

Defining Moments in PACE- by Sandra Hall

Sometimes I wonder if we'd known in advance how much work it would be to build a new building, would we even have started? Now the hard work is done and we are ready to build, except for the small problem of not having enough cash or pledges. Our project is unique from other projects in other churches because we had to satisfy not only the City of Martinez but the Diocese of Oakland as well; each task had to be done not once, but twice. But yes, most of the hard work is behind us, except for the fine tuning which we are now in the process of doing.

PACE (**P**arish **A**ctivity **C**enter **E**xpansion.) originally started in 1993 but it was then concluded that there wasn't enough money in the parish. That was proved wrong in the first pledge campaign but I am jumping ahead. It really got off the ground in 1998 with a small group of basketball Dads who approached Fr. Vincent Brylka with the proposal. Some of those volunteers had talents and skills to offer for which we could not have paid. In our parish, and on the original PACE Committee, we had a developer, an asphalt contractor, a building contractor, a county flood control engineer and an electrician. After meeting with the then City Planner, Barbara Bacon, they learned that a building could be put on our existing land, but that it was actually two lots and they would have to be merged. After Fr. Vincent met with the Diocese they decided we needed to learn from a professional whether or not St. Catherine's had the wherewithal to raise the necessary money. So, the first order of business was to accept proposals from a list provided by the Diocese, of professional fund raisers. After reviewing the proposals and completing interviews, the committee chose Walsh and Associates. Mike Walsh was originally based in the Bay Area and, while he worked with all faiths, his background was Catholic. He also had a proven track record.

The next step was a parish feasibility study. Some people were invited throughout the summer of 1999 to be interviewed by Walsh's representative. At the end of that assessment it was concluded that St. Catherine's could raise at least \$800,000 and even, perhaps, a miracle goal of \$1,000,000. At that time it was estimated that it would cost slightly over \$1,000,000 to build a parish center which would include a full size basketball court, a stage, offices and a kitchen. Once the decision was made to go forth some parishioners were trained to ask for pledges. There were information sessions and town hall meetings where more and more people came on board. On July 9, 1998 a parish-wide information meeting was held.

After meeting with the Parish Finance Committee PACE met with the Diocese who sent their approval letter in December 1998, and the contract with Walsh & Associates was signed. A huge part of the approval from the Diocese was because we had selected Rich Vila as our builder. Rich, a parishioner of St. Catherine's, is one of the top builders on the Diocese list. If you'd like to see just what kind of a gift this is you can visit vilaconstruction.com and look at his credentials. The bonus gift was that Rich promised to build at cost plus a small percent. At that time there were a couple of rough draft plans created by Rich Vila. A friend of PACE committee member Lloyd Carone, an artist named Ann Bloxom, created a rendering of what our building might look like.

A first decision was that it made more sense to leave the convent in place rather than tear it down. St. Catherine's had built the convent in 1948, when the school opened, to house the staff of teaching Sisters from the Order of St. Joseph of Carondelet. From the beginning the PACE plan **was always two phases**. Phase I was making the convent into Parish offices and meeting rooms where before the parish office had been crowded into the Rectory. By 1998 five nuns were renting the convent and, of them, only one was employed by the Parish; Sr. Jeanne Therese Haskell, the Director of Religious Education. Most of the large convent building was used for storage. Again Lloyd Carone brought forth a contractor named Bob Aston, who did a structural assessment and found the building to be sound. Another parish volunteer, Tim McLoughlin, created the new parish office from the old convent chapel. At that time the leaking roof was repaired, PACE committee member, Joe Gilmore, upgraded the electricity and Larry Schweinfurter improved the phone lines. All of this was overseen by the volunteer PACE committee.

In January 1999, Greg Black, of Walsh & Associates set up an office and Debbie Palmer was hired as a secretary and bookkeeper. In February of 1999 the fundraising was designed for two groups, *Major Gifts* chaired by Roger and Vivian Rittenhouse and *Parish Gifts*, Chaired by Frank and Sandra Hall. This, along with Fr. Vincent, became the PACE finance committee. In March 1999 we had our campaign kickoff, Pledge Sunday, and our video was created. Parishioner Jim Kelly volunteered as the PACE auditor, orientation meetings started and the pledges started coming in. In May of 1999 there was a Phone-A-Thon held at the offices of Lloyd Carone and a letter went to the school parents inviting them to participate.

A huge part of the first campaign, and the reason for its success, was prayer. Parishioner Theresa Moody drafted a special prayer for PACE which was said at all the Masses.

