

St. Bernard/Ascension Town Hall Recap

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Thank you to all that were able to attend the Town Hall Meetings at St. Bernard and Ascension. Here is a summary of what was talked about and responses that we received, including the Town Hall meeting minutes and parishioner responses. Transparency is VERY important which is why comments have not been altered unless indicated by the respondent. Our intention is to review all comments. If you would still like to provide feedback, we are still looking forward to hearing from you.

At each parish we had about 75 people in attendance. Participation was engaging and thoughtful. A variety of opinions and questions were shared. Updates were given on the progress of the Joint Leadership Team and a presentation of the current state of each campus.

Joint Leadership Team (JLT):

The focus of the JLT has been to find opportunities between our clustered parishes to maximize efficiencies. This began with addressing the needs of our shared Faith Formation program (STBAFF). We are now assessing our shared ministries with the intention to develop an organizational chart of shared resources, including our pastor and business administrator. Finance councils and campus specific needs will remain separated. We would like to gravitate towards a Joint Mission Team (JMT), which would replace our individual parish councils as the pastoral focus of both parishes are essentially the same. Beginning stages of this development will start with our ministries. In the coming weeks, each of the ministry leaders will be interviewed by a member of Joint Leadership Team to assess the ministry leader's perspective and willingness to collaborate with their counterpart at the other parish. We anticipate the development of the Joint Mission Team to take, at minimum, a year to get off the ground.

Campus Challenges:

St Bernard:

- Handicap accessibility of the school building
- School roof needs to be replaced within 2 years
- School boiler is aging and needs repair during the year
- School restrooms need updating
- Safety concerns with the hill during the winter for STBAFF
- Aging rectory and convent

Ascension:

- Handicap accessibility to the church, current elevator is not user friendly
- Main floor bathroom for handicap accessibility
- Need for narthex-type gathering space
- Need to expand space to comfortably host year-around STBAFF, along with large funerals and annual fish fry.

Cost estimates for a variety of options were presented. These options were meant to give the parishioners an idea of costs rather than to indicate a direction that the individual parish councils/finance councils are directing our strategies. Our hopes were to stimulate thought and conversation. We intend to hold future meetings to discuss our strategy further.

ST. BERNARD Update:

On 4/28/2018, the STB Finance council approved the following expenses: replacement of the school roof and the repairs to the church steeple. These were viewed as repair expenses that cannot be held off any longer. Though the school roof expense was presented to at the Town Hall as an option as an upgrade, the finance council, trustees, business administrator and Father Gregory agreed that we cannot prolong these repairs. We value your input to our long term strategy for our campus. To allow for any potentials of Option 2, we needed to replace the roof now. Therefore, we are proceeding with repairing these two structures. We will announce the start date of these projects once we have received confirmation from the contractors.

ASCENSION Update:

The Ascension Finance council is currently exploring options to address the elevator entrance accessibility by eliminating the slope and having an automatic door opener installed. This option would retain the current lift. However, the ushers have been contacted and will have someone available to assist with the elevator for weekend Masses and most other events.

Availability of Town Hall Meeting Recap & Parishioner Responses:

In an effort to maintain transparency and conserve paper, the remainder of the recap and comments are located on our parish websites; st-bernard-cologne.org or ascensionnya.org There will be some paper copies placed in the Narthex kiosk at St. Bernard and on the shelves in the back of church at Ascension. Please reserve these copies for parishioners that do not have access to the internet. JLT members, Kelli Starkey (STB) and Brian Willems (Asc), recorded the notes at each respective meeting. Their notes have been included on the websites.