

DIOCESAN NEWS

Activists request adult business moratorium

Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

More than 100 northwest Rochester residents, led by parishioners from Most Precious Blood Parish and including parishioners from several area churches, turned out at a Rochester Planning Commission meeting Nov. 9 to oppose a proposed adult entertainment business on Mt. Read Boulevard.

At the meeting, the commission directed C&A Playmates Inc. to apply from scratch for its proposed nude dancing club, cigar lounge and lingerie shop. The proposal was deemed not similar enough to one for a strip club last summer at the same site, 1485 Mt. Read Blvd., for C&A to proceed where that aborted effort left off.

Before the public meeting, the commission was given petitions with more than 950 signatures opposing the C&A proposal. They were signed by Sacred Heart Cathedral, Holy Rosary, Holy Family, Holy Apostles, St. Anthony and Most Precious Blood parishioners.

Meanwhile, Josephine Ciuffo planned to formally petition the Rochester City Council Nov. 10 on behalf of Most Precious Blood parishioners for a moratorium on adult business applications. She and other MPB parishioners met with the mayor this month, asking for a comprehensive policy on such adult businesses.

Bernardine Gordon, also a Most Precious Blood



Greg Francis/Staff photographer

Bernardine Gordon counts petitions at Most Precious Blood Church before going to a Rochester City Planning Commission meeting to protest a proposed nude juice bar at 1485 Mt. Read Blvd.

parishioner and a leader of the coalition opposing the club, said she thought the turnout Nov. 9 made a difference to planning commission members.

The petitioners are supported by Interfaith Action, a community advocacy organization based in Rochester-area churches.

"When they saw us, they were a little bit stunned by the amount of people there," she commented. "We really filled the council chamber. We really wanted to let them know we really don't want this."

Noting that the northwest city area has three topless bars and two adult bookstores, she added, "We are oversaturated right now."

An application for the same Mt. Read Boulevard site last summer sought just a topless bar. C&A, however, proposes to create "an adult entertainment mini-mall," petitioners say. C&A plans a juice bar and cigar lounge featuring all-nude dancers; a lingerie and modeling room; and a video and novelty retail outlet at the site. The site, on the border of Greece and Rochester, was formerly home to a restaurant and is in a mixed industrial and residential area.

Northwest city residents already were geared up to fight the proposal, following a similar fight last summer, when many worked to defeat the proposed strip club. On Aug. 5 the two men proposing the club withdrew their application.

Proposal calls for new parish to replace four city parishes

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

Parishioners of four Rochester west-side city parishes are considering a plan that could involve closing all four and creating a new parish.

In letters dated Nov. 9, parishioners of Holy Apostles, Holy Family, St. Anthony of Padua and St. Francis of Assisi churches were informed of the proposal developed by the Dutchtown/Edgerton/Lyell-Otis Planning Group.

That proposal comes on the heels of a plan Bishop Matthew H. Clark approved in June to consolidate six parishes in southern Cayuga County into one new parish.

In Rochester, members of the four-parish planning team will be at the four churches Nov. 14-15 to meet with parishioners at each of the weekend Masses, and a town meeting has been scheduled for 1:30 p.m. Nov. 29 at Holy Apostles School Hall.

If the parishes approve the plan, it will be submitted to Bishop Clark by the end of December, and, pending his approval, phased implementation will begin in 1999. Implementation is expected to continue over approximately five years.

That implementation, to be overseen by a transition team yet to be named, will include the selection and assumed renovation of a central site to house a worship space and parish offices, and the gradual selling of current properties. The new parish would continue to offer Vietnamese

and Spanish language Masses to serve those growing populations.

Gail Blanchard, chair of the planning group, cautioned that the plan is only a proposal and still subject to input from parishioners at the upcoming meetings.

"That's the proposal: We'll see what the parishes say," observed Blanchard, a member of St. Francis of Assisi Parish.