*O God, Builder of all things with much labor you shape and polish us into living stones
Until you make us worthy to be built into your kingdom.
You have given us the power to become your co-workers.
Grant us a successful completion to our Keeping P.A.C.E. Campaign,
Which we undertake for Your glory and the well-being of our community.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, Your son. Amen*

Mark and Marguerite Chatigny headed up the Prayers and Spiritual Guidance Committee; whose volunteers handed out copies of scriptural readings to people as they left Mass, so that our prayers could continue throughout each week.

On June 3, 1999 there was Parish Victory Celebration for having received just over \$1,000,000 in pledges.

In August of 1999 the Nuns' contract ended and they moved from the convent. Fr. Vincent sent a letter to all the donors informing them of the modifications that would be made to the old convent to create the new Ministry Center. Phase I had started. For the next three years PACE volunteers, Sandra Hall and Marguerite Chatigny worked in the

background depositing pledge payments, billing, and providing bulletin updates.

In the spring of 2001 Fr. Vincent selected an Architect Review Panel made up of parishioners Joy Belleza, Tom Greerty, Jim Kostelic, Angel Rubio and Lois Rutten, and School Principal Nancy Libby. Requests for proposals were sent to a Diocesan list of architects. Three architectural firms were chosen for interviews set for September. The Architect Review Panel put together the questions they would ask of each architectural candidate. In September, 2001, Fr. Vincent was transferred and Fr. Tony Valdivia became our new Pastor.

By the end of 2001 we had netted \$559,876.00 in pledges and had already paid for the renovated Ministry Center. The Architect Review Panel, with the approval of the Diocese, chose the architect E. Paul Kelly who started to work in January 2002 by writing to our church's service clubs to establish the needs of the parish. At that time the service clubs at St. Catherine's represented about 250 parishioners so it was deemed the most expedient way to do our needs assessment. Letters were also sent to the school and the schools of Religious Studies. In March of 2002 we sent E. Paul Kelly the contract signed by Fr. Patrick Goodwin the Vicar of Temporalities of the Diocese.

In March of 2002 we had netted \$648,890.61 in our Diocese account. Fr. Tony Valdivia and Sandra Hall met with Fr. Patrick Goodwin and then again with the Diocesan Design Review Board. It was at this meeting that we were told that if we raised half the money in cash and the other half in pledges the Diocese would give us the construction loan. By then construction costs had doubled.

On April 15, 2002, Fr. Tony sent a letter to Paul Kelly enclosing the responses from the service clubs, the school and the schools of Religious Education. Fr. Tony asked Paul to submit the concept design to the Diocese by June and a town hall meeting was arranged for the parish for May. The town hall included panel made up of PACE committee members, E. Paul Kelly and Fr. Tony, with Sandra Hall moderating. In August the Committee met with Paul Kelly to look at the footprint of the building and decide where it should sit on the property. Meanwhile a soils test was found to be necessary because of the proximity of the creek. So PACE hired Stevens, Ferrone and Bailey to do the tests. Their bid was for two borings, one at 15 to 20 feet and a second at about 40 feet. Rich Vila convinced them to do three deep borings, at no extra cost, as well as provide an erosion control plan. PACE started the permit process with the Health Department, the property consisted of two lots so the decision had to be made for a lot line adjustment, and the county Public Works had to be contacted to establish the minimum elevation of a building in the flood plain.

In September, 2002 the PACE Committee met to look at the first architectural renderings. The plans showed a 9,400 square foot building with a full size High School basketball court, a stage, a kitchen and a wall of windows overlooking the creek. PACE committee member, Angel Rubio, pointed out that there would be little use for extensive landscaping at the front of the building but that the focus should be on the creek side. Parishioner Doug Crume, a surveyor, reported to Paul Kelly that the existing fence

closely followed the required setbacks. PACE Committee member, Mitch Avalon, reported that to meet County flood control requirements the floor of the building had to be three feet over the highest point on the site. This meant that ramps would have to be added to every entrance.

The PACE Committee decided at this time that we needed an independent, professional, cost analysis from a company called Davis, Langdon & Adamson. So by mid September we were waiting for the cost analysis, the soils report, information regarding the lot line adjustment and the Use Permit. November 2002 notes show that the cost analysis came in higher than what Rich Vila had bid on the job. The building cost at that time was estimated to be \$2,681,000. The good news was that our soils testing results were positive; that no special footings were needed for the site. Money was starting to become the big issue by then. The PACE committee members discussed changing the size of the building or starting a second pledge drive. In February of 2003 we received a letter, addressed to Fr. Tony, from Rev. Patrick Goodwin of the diocese, who happily granted approval for a second capital campaign. Fr. Goodwin stated that the "Diocesan loan issue will be addressed in the future when you are ready."

