



St. Michael Catholic Church

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ST. MICHAEL PARISH CHURCH PASTORAL AND FINANCE COUNCIL POLICY AND PROCEDURES (CHANGE #1)

April 11, 2024

The following Change #1 to the parish's existing Policy and Procedures regarding the conduct of the parish's Pastoral and Finance Councils is hereby published to better clarify the procedures for guests during Councils' meetings.

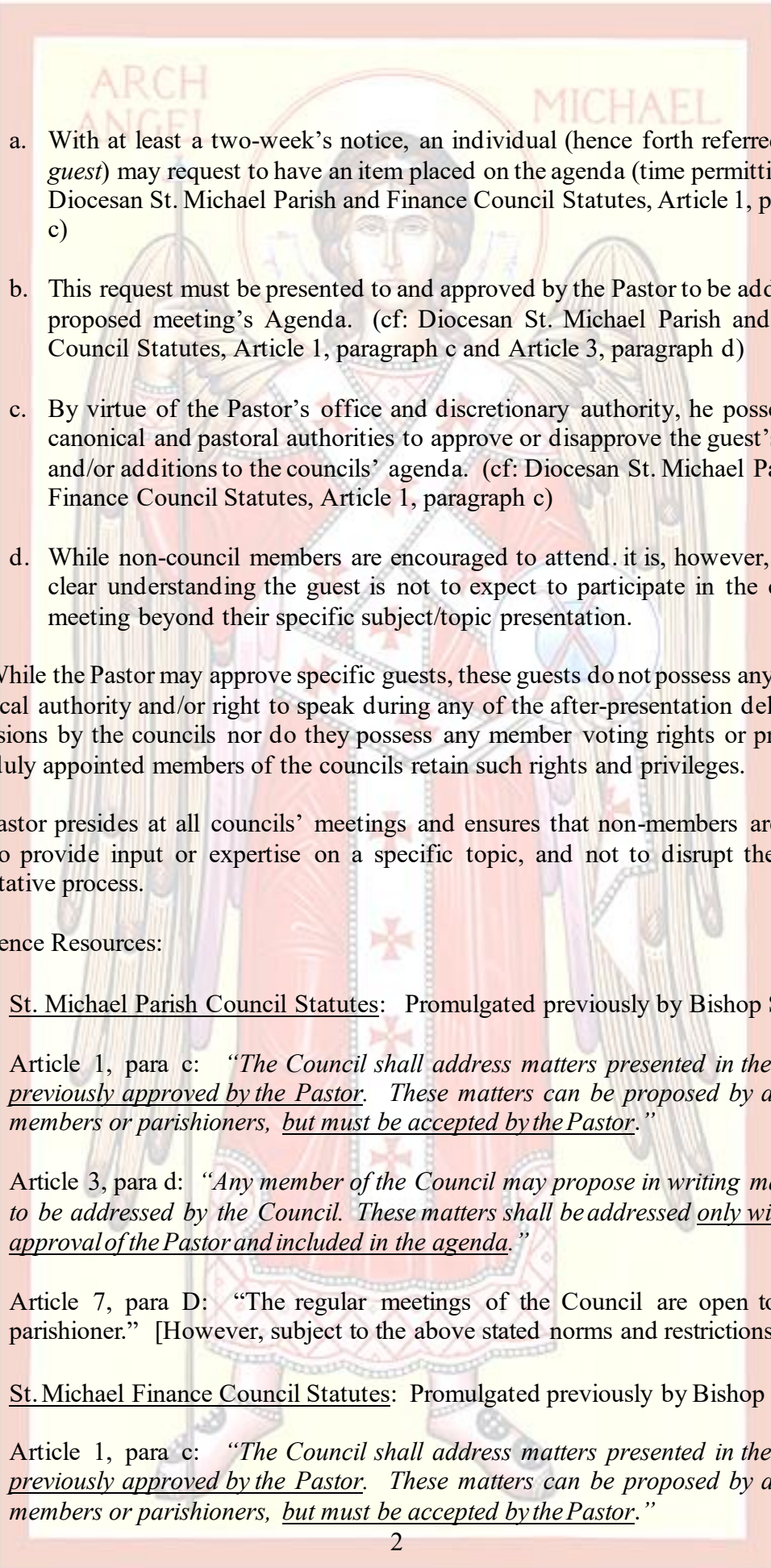
Is a parish-level council's meeting open to anyone who would like to attend and engage in discussions?

