

St. James Armenian Church of Westchester

Minutes of Annual Parish Assembly, 1993.

Date and Place:

The Twentieth Annual Parish Assembly of St. James Armenian Church of Westchester was held on February 7, 1993, in the Church building. The formal notice of the Assembly, the Agenda and the Nominating Committee's list of candidates for office had been mailed to all members prior to the meeting.

Call to Order and Opening Prayer:

The meeting was called to order at 12.15 PM. The Opening Prayer was offered by Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian who presided as President of the Parish Council. Mrs. Elma Davidian, on the basis of a count of registered members, stated that a quorum was present.

Report of Nominating Committee:

The report of the Nominating Committee was presented by Ara Ishkanian, its Chairman. The list included names proposed for Parish Council, and the Nominating and Auditing Committees. A call was made for further nominations from the floor. No nominations were forthcoming, and the list of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee was adopted.

Election of Officers of the Assembly:

Judge Vincent Gurahian was elected Chairman of the Assembly, and Vilma Nakashian Recording Secretary.

Judge Gurahian asked each of the nominees for office during the ensuing year to stand and be recognized by the Assembly. He then instructed the members on voting procedure, and recessed the meeting for balloting and lunch.

Resumption of Meeting:

At the resumption of the meeting, Father Kasparian called attention to the letter-fax-telephone campaign that was being conducted to bring to the attention of President Clinton and the Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali of the U. N., the urgent needs of the civilian populations of Armenia and Karabagh, and the need to bring an end to the Azerbaijan blockade. He provided a telephone number that could be called to register our protests.

Father Kasparian also announced that Mr. Suren Fesjian has agreed to underwrite the costs of the Poon Paregentan celebration February 21, 1993 at the Greek Church of our Saviour. Mr. Fesjian was given a round of applause for his generosity.

Judge Gurahian, after determining that all eligible parties had voted, declared the balloting completed, and that the voting was closed. The Nominating Committee was excused from the meeting to count the votes.

Motion: It was moved, seconded and unanimously approved to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the 1992 Assembly since all present had copies provided to them.

Pastor's Report:

Father Kasparian presented his report. In addition to a record of his duties as priest, counselor, educator and administrator, highlights include the following:

1. Historical background of the lengthy search which resulted in a successfully negotiated contract to purchase property in White Plains, on North Street very close to the Hutchinson River Parkway.

2. A review of his mission of faith to Armenia during August of 1992. He stated that funds collected from our congregation were delivered to Armenian refugees in Yerevan. He was accompanied by Carol Der Boghosian, George Leylegian and Jennifer Gurahian.

3. He made a special request to be informed of sickness in the parish, especially if any member is hospitalized.

4. Thanks were extended to all in the parish who had served in many capacities. Garo Bashian was singled out as a special contributor through the two annual rug sales which he organized and conducted for many years. It was announced that Garo would not be able to continue in this capacity in 1993, but the special thanks of the parish were extended for his many years of service.

5. Announcement was made of a major contribution to a special fund for the new church, by Mrs. Robert (Anahid Keljikian) Birnbaum. She has contributed \$100,000 to fund a special memorial which is yet to be specified. The announcement brought forth a round of applause.

Election Results:

Judge Gurahian reported the results of the election. Those elected (in alphabetical order) were:
For Parish Council: Lionel Galstaun, Shahen Guiragossian, Martha Gurahian, Richard Papalian, Marguerite Sagatelian; elected alternate was Harry Nakashian.
For Nominating Committee: Ann D. Boghosian, Berge Derdarian, Michael Pisani, Bernard Tepikian; elected alternate was Robert Khadjeturian.
For Auditing Committee: Harry Abajian, Avadis Sakalian, Ruth Sanossian; elected alternate was Irene Shadoian.

Report of Parish Council:

The report of the Parish Council was presented by the Chairman, Ara Momjian. After expressing gratitude to Father Kasparian and the members of the Parish Council, he cited the extraordinary response in the drives for clothing and money for the benefit of the refugees from Azerbaijan in Armenia.

He summarized the lengthy and frustrating negotiations with the Boy Scouts of America which were finally ended without agreement. He also summarized the three accounts which are being held. The first is the main Building Fund, presently at about \$1,360,000. This account showed a loss of about \$16,000 during 1992 because of poor performance of one stock. The second is the Anahid Birnbaum account, which has shown an appreciation of about 7% during 1992. The third is a special fund named the "2022" Fund, which is intended to be the basis of a future endowment; presently, it contains about \$35,000, but will be added to each year on the basis of a motion passed by the 1992 Parish Assembly.

Report of Stewardship Committee:

The Report of the Stewardship Committee was presented by its Chairman, Richard Papalian. He made a special plea for members to assume the responsibilities of stewardship, and to complete the forms that were distributed. He asked for the completed forms to be returned by February 28. A successful stewardship campaign is essential to the financial security of the Church. It presently provides about 27% of the operating budget. Past budgets have called for about one-third of the funds being provided by stewards. This is still a needed objective. Richard Papalian called on Agnes Bostonian to address the Assembly.