In the next year we prepared for the City of Martinez permit process. Fr. Tony made the decision to go with a design build using Rich Vila as our contractor. Our new priest, Fr. Neal Clemens, concurred with Fr. Tony's decision. In November, 2003 Frank Hall asked Britton Tree Services to provide an arborist to examine the oak trees in the creek and to give us a free estimate. Also in November of 2003 Fr. Neal informed us that Alex Hernandez had told him that the Diocese would provide loans for both our Parish Activity Center and the retrofitting for the school and church. Fr. Neal set the challenging goal to begin construction in June 2004. In December of that year E. Paul Kelly went to the Diocese Design Review Committee. After that step we could finally begin the city Use Permit process.

Parking was always an issue. No matter how many ways we drew the building we always came up short for the required number of parking spaces. In February of 2004, after being directed by the City of Martinez, PACE hired Crane Transportation to complete a parking and traffic study on our behalf. We did get some good news in March of 2004. The Retrofit report came back very favorable for the church. The two side entrance walls were hollow and they only needed to be strengthened with cement. The school report was also good. The exterior walls needed shoring but only on the hall side of the building, not on the classroom side. While the PACE Committee advised and participated in the retrofit of the church and school PACE funds were never used in the retrofit.

In April of 2004 Diana Palmer and Sandra Hall met with Carolyn Cole and Mark Crane of Crane Transportation to go over the existing uses and the planned uses for the new building. Parish service clubs, the school, the religious education schools and different church ministries had already submitted activity lists in preparation. After that meeting the city of Martinez accepted the proposed scope from Crane transportation and their fieldwork began immediately. E. Paul Kelly was also working with the city in the Use

Permit process. This was on a separate, but parallel, course with the Traffic and Parking Study. Once we got the city permits we could submit out drawings to the Diocese for final approval.

We were now near the end of the first pledge drive. At the end of 2003 we had deposited \$992,000 in our Diocesan account, just \$68,000 shy of our original \$1,060,000 goal. Over the past four years we had spent \$98,000 on all of the things described above. We were still working under the belief that the Diocese would lend us our construction money and even cover increased construction costs. We were starting to let it be known that there would be a second pledge drive.

Frank Hall suggested that PACE offer a series of Neighborhood meetings in May of 2004. It would eventually be required as part of the city's permit process but by promoting them ourselves we could show ourselves to be good neighbors and we could define the debate. Also in May of 2004 Rich Vila and Nancy Libby met with Janie O'Neal the engineer handling the retrofit of the church and school. On May 10, 2004, E. Paul Kelly submitted our Use Permit packet to the City of Martinez.

On May 11, Fr. Neal signed the document asking the city for a Design Development Review. It was around this time we started to learn that we were going to have to reconfigure the right angle turn at the corner of Henrietta and Ferry streets; that we were going to have to create a *knuckle*, or, round it out like a court. In early June Frank and Sandra Hall met with the Executive Board of the Martinez Chamber of Commerce and our project was well received. Senior City Planner, Corey Simons, was assigned our project by the City of Martinez. Paul Kelly wrote to Corey Simons on June 22 addressing parking lot landscaping, the Parking and Traffic Study, the *knuckle* the Title Report, the Creek setback requirement, the geotechnical report (Stevens Ferrone and Bailey's soils test) emergency access, proposed elevations, floodplain information, environmental issues and public noticing material. We started drafting our Owner's Statement for the permit application. PACE Committee member and landscaper, Angel Rubio, went to the creek bed and cleared around the large oak tree in order to check its health. He reported that the tree was healthy but he would need a front loader to move a large block of cement that rested against its trunk. Rich Vila received the seismic retrofit drawings from the Structural Engineer for both the school and church and he submitted the drawings to the city. Fr. Neal received the letter from the Diocese approving the retrofit of the church and school. The fine tuning of the Parking and Traffic study continued throughout May and June of that year. The final product was dated July 7, 2004.

On July 14 we submitted our Owner's Statement. We were starting to understand about hazardous waste permits, Fire Marshall Permits, Public Health permits, and Design Review Boards; now County as well as City and Diocesan.

In August, Frank Hall met with the City Public Works Department. He was directed on the *knuckle* and told that we needed to modify the building so that we could meet the Fire Dept requirement of twenty feet clear from the street to the back parking area. The city

would accept all merging of parcels after the public hearing process but prior to issuance of the building permit. He was told that both the City Planning Commission and Public Works agreed on this process. Both of these requirements caused a loss of precious parking spaces. Rather than change the building location, at a loss of even more parking spaces, Paul Kelly lopped off the left and right corners. The angled side allowed the twenty feet clearance for fire trucks. However, the street corner of the property did not come under the expertise of E. Paul Kelly so the redesign of the corner was given to the firm of Leptian, Cronin, Cooper, Morris and Poore, Civil Engineers. Al Morris of that firm designed the *knuckle* and Paul Kelly incorporated in into the plan.

