This meeting was called due to a motion in the January 28, 1996 Parish Assembly.

MOTION by Joseph Tavitian that a special committee be established at a later date by the Parish Council to receive other estimates and report back to a Special Assembly for voting.
AMENDMENT by Marsha Kazarosian to put a time limit of three weeks on the original motion.

The meeting began at 7:31 p.m. with a prayer by Rev. Fr. Sahag Kaishian.

Stephen Arthur was chairman of the Assembly with Cynthia Kasparian as secretary. Richard Serabian stated that there were 37 dues paying members present.

1996 BUDGET

There was some discussion on whether the revised 1996 budget should be presented to the Assembly. On January 28, 1996, the assembly had voted to permit the Parish Council to revise the financial report as they saw fit, and accepted it, so there was no need to present it.

STEEPLE

Joseph Tavitian began the discussion on the two estimates for the repair to the church steeple. Conner Power of Structural Technologies, Inc. had provided the church with an estimate of over \$200,000 for the overall repair and completion of the steeple. George Burgess, steeplejack, also provided an estimate of \$27,500 for the first phase of the restoration process.

Martin Aaronian, Joseph Tavitian, Harry Kasparian, and Lance Kasparian met to discuss the report provided by George Burgess. Joe stated that, according to Lance, the approach presented by Conner Power was his recommendation to proceed.

The financial situation of the church was then addressed. Several members stated that this is a small parish and we cannot raise this substantial amount of money by ourselves. We need to go to the public and some major charities for help. Der Sahag stated that it is possible to hire a professional fundraiser.

Harry Kasparian stated that it is important to structurally detail exactly what needs to be done. On the question of moving the bell itself, the concern was that since it was about 6,000 lbs., it may be holding the structure in place.

Paul Kazarosian stated his concern that Conner Power had looked at the steeple three years ago. Harry Kasparian told him that Lance had met with Conner Power in the last month and reviewed his original report, item by item. Paul then asked if the committee had received any other estimates. The committee did not think that it was necessary, since Conner Power respects George Burgess' work even though he didn't agree with the approach, and felt the estimates already received were enough.

A discussion ensued on the exact work that needed to be done. Cy Minasian stated that the building must be waterproofed before any repairs can be done. Harry Kasparian detailed the steps to be taken:

1. Good analysis of how bad the structure is
2. Make the structure secure
3. Perform outside repairs

Edward Der Bogosian gave his report on George Burgess' estimate of repairs. He pointed out that this was only the first stage, and that, as we raised money, we would complete each stage. He also said that there should be pictures of the damage to show the members so that they will understand the extent of the damage. The assembly then discussed the particulars of the steeple. A suggestion was made to install a barometer up in the steeple to see what happens when the wind blows. Also, it was suggested to close up the tower, but the concern was that the steeple would begin to sway. Several members agreed that we must complete the repairs to the steeple in the most reasonable way possible.

Paul Tavitian felt that it was unrealistic for this parish to raise the substantial amount of money needed according to Conner Power's estimate, and that both men should come to a meeting and explain the whole process from both points of view.

Paul Kazarosian stated that George Burgess had reviewed the steeple area several times and was very capable of doing the work. He also agreed with Paul Tavitian that both men should come to a meeting and explain the process.

Liz Arakelian requested a review of both estimates, for which Steve Arthur complied.

Martin Aaronian then gave a quick review as he didn't feel that the assembly understood the issues completely. Marty stated that the Conner Power estimate was for \$210,000 to \$283,000 for work from the steeple to the cellar. He then stated that the original committee did a fine job in getting another estimate from George Burgess and read his report. Marty also stated that Mr. Burgess' report does not itemize the repairs. Zarty Chilingirian stated that George Burgess is well respected man in his field and that his report should be taken into serious consideration.

Robert Serabian suggested that the parish install a fiberglass dome.

Joan Takesian gave a few ideas from other churches about raising money, i.e. setting up a money thermometer.

Harry Kasparian stated that it was important that, for our own safety, we go into the structure and analyze the work to be done and then stabilize it as much as possible.

Steve Arthur then reminded the assembly that Judge Vincent Gurahian had stated that this repair falls under the scope of the Parish Council. Der Sahag then stated that it is an item on the agenda, so it must be voted upon. A discussion then ensued on whether the Parish Council was responsible for making the final decision on repairs.

Steve Arthur then said that the Committee needs more information and statistics, i.e. a breakdown of expenses, etc., and possibly, meeting with both Conner Power and George Burgess. Harry Kasparian pointed out some of the steps:

1. Get a building permit
2. Get the architectural/structural drawings approved by the Building Committee
3. Complete the outerpart of the structural work later on.

Zarty Chilingirian stated that when you get a building permit, you also will need to provide handicapped access.

MOTION by Paul Tavitian to permit the Parish Council to appoint a fundraising committee to raise money for the steeple project.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

Albert Movsesian stated that this project is very large and we should enlist the assistance of the Diocese as the holders of the deed and tell them that there is structural damage. Then the Parish should vote on the repairs.

Harry Kasparian stated that the Steeple Committee will work with the Fundraising Committee.

Paul Tavitian then stated that the Parish Council can wait until all the Parish Council members were back from vacation before the appointment of the Fundraising Committee.

Steve Arthur then read the revised Parish Council report.

Paul Tavitian then asked about the fact-finding committee. Edgar Movsesian provided some detail stating that the committee would survey the community to find the needs, and not just on the steeple project or the merger.

Another discussion about the rift in the parish then ensued. It was pointed out by several members that it is all one community and we need to work together.

MOTION by Alice Basmajian to accept the revised Parish Council report.

The motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

MOTION by Paul Tavitian to adjourn the meeting.

Motion was seconded. MOTION PASSED.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m. with a closing prayer by Rev. Fr. Sahag Kaishian.


Respectfully Submitted,



Rev. Fr. Sahag Kaishian
Special Parish Assembly President



Stephen Arthur
Special Parish Assembly Chairman



Cynthia Kasparian
Special Parish Assembly
Secretary