Yes, however, there are practical, respected, and observed norms, restrictions, and expectations which have been long-held as norms within the U.S. dioceses (and subordinately to its parish or parochial churches):

1. The Pastor leads the councils and at his discretion, councils' meetings may be held in Executive Sessions (i.e., closed to non-member guests) when confidentiality is required (especially if the meeting involves sensitive personnel or financial issues).

The primary or overriding canonical principle is that such parochial councils—whether Pastoral or Finance—are consultative bodies. The Pastor presides over both councils and has the final authority to determine who may address the councils' members to assist him provide expert advice or specific information.

2. No guest, who is not an existing member of the Councils, shall attend councils' meetings unless: (a) they have a specific item of discussion to be presented to the Council(s); or (b) they are invited to a specific meeting to give an activity report [such as parish annual bazaar status report; a new suggested parish fund-raising event, etc.]. The following requirements apply:

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- a. With at least a two-week's notice, an individual (hence forth referred to as a *guest*) may request to have an item placed on the agenda (time permitting). (cf: Diocesan St. Michael Parish and Finance Council Statutes, Article 1, paragraph c)
- b. This request must be presented to and approved by the Pastor to be added to the proposed meeting's Agenda. (cf: Diocesan St. Michael Parish and Finance Council Statutes, Article 1, paragraph c and Article 3, paragraph d)
- c. By virtue of the Pastor's office and discretionary authority, he possesses the canonical and pastoral authorities to approve or disapprove the guest's request and/or additions to the councils' agenda. (cf: Diocesan St. Michael Parish and Finance Council Statutes, Article 1, paragraph c)
- d. While non-council members are encouraged to attend, it is, however, with the clear understanding the guest is not to expect to participate in the councils' meeting beyond their specific subject/topic presentation.

NB: While the Pastor may approve specific guests, these guests do not possess any inferred canonical authority and/or right to speak during any of the after-presentation deliberative discussions by the councils nor do they possess any member voting rights or privileges. Only duly appointed members of the councils retain such rights and privileges.

The Pastor presides at all councils' meetings and ensures that non-members are invited only to provide input or expertise on a specific topic, and not to disrupt the official consultative process.

[Reference Resources:

- St. Michael Parish Council Statutes: Promulgated previously by Bishop Sheridan

Article 1, para c: *"The Council shall address matters presented in the agenda, previously approved by the Pastor. These matters can be proposed by any of its members or parishioners, but must be accepted by the Pastor."*

Article 3, para d: *"Any member of the Council may propose in writing matters to be addressed by the Council. These matters shall be addressed only with the approval of the Pastor and included in the agenda."*

Article 7, para D: "The regular meetings of the Council are open to any parishioner." [However, subject to the above stated norms and restrictions.]

- St. Michael Finance Council Statutes: Promulgated previously by Bishop Sheridan

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Article 3, para d: *“Any member of the Council may propose in writing matters to be addressed by the Council. These matters shall be addressed only with the approval of the Pastor and included in the agenda.”*

Article 7, para D: “The regular meetings of the Council are open to any parishioner.” [However, subject to the above stated norms and restrictions.]]

3. After the guest has given their specific subject/topic presentation or activity report and any post-presentation council members’ questions and answers (Q&A) segment has concluded, the guest will be excused from the councils’ meeting and it will continue as normal per the agenda. Generally, 10 minutes will be allowed to the speaker or guest.
4. There are no “***observer***” non-council members permitted to attend an entire or partial councils’ meetings.

In addition to the Code of Canon Law and established Diocesan Particular Law (in part, cited above), the general conduct of councils’ meeting will ensure the norms of the Robert’s Rule of Order are followed. Regarding guest speakers:

1. A guest speaker is not a council member, does not have parliamentary rights, and has no inherent or acquired rights to speak [beyond their presentation of the subject/topic], make formal motions, participate in debate, or vote.
2. Regarding time limits, each guest presenter is permitted to speak for no longer than 10 minutes.
3. The Presiding Officer [the Pastor] has the authority to remove non-members from councils’ meetings if they disrupt the meeting or violate rules of professional conduct and decorum.
4. Meeting minutes should only record the name of the speaker and the topic, not a summary of their speech.
5. Like [appointed councils] members, guests should address all remarks to the Presiding Officer [the Pastor], not directly to members of the [councils’ members].

(cf: Robert’s Rule of Order, 12th Revision Edition, September 2020)

In closing, councils’ meetings are to maintain a sense of dignified order and décor. Without such, any councils’ meeting can easily devolve into something akin to a municipal, open "Town Hall" meeting.

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Thank you in advance for your time and kind assistance in this important matter.

Respectfully
Yours in Christ,

cc: File

Rev. R. Newbury Jr.

Rev. Robert G. Newbury Jr., KC*HS
Pastor

