

# St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church Capital Campaign Committee Meeting 1/24/09

## *Meeting Minutes*

**Attendees:** George Vittas, Fr. Vasile Tudora, Paun Peters, Nancy Medvic, Dr. Chris Yiantsou, Dr. Lou Antahades, Margaret Chokas, Fr. Michael Stearns, Joe Sullivan, Harry Karegeannes  
**Not in Attendance:** Louie Papaliodis, Debbie Manos

- Debbie Manos will try to be available for special projects, but will not be able to attend meetings.
- Father Michael gave a presentation regarding the Capital Campaigns experience at St. Demetrios. Basically, St. Demetrios ran three different campaigns in succession.
  - 1) They tried to raise money on their own. They raised about \$500K – this included money from their festival, other fund raisers and from parishioners purchasing items for the church.
  - 2) They hired RSI, an outside consulting firm located in Dallas and specializing in church stewardship and fund raising. (RSI charges a lump sum fee based on a church's financial resources – they charged St. Demetrios \$25K. RSI's track record for Orthodox churches over a 3 year period is 9-10 times the amount of the community's annual giving.)
  - 3) Due to unforeseen expenses, i.e., legal, etc., after 3 years they ran a third campaign and hired RSI again. This campaign was only half as successful as the first one with RSI.
- > Using RSI involves an 8-9 month preparation period during which time a parish forms a number of committees of 20-30 people each with no one being asked to be on two committees. RSI teaches the committees how to proceed and meets with them once a month to keep them on track.
- > The program went as follows:
  - Father Michael gave sermons on the subject of commitment to the capital campaign once a month for several months prior to kickoff.
  - Bag of promotional items hand delivered to each home
  - Advance Commitment requested from church leadership. Dinner held at church to announce amount one month prior to Commitment Sunday. \$100K in advance commitments - \$350-400K in commitments after dinner.
  - Commitment Sunday - parishioners asked to fill out commitment cards
  - Celebration Sunday held two weeks after Commitment Sunday to announce total commitments received. Approximately \$900K pledged – 90% collected – Goal was \$1M.
- > Key is to keep it in front of the people and keep them excited – have events monthly.

- > Down side to using RSI: prep time and expense
- > Upside: Raised close to goal, people understood stewardship and it brought community together
- > Spent a lot of time contacting foundations – received no responses.
- > St. Demetrios didn't auction individual items in church. Placed large plaques in narthex with names listed to recognize all contributors.
- > All told, in this first campaign with RSI, St. Demetrios raised \$1.4 million but they still had a very large amount of debt financing needed after the capital campaign was over.
- > When Fr. Michael arrived he realized there was insufficient ability to cover debt amortization so a second capital campaign was started with RSI. The second campaign raised about half the amount raised in the first. According to Fr. Michael, St. Demetrios' ministries are underfunded because of excessive debt.
- Joe gave BC presentation. Will present to GA on 2/15 to get authorization to spend \$136K to proceed with Detailed Design. George asked if we could stop half way through process to start CCC and see if we can raise enough money. Joe said the thought was to complete Detailed Design to show people this is now reality.
- It was noted that building would definitely not begin until we acquire financing.

***Actions to be taken Before Next Meeting:***

- George and Chris to meet with George Naftis to discuss methods of and “lessons learned” during the capital campaign at Holy Trinity more 10-15 years ago.
- Paun, Chris and Louie to form a Financial Subcommittee to research feasibility of debt financing. They will meet after church on 2/1 to discuss banking situation and what we need to get a loan in today's market. Larry to supply financial reports for their use. Paun said that Texas banks are in a little better shape than the rest of the nation and that Frost Bank has a loan officer who specializes in church loans.
- George, Nancy and Margaret to form Subcommittee to research feasibility of using consulting firm or archdiocese help to assist in planning and directing the capital campaign. They will meet after church on 2/1.
- Next meeting of CCC set for Saturday, 2/7/09 at 9:00 am.