In October of 2004 Paul Kelly re-submitted our plans to the city. Frank and Sandra Hall met with the Martinez News Gazette and arranged for the artistic rendering to be published along with an article. The rendering cost \$1500 and was a gift of Connolly and Taylor, who were promised that they could have the original artwork once the project was completed. Two Neighborhood informational meetings were arranged for November 8 and November 15. We learned that we had neighbors in opposition to our building. On November 10 we met with the City Architectural review Committee and received favorable comments from the five commissioners. Also in November we re-met with the city's Advisory Design review Committee, the *knuckle* people.

The advisory Design Review Board of the city of Martinez recommended that we make some major changes: 1.) that we change the configuration of the right angle turn at the corner of Henrietta and Ferry streets to a rounded out *knuckle*. 2.) That we add windows on the upper face of the building on the west side and a brick façade giving the building a 1930's retro look, "like City Hall." 3.) That we move the footprint of the building to a different location on the site. 4.) That we design a pedestrian path to the door of the building separate from the automotive area. 5.) That we redesign and relocate our existing playground equipment to make it ADA conformed. 6.) The Design Review Panel also said they felt that we were being *insensitive* to trees but they didn't expand or describe how we were being insensitive. PACE met in November to discuss these 'suggestions' from the Design Review Board and we decided that we would be resolute in our choice of the building location. PACE had tried every possible footprint and the entire committee liked the location we had finally chosen. Here are some of the minutes from that meeting:

The next issue was the aesthetics and question of what Design review might consider a "1930's retro look." The PACE Committee agreed that using buff, or yellow colored bricks, "like City Hall," is not an acceptable suggestion. There was discussion of softening up the brick wall using some designs in the brick or perhaps adding some sort of brick parapets. There was discussion on the pros and cons of adding ivy to the front. Frank Hall spoke on behalf of Paul Kelly and said he had designed a handsome building for us. Bob Osmond suggested that we might keep any kind of design change in abeyance for the Planning Commission. As far as the Design Review Committee Bob Osmond said we shouldn't cede

anything at this point.

The PACE Committee also did not like the suggestion that windows be added to the front. Sandra Hall pointed out the added expense and Bob Osmond noted the afternoon sun would render the building unusable during certain times of day. Frank Hall said there are windows near the ceiling in the Jr. High Gym. Angel Rubio noted that you couldn't see the top of the building unless you were walking. There was discussion of landscaping and Angel Rubio was asked if there was some kind of a fast growing tree that could be planted in front of the building. He suggested a Chinese Elm and described it as airy looking with a small leaf. He said it is not a messy tree like a Sycamore.

Bob Osmond read from the Design review Committee notes where it is written that we are not being, "Sensitive to the trees." There was some discussion as to what that might mean. Frank told of the arborist who looked at our big oak over the creek and said for \$2000 his company could clean out all the dead limbs. Angel said to let him back there and it would be done without any \$2000 cost to the church. Sandra pointed out the City is probably being more insensitive to the trees by forcing the addition of the knuckle. It is her belief that adding pavement will injure the cork oak in the northeast corner of Susana Park.

Frank Hall said that based on tonight's meeting Paul Kelly would draw plans for the Design Review Committee to look at 4:00 PM on December 8, 2004. Bob Osmond asked if we could inform Design Review that we are in accord as a committee and this will be our final presentation. Frank Hall said that, yes, this would be a fixed point and they could then write their individual recommendations to the City Planning Department. Kit Greerty asked who would be there on the 8th and Frank said Fr, Neal, Mitch Avalon and Paul Kelly.

Bob Osmond suggested that Paul Kelly include some photos of like buildings so the Design review Committee can see how well it will work with a brick façade. Frank said there will be a rendering prepared for the Planning Commission and the cost of \$1500 will be picked up by Connolly & Taylor. They will own the artwork after it is no longer needed as a tool. Kit Greerty asked when it would go to the Planning Commission and was told it would be in late January, possibly the 24th.

According to Frank this will be the meeting where we will want people to attend and to respectfully address the Planning Commission. It would be good to have members of the

parish sitting in groups perhaps wearing like shirts and or uniforms. A broad sampling from the Parish might include St. Catherine's Youth Group, students and CYO Basketball teams.

Bob Osmond asked about the wording of the Variance and asked who would be working on that. Frank said Mitch Avalon and hopefully Bob Osmond. Bob Osmond agreed. He asked Frank if he had heard any word back from the City Staff and Frank said he heard that they will not throw darts at it. He said he believes they will be ambivalent.

