

Special Church Conference, Our Time to Build
Meeting Minutes, Tuesday, June 13th, 7:00pm

Meeting was called to order @ 7:10pm

A handout detailing the motion requiring the vote