But, she added, the proposal is based on the realities the parishes face in terms of finances, attendance, the condition of the current buildings and the availability of priests due to the growing priest shortage.

"(The planning team) took the facts and said, 'It's time to bite the bullet,'" she said.

In the draft proposal, the planning team notes: "We have four existing properties which cannot survive on their own because of decreasing population, reduced financial resources, and underutilized space in aging buildings. Among the four parishes there are numerous fragmented programs and services which can only be strengthened if efforts are combined among the four parishes, to include human (clergy, staff, volunteers) and financial resources."

"What we are seeing is that parishes are using their savings to survive," Blanchard acknowledged.

Meanwhile, combined attendance at the weekend liturgies of the four parishes is approximately 1,450 — averaging about 130 people for the 11 current Masses.

Blanchard pointed out that a joint Easter service this year involving three of the

parishes — Holy Apostles, St. Anthony of Padua and St. Francis of Assisi — and Ss. Peter and Paul Parish foreshadowed what larger services can bring once the parishes are combined.

"That energized a lot of people," she said.

Deacon Patrick Shanley, temporary administrator of the Holy Name Parish, said that people at his parish have been aware that changes were coming.

"They certainly have been kept abreast of the realities, the fiscal and people realities," Deacon Shanley reported. "Some people have been expecting this. There have been some people who were not part of the process — the team — who said this is what we should do."

One of the unresolved issues is what to do with Holy Family School, Deacon Shanley acknowledged. Options that have been mentioned include retaining the school as part of the new parish, selling the school building to the school or selling it to the diocese.

The transition team will determine the school's status, according to William Pickett, director of pastoral planning for the diocese.

"They will have to work out these details," he said.

One detail that is clear is that Deacon Shanley will not be part of developing the proposed new parish after July 1, 1999: He plans to leave after his contract ends.

"I think it needs new leadership," he said.

Obituary

Fr. John Roach; longtime Clifton Springs pastor

Father John E. Roach, pastor at St. Felix Church in Clifton Springs for 25 years, died Nov. 7, 1998, at Rochester General Hospital following a long illness. He was 80.

Father Roach was born in Pasadena, Calif. He attended St. Andrew's and St. Bernard's seminaries and was ordained June 5, 1943, at Sacred Heart Cathedral by Bishop James E. Kearney.

He served as assistant pastor at Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester (1943-48), St. Leo Church in Hilton (1948), Holy Apostles Church in Rochester (1948-62) and St. Patrick Church in Corning (1962-66).

In August 1966, Father Roach began his only pastorate, at St. Felix. He remained in that position until his retirement in June 1991.

"He was a very able person to run the parish. He was good at saving money, and

he kept the grounds and buildings up nicely," said Kay Goodman, a longtime St. Felix parishioner.

"He was a careful administrator," agreed Father Anthony Calimeri, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Church in nearby Phelps from 1983-93. He also assumed the St. Felix pastorate in 1991 upon Father Roach's retirement.

Goodman added that Father Roach was also a very generous and devoted priest.

"He always responded to calls," she said.

"If you called the church, you would find him there. He wouldn't be off on the golf course or anything," remarked Father Calimeri, who retired in 1993.

Father Roach remained active in recent years, filling in at several parishes in the Finger Lakes area while residing in Naples.

"When I was in Clifton Springs it was

like pulling teeth to get a (substitute) priest. So when I retired, I made up my mind that if I could help these priests out so they could take some time off, I would," Father Roach commented in a July 1995 *Courier* article.

Father Roach's Mass of the High Priest was to take place Nov. 10, at Holy Apostles Church with Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey presiding and Father Paul Wohlrab serving as homilist. His funeral Mass was to be celebrated Nov. 11, at St. Felix Church with Bishop Matthew H. Clark presiding and Father Eugene McFarland serving as homilist. Interment was to be at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Father Roach is survived by his sister, Rita Donoghue; and several cousins and friends.

Donations in Father Roach's memory may be made to a charity of one's choice.

- Mike Latona

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