While PACE was meeting on November 29, Paul Kelly was conversing with Martinez Senior Planner, Corey Simons. Simons was guiding him through the Design Review process and advised that we incorporate more of the suggested changes in order to widen the support of the members of the Design Review Committee. Thus, Paul Kelly made a number of changes, which included adding windows on the west side. These windows are decorative; to be made of dark glass because of the afternoon sun. Paul sent a letter to the Planning Department in December, 2004 telling them how PACE addressed each of the Design Review recommendations.

First he stated that the church strongly preferred the location that had been shown on past submittals. 2.) That a five foot path for pedestrian path had been provided, but with no guarantee that it would be used. 3.) That PACE provided what we felt was additional interest in the façade. We did not attempt to necessarily relate it to the neighborhood which we felt really had no architectural identity appropriate to a larger scaled building nor to the City Hall period architecture. Our approach was to provide a building which represents today's era, but scaled down to be of interest to the neighborhood. 4.) That our philosophy for the gate was that it was a pleasing low scaled fence/gate, not an entity unto itself. We felt it should not compete with the building statement. 5.) That we would handle the final outcome of the play equipment. 6.) That only one tree is planned for removal rather than those effected by the required street *knuckle*.

Now it was time to get ready for the Planning Commission on February 22, 2005, to seek our parking variance.

A letter, signed by Fr. Neal, was sent to St. Catherine's leadership community; the presidents of the different service clubs, the school, and the schools of Religious Education encouraging them to write letters to the Planning Commission. PACE had been advised that it would be prudent to have no more than five speakers. A speaker training was held on February 20 to make sure those five would not all be saying the same thing. It was also planned that each group would don its identifying garb like hats, t-shirts, and aprons; and with the kids in their uniforms. The groups were also asked to bring their banners and flags. Announcements were made in church asking everyone to attend to show the sheer size of our community, but, we were reminded, above all things to be polite to those who spoke out in opposition. And we knew there would be opposition.

At the Planning Commission meeting we presented a carefully crafted five-page letter of

request along with some letters of support we had sought from community leaders. The presentation was opened by PACE committee member Mitch Avalon, Ken Watson was there from Paul Kelly's office as was Carolyn Cole from the Crane Transportation Group. We knew that if there was too much opposition from the neighbors the building would not be constructed. We had made some concessions to offer the City Planners that had been suggested by Corey Simons and Dina Tasini; 1.) That we put out a letter each year to the school parents reminding them of the drop-off rules; 2.) We have a parking monitor for large group gatherings, and; 3.) That we would provide a letter each year to comply with our Conditional Use Permit, the permit that would give the City a form of redress if we failed to comply with what we had agreed.

PACE had already worked out a reciprocal agreement with the nearby Boys and Girls Club where we agreed to check our annual calendar against their annual calendar so as to not have any parking conflicts. That night a number of people spoke in opposition and Planning Commissioner, AnaMarie Avila, a parishioner, recused herself from the vote because of a conflict of interest. The final decision was postponed to March 8, 2005.

Here are the minutes from the March 7, 2005 PACE meeting

The meeting came to order at 7:00 PM with the single intention of planning the approach to the Planning Commission Meeting for Tuesday, March 8, 2003. Bob Osmond noted that Mitch Avalon had done a very good presentation at the Feb 22 Planning Commission meeting and thanked him for his hard work.

Mitch presented a flyer that was created by (a neighbor) and delivered to the neighborhood. He went over the flyer item by item and answered each accusation. He said there are other issues of opposition that came up on the 22nd that he will also address. Bob Osmond asked if he was going to address the Committee or wait to answer questions. Mitch said he plans to address them up front.

Topics included tree removal, parking and drainage. Diana Palmer said that if we were going to open the upper yard for parking for City events we will need to screen off the play structure. Mitch Avalon suggested the City could move the Play Structure to Susana Park. Frank Hall noted that Mike Telfer would have to take the lead on this because the Telfer family had donated the Play Structure in memory of their daughter.

Mitch Avalon said he intends to propose a plan to establish a process where the neighbors help create a traffic solution. Frank Hall noted that the school is getting a new Principal and Bob Osmond pointed out the school traffic issue is totally disassociated with our project.

Diana Palmer asked if we were taking part of Susana Park for the knuckle the Design Review Committee required. Mitch Avalon said the City owns both the park and the street and they are giving 204 square feet of Park to the knuckle. We are giving up nine parking spaces and 2,660 feet, more than 13 times what the City is donating, for the knuckle.

Frank Hall said his sense is the City staff is supportive of our project but that we have to get all of these issues on the record for the Appeal to the City Council. Sandra Hall asked if we can bring anything new to the Appeal and was told that we could only respond.

There was general discussion for mitigating the parking problem. Frank Hall introduced the idea of Park & Walk. He has been talking to parishioners one-by-one and convincing them to park on Alhambra. Mitch Avalon asked if Carolyn Cole, from Crane Transportation, was going to be

present at the March 8 meeting and was told yes. Diana Palmer asked about the accusation that our Parking and Traffic Consultant had a conflict of interest. Mitch Avalon said that (a neighbor) stated the traffic study was not an independent study because we hired and paid Crane and they worked at our behest.