She pointed out biblical references to tithing, which means contributing one tenth of gross receipts to the church.

Report of Membership Committee:

Douglas Tashjian presented the report of the Membership Committee. He noted that the Church's membership should be larger, considering the size of the Armenian community in Westchester. He asked for the cooperation of the members of the parish to secure the names of people

who would be likely to become members.

He also called on the membership to:

1. Participate more fully in church religious and social affairs
2. Volunteer to help
3. Be more generous with contributions
4. participate in fundraising activities.

Report of the Diocesan Delegate:

Judge Gurahian, the Diocesan Delegate, reviewed the written report of the Diocesan Assembly which was in the handout given to all the members. Lionel Galstaun reviewed the substance of the Proposals that were presented to and approved by the Diocesan Assembly. Margaret Brophy asked about the status of the Unity talks. Judge Gurahian replied that they were stalled because of two main blocks:

1. Inability to agree on a set of unified by-laws, and
2. Disagreement on the proportion of clerical and laic representation at the annual Assemblies.

The Prelacy limits the number of clerics whereas the Diocese permits all clerics to attend.

He also cited a difference in the structure of the Canadian Diocese: It is a separate organization from the Eastern Diocese, whereas the Canadian Prelacy churches come under the egis of the Prelate in New York.

Report of the Building Committee:

Ed Essayan presented the Report of the Building Committee. In response to a question from Lillian Boyajian regarding the results of the questionnaire that was circulated, Ed responded that on the basis of responses received, preference was expressed for

1. A church of traditional design, moderate in cost, with the design of the altar an important consideration.
2. Seating for 200-250
3. Well appointed kitchen and classrooms

Zaven Tachdjian reported on the negotiations for the acquisition of the new property. Ruth Sanossian noted that arrangements should have been made for parishioners to view the property. It was noted that permission had to be obtained for each visitation, and that this imposed a cumbersome condition.

Mr. Tachdjian's report covered the following:

a) We offered \$1.35 million for the 10+ acres, conditional on approval of the Parish Assembly, Diocesan Council and the Board of Trustees of the Diocese. This was considered a good bet, especially since remaining at our present location would entail legal and other consultant expenses in excess of \$100,000 merely to complete the permitting process. Other expenses would include about a mile of water line and a connection to the sewer. Additionally, it was agreed by all who had experience with the Town Board of Harrison, that a permit would never be issued for a Fellowship Hall. All these problems are avoided in White Plains.

b) The Permitting process in White Plains starts with a Permitted Use for churches in residential zoned property. It is understood that a church may include a Fellowship Hall. This is a great advantage compared to Harrison.

c) Our present concept is for a church of about 5000 square feet, and a Fellowship Hall of about 9000 square feet.

d) The Permitting Process should last about six months.

George Davidian reported that he had visited the property and found that the wet area may limit our ability to utilize the property. Zaven Tachdjian responded that the wet area is to be defined by a group of specialists, but that he was confident that there will be ample space for the buildings. At least a major part of the area that is wet during the winter is dry in summer, and can be used for picnics, etc. Zaven Tachdjian also noted that environmental aspects will have to be addressed as a part of the Permitting Process, and that provisions will have to be made for drainage, traffic

surveys, and that gas fuel is available on North Street.

Motion: Motion was made, seconded and passed to authorize purchase of the property including all buildings, for a price of \$1.35 million. The vote was 44 in favor, 4 against and 4 abstentions.

Other Business:

Parishioners were reminded that church dues are payable on January 1, and **must be paid before December 31** for members to retain the right to vote at the Parish Assembly the following February. **On a motion made, seconded and approved, this rule will be enforced in subsequent Assemblies.**


Karen Sirabian, noting that architectural planning of the new church and ancillary facilities will affect all parishioners, requested that plans be presented to the Parish, in a special Parish Assembly if necessary, in a timely fashion, so that changes will not be precluded because of time constraints.

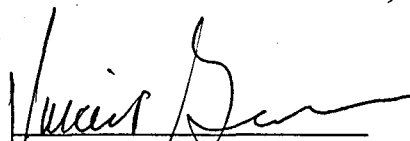
Motion: It was moved by Karen Sirabian, seconded by Douglas Tashjian, that the Building Committee submit its architectural plans and budget to a Special Parish Assembly, in a timely fashion, in order to allow for adequate comment from the Assembly, and for revisions to be made based on such comments, if so directed by the Parish Assembly. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion: Motion was made, seconded and approved to raise annual dues to \$60 commencing in 1994. A motion to table the motion was defeated.

Adjournment:

The 1993 Parish Assembly was adjourned at 4:40 PM. A closing prayer was offered by Father Karekin Kasparian.


Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian, President


Wincent Gurahian, Chairman


Vilma Nakashian, Secretary