St. Peter Parish Council (SPPC) Meeting Minutes

October 5, 2026

Attendance

Parish Council Members:

Parish Council Role	In Attendance
Pastor	Father Joe
Parochial Vicar	Father Marty
Chairperson	
Vice Chairperson	Skip Paul
Secretary	Marion Enie
Ladies Guild	Joanne Beekley
Faith Formation	Chloe Brzoska
Knights of Columbus	Mike Farina
Finance	Ralph Rand
Christmas Fair	Jane Alaimo, Chris Miller
Liturgy	Mary Todzia
Building and Maintenance	
Regional Parochial School	Mary Beth Iacobelli
Trustees	Carmelo Rosa
At Large	Martha Ceplenski, Kathy Oktavec

Parishioners/Guests:
Melissa Carlson

Opening

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. Father Joe offered the opening prayer.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Kathy Oktavec made a motion to approve the June minutes, seconded by Ralph Rand; all approved

Mary Beth Iacobelli moved to approve the September minutes, with edits to include Joanne Beekley in attendance and to add to new business that a grant has been submitted to upgrade the security system. Kathy Oktavec seconded; all approved

Old Business & Recent Events

Ralph Rand reported that ~12 parishioners attended the Finance Q&A during the September 27th Coffee Hour. There were multiple items addressed. The Finance Committee is developing a Q&A for distribution.

No report for the Exit Door update. The specs need to be reworked. The initial estimate received was $6k.

Skip Paul reported that Fr. Joe's Blessing of the Pets on October 4th. Each pet received a St. Francis medal. Fr. Marty recommended posting event photos on the St. Peter website. Pope Francis has designated this year as a Jubilee Year, marking 800 years since St. Francis's death.

New Business & Upcoming Events

Fr. Joe noted that the Diocese gave no direction on when to recite the Vocation and St. Michael prayers. Per Church Law, only the Mass prayers can be recited during the Mass proper. These prayers should not be part of the Mass prayers. It was agreed that the prayers will be recited before Mass begins. Lectors will be updated. Fr. Joe to work with Laura to develop an announcement.

Ushers will count weekend Mass attendance during the month of October and report it to the Diocese. The count should include everyone in attendance, including priests, deacons, choir, and children. 5 PM: Mike Farina, Craig Salonia; 8:30: Ken Vallera; 11: Carmelo Rosa.

Evening Mass will be at 4:00, starting on October 31 to coincide with the annual time change.

Skip Paul reported that the Liturgical Committee is making progress. The goal is to improve attendance at parish events through better communication and promotion. The next event, the Living Rosary, will be on October 19th.
The All Saints Vigil will include Mass at 4:00 PM, followed by Adoration from 5-9 PM and a Rosary starting at 5. Mary Todzia will lead the Rosary. Luminaries to honor our beloved deceased will be made available as part of the a Mass at 6 PM on Monday, November 2. Announcements and envelopes for a proposed $10.00 per-luminary offering are being developed.

Mike Farina reported that the Townwide Ecumenical service will be at St. Peter this year on Tuesday, November 24th. Sr. Lany Jo will help coordinate. Musical accompaniment is under discussion. The Ladies Guild will provide refreshments. Participating churches are the United Congregational Church of Higganum and Haddam, St. James Episcopal, United Methodist of Higganum, St. Peter, and Sisters of the Sacred Heart. The committee plans to develop an ad for HK News and potentially a news article.

Revisions are needed to include the Liturgy Committee in the Parish Council By-Laws: Article III, Membership, item 2, Ex-officio members, Liturgy Chairperson (or representative), and Article V, Section C, Committees, to include Liturgy. Jane Alaimo moved to approve the amendments; Mary Beth Icaobelli seconded; approved. Mary Todzia will serve as Liturgy Committee voting representative.

Coffee hours will be planned throughout the year as follows. Hosts are needed.

- September, Parish Council
- October, Faith Formation
- November-December-none
- January
- February-March-none
- April
- May
- June
- July-August-none

Marion Enie recommended adding monitors at the Church entrances to make announcements. Fr. Joe commented that St. Lawrence is considering the same. Marion will follow up with Bob Vissers at St. Lawrence.

Additional new business
Mary Todzia reported that someone was injured by a kneeler and that the First Aid kit was difficult to find. Mary will review the items in the kit and ensure that it is in a convenient location.

Mary Todzia noted that the crying room has items that may be a hazard for children. Chris Miller suggested that Moms make the space child-friendly.

Martha Ceplenski commented that a parishioner asked about establishing a children's choir. At this time, no plans are underway. 6 committed children would be needed and the support of a musical director.

Ministry Updates

Knights of Columbus

Mike Farina reported that the Knights will contribute ~$40,000 to multiple projects, including the exit door, catch basins, propane tank, and parking lot.

Ladies Guild

Joanne Beekley reported that the Ladies Guild will recite the Rosary before the October 14th meeting at 6 PM. Baked goods are needed for the October 15 blood drive.

Catholic Charities/Pro-Life Ministry

Mary Todzia reported that there will be a rosary to end abortion on the Town Green on October 17. Mary also distributed a Prayer to End Abortion.

Finance Committee

Ralph Rand reported that first-quarter income and expenses are even. Chris Miller appreciated the HELP email; ongoing education is important.

Christmas Fair

Chris Miller reported that distributing the raffle tickets after Mass was very successful. Only 56 envelopes needed mailing. 69 businesses made donations. The process is underway to accept electronic payments, with a $12/month fee to activate and a 0.08% fee if using a debit card.

Tag Sale

Mike Farina reported that the activities are gearing up for 2027. The town jail will be available for storage of items after October 19.

Faith Formation

Chloe Brzoska noted that Confirmation rehearsal is on October 14. Bishop Reidy will officiate Confirmation on Sunday, October 18. 73 children are enrolled in Faith Formation for 2026-27. New textbooks have been approved.

Closing

NOTE: Next meeting is on Monday, October 26 (moved due to All Souls Day on November 2)

Father Marty offered the closing prayer.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.