Frank Hall said Crane gave the City a draft RFP to review. The City made some changes before it was finalized and could have required that we pay for a peer review. They didn't. He said that Commissioner Wheeler said the Parking Study is, "Not an issue."

Commissioner Burt had inquired about acoustics at the Feb 22 meeting. Frank Hall said that Ken Watson, of Paul Kelly's office had run our design by an acoustical engineer and was told he could, "Make it work." Frank added that an acoustical study is a requirement of the Diocese.

Frank Hall read a Letter of Understanding between St. Catherine's and the Boys and Girls Club. He noted that the two entities are in the same business of doing good and if we can't make this agreement work then shame on us. He said the Boys and Girls Club lawyer, Ginnochio and Angelo Costanza from St. Catherine's had helped with the letter.

Nobody on the PACE Committee knew if the two Commissioners who had been asked to recuse themselves would be sitting at the March 8 meeting. Frank Hall said the Commissioners will have read the favorable Staff report and he hoped that we would have a transcription of the first four speakers and Kathy O'Connell's speech for the March 8 meeting. Mitch Avalon will do most of the presentation and said that too many speakers can become counter-productive. He added there should be no applause after each speaker. He said Commissioner Burt was only being polite when she allowed applause on Feb 22.

Sandra Hall said that (the neighbor from across the creek) might show up and that she is an accomplished speaker. Mitch Avalon said that if she can see the hills over the 30' trees she will still be able to see them over our building. Bob Osmond said the only issue is parking and Frank Hall reminded Mitch that we cannot cut down the size of the building.

Mitch Avalon said that they will close the public hearing but we can stay to listen. They will address questions to Mitch Avalon as our spokesperson. He said they can approve it right then, they can wait with their decision, they can tweak the plan a little and they can add conditions of approval. As an example, they could insist that we replace an existing tree. They could add the condition that we re-align the sidewalk around the existing tree and create a meandering path. They could send us back to Design Review. Angel Rubio said he doesn't think we will do any harm to the tree. Then general discussion regarding sidewalks ensued.

Final comments were regarding opening the upper yard for Tue night's meeting. The PACE Committee then went to the Parish Council meeting to share the discussion. Sandra Hall displayed white boards with signatures from all of the weekend's masses.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45PM.

Back on February 16 we had received a letter telling us the Diocese approved of our plans with only a few exceptions. Here is an excerpt from a letter to the PACE Committee from Sandra Hall:

This is an exciting time in our building project. First, the good news; the Diocese has approved our plans, but with some caveats. Because of the input we have received from Rich Vila and from Paul Kelly none of their concerns came as a surprise. One concern was that we install a low maintenance floor rather than wood. This was first suggested from the Youth Group at one of our early Parish meetings as a cost cutting measure.

Secondly, the Diocese wanted assurance that Rich Vila will be our contractor. Fr. Neal was

asked if Rich had been selected and Fr Neal confirmed that he had. Their final concern was that we understand that we are required to pay Union and/or prevailing wages. This was something that Rich had informed us of long ago.

Also behind the scenes during this time there was permit work being researched and completed by the PACE committee members. A PACE Kitchen Team was formed to visit a synagogue in Danville which had been designed by Paul Kelly's firm. PACE Committee volunteers were visiting other facilities and researching rental agreements which had to be crafted in advance of getting our building permit.

On March 10, 2005, the Martinez Gazette reported in its headline, "St. Catherine's gets green light to build parish center." The Contra Costa Times Pleasant Hill/Martinez Record ran an article with the headline, "St. Catherine's gets OK for gym." But in a letter to PACE Committee members in March 21, Sandra Hall said that we still did not have our Use Permit. At the 11th hour a neighbor wrote a letter appealing the Planning Commission's vote and asking for more concessions even though all the issues had already been addressed. The City Council would be addressing our issue at their meeting on April 20.

Meanwhile we went forward with plans for a construction meeting on April 22 and continued to work towards a second pledge drive. E. Paul Kelly's notes from that meeting show that the "design build" concept was discussed. Kelly's contract included the design for: structural engineering, civil engineering, the landscape architect and an acoustic consultant. Design build contractors provided by Vila included: heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing, fire protections (sprinklers and hydrant), and electrical work (power, lighting and fire alarm). PACE would be responsible for a kitchen consultant, security and communication and data. Angel Rubio would be working as our landscape consultant to advice about native plants along the creek. It was time to contact P. G. & E., Martinez Water and Central San.

Frank and Sandra Hall asked to step down as leaders in the second pledge drive. There had been a series of sub-committee meetings with parish volunteers giving their input about the second drive. PACE chose Walsh & Associates to run the second campaign based on the success of the first. Alan and Katherine Hern were asked to head up the new pledge drive.

On March 23 St. Catherine's sent a letter to the City of Martinez Planning Department clarifying that construction work would not take place on weekends until the building was *buttoned up*. After that, we agreed to work from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays but not on Sundays. Meanwhile Martinez Senior Planner Corey Simons was requesting detailed information about the proposed parking lot lighting; showing the *neighborhood-friendly* nature of the light fixtures. In April the city asked the Geotechnical Engineer to review the structural engineer's design and write a letter to the Building Department stating that the design was in compliance with the recommendations in the soils report.

In the spring of 2006 PACE volunteers put on a concert by the Notre Dame Glee Club. St. Catherine's 2001 graduate, Robby Rusca, was a freshman at Notre Dame and asked if

he could bring the Glee Club Concert here as his contribution to PACE. Fr. Brian Joyce of Christ the King offered the use of his church and St. Catherine's volunteer, Mary Cook, found parish host families for over sixty musicians. We were told that our concert was one of the best attended to date. Throughout the entire campaign our parish service clubs held small fundraisers and have continually made club contributions to PACE.

Throughout the planning process we have been offered building material, which would be a huge savings for us, such as cement and rebar. Rich Vila pointed out two caveats with these kinds of gifts; 1.) That we would have to ask our donors to hold on to that material for an indefinite time because we didn't have a target date for construction, and 2.) Vila Construction would have to oversee the quality of the material, using only the best. However, gifts of construction material have not been ruled out as cost savers.

In May of 2006 we heard back from the Diocese attorney, Jim McCann, who was working on the draft of the parking agreement. He was drafting a document that would be acceptable to the City of Martinez and would be attached to our Conditional Use Permit.

Building plans were handed out to all the experts for Plan Checks. The drawings were found to be solid workmanship. Our construction plans were ready to go.

We had our first pre-construction meeting in August of 2006. On August 24, 2006, we had, on hand, a cash balance from the PACE I Campaign of \$658,875.59, a cash balance, on hand, of \$256,186.45 and \$13,248.00 (gross) from the Notre Dame Glee Club Concert. The total pledges from the PACE II Campaign, was \$734,190.60 which included bequests for \$25,000 and "in kind" value of \$18,500. Not included was a Soda Foundation \$75,000 Grant which had been procured by Sandra Hall, but would not be made available until construction was actually underway. **In our original PACE I drive we were told we would be lucky if we raised \$800,000 and we raised just over a million. In PACE 2 the volunteers raised almost the same amount we were striving for in 1999.** St. Catherine's was becoming known as *the little church that could*.

In September of 2006 Frank and Sandra Hall met with Mike Canizzaro, the CFO of the Oakland Diocese. They were told that St. Catherine's needed to raise an additional 2.5 million dollars in pledges before the diocese would lend us the money. How could this have happened? Trying to keep up with construction costs was like trying to fill a bucket with a hole in the bottom. If we could have started building at the outset our project would have costs just over a million dollars, but we didn't know then whether or not we could even legally build on the site. Around this time we shortened the PACE prayer so it could be recited at each of our Masses.

In December of 2006 the total expenses were published in the church bulletin:

Total pledges both campaigns	\$1,754.650.80
Total collected to date from both campaigns	\$1,290.764.37

Expenses to date:

Phase I, Ministry Center	\$ 29,720.07
Architect	\$294,742.82
Costs of both campaigns	\$138,522.66
Permits and fees	\$ 84,817.10

Balance in savings account including interest:	\$ 983.856.58
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We were accruing about \$50,000 a year in interest alone.

In February of 2007 Paul Kelly wrote to Fr. Neal pointing out that the Conditional Use Permit was about to expire on March 8, 2007. On March 7, Andrew von Haunalter, the school Principal received and forwarded to Fr. Neal and Sandra Hall, an email from Albert Lopez of the City of Martinez. Mr. Lopez explained that something had to happen immediately. Either Rich Vila had to come in immediately, with proof of insurance, and get the Building Permit, or, we would have had to apply for a planning extension and face the public hearing process again. The school was starting to build the pre-school in the Ministry Center and we believed that the neighbors, who almost stopped the building, would be up-in-arms again over the pre-school project. So, the decision was to get our Building Permit immediately. Failing to do so could have potentially squandered all of our hard work to date as well as over half a million dollars in development costs. The City of Martinez gave us a one-day grace period to accommodate Fr. Neal's day off. He then signed a check in the amount of \$17,397.15 and we finally had our Building Permit.

No PACE money was spent on the creating and building of the preschool in the **Ministry** Center. It also needs to be mentioned that it was parishioner Tim McLoughlin who created that lovely space for toddlers in a major remodel.

Deacon Albert took over as the Parish Administrator in September of 2007 after Fr. Neal left. One of the first things Deacon Albert did was to invite PACE representatives to attend a meeting of the Parish Council. Parish Councilwoman, AnaMarie Avila Farias had expressed an interest in PACE and asked Deacon Albert if she could get on board to help us in any way. AnaMarie reviewed PACE documents and finances to prepare for the joint meeting on October 4, 2007.

Like many of our other volunteers AnaMarie brought a fresh perspective, her talents and her education to PACE. Her plan was to create a feasibility study and a cost analysis, that is, to estimate what our exact costs would be and to discern what we could expect as

income from the building. The idea was to go to the Diocese with a workable figure rather than having the Diocese telling us what we had to raise in pledges. Until this time the goal, set by the Diocese, had been a moving target. Something that most parishioners didn't realize is that the Diocese is the bank. St. Catherine's couldn't go to an outside lender because we didn't own the land; it belonged to the Diocese. But, the other important use of a cost analysis and feasibility study was that potential grantors would ask for the kind of information that such a study would garner.

AnaMarie Avila, Deacon Albert Dizon and Frank and Sandra Hall met with Mike Canizzaro at the Diocese on October 30, 2007. The CFO said that, in the opinion of the Diocese, our campaign was failing because we had not yet brought in enough pledges. He again explained that we needed to have half the costs on hand and the other half in pledges before the Diocese would give us our construction loan. He commended us for using the professional fund raising company and strongly suggested that we hire another professional who might help us with different funding strategies. He also suggested partnering with the City of Martinez who might recognize that there is no other building like this in our town and who might see the benefit of sharing the use of the building with us. Canizzaro cited the relationship between the City of Walnut Creek and the Jewish Community Center as an example. We came from that meeting frustrated but also inspired to find other ways to raise funds outside of the St. Catherine's family. As of August 26, 2007, we had a total of \$1,066,752.60, which included \$22,729.60 in interest.

In November the same four people met with the interim City Manager, Don Blubaugh, as well as Assistant City Manager and Community Development Director, Karen Majors. The meeting was very fruitful. Not that there was any partnership possibility but that we were given the gift of time. We were told there were no foreseeable problems with extending our Building Permit.

The Parish Activity Center Extension or PACE activity is always going on behind the scenes. We underwent an internal audit and worked towards finalizing our business plan. The structure of the PACE committee was changed in order to create a larger Team of people with expertise and connections who could be called forth when needed. The restructuring made it more workable, with a smaller decision making group, as had been originally set forth by Fr. Vincent. A larger group, now called the PACE Team, is to be kept informed and therefore able to inform even more people of PACE activities. PACE is in the parish web page for anyone who might be curious to know where the process is to date.

After being advised by the Diocese to hire a professional consultant, PACE hired the firm VenueTech out of Lafayette. The owner, Mr. John Lynde, has worked for years finding alternative funding for non-profits. John Lynde is also in the building management business predicted what we can expect for income and expenses once the building is up and running. One of his first requests was to meet with PACE Team member, Vince Romeo, the Director of CYO. Outside of the school use, CYO will be the 2nd biggest user of the premises. We needed to get a clear picture of how their use will affect our income and, after that, every other potential user will be assessed. Lynde then

met with Sandra Hall and PACE Team members Diana Palmer and Rita Thomas to start an internal audit of PACE finances.

An internal audit is important in order to draft Grant Proposals. Also, we will be returning to the Diocese with our business plan and we want perfect records. The first pledge drive was posted in the old DOS computer program so a spread sheet, combining the two campaigns, needed to be created and parish volunteer, Esther Conception took on that task. Rich Vila provided a new building cost analysis. The finalized business plan can be viewed on the parish web page www.stcmtz.org under the heading *Articles of Interest*.

It would have been nice if we could have had a backward look at the beginning of our project, but it might have been too discouraging to even start. So many things could have stopped us completely. We might not have been able to merge our two lots. Our property might have been incompatible with flood concerns. If the dirt had been unstable we might have failed the soils analysis. If the neighbors in opposition had been more numerous and if we hadn't got our parking variance we would have been brought to an abrupt stop. We could have been stopped by the Diocese, the City, the County, the Fire Marshall or the Health Department anywhere along the process, but we weren't. The huge amount of money we have received in pledges is unbelievable enough to be miraculous. I believe this has been a result of our continual prayers. Fr. Leo says we can't get dollars without pennies. We continue to receive contributions, either through pledges or prayer.

Our balance in the Diocese PACE account is \$1,312,034.26 as of June 30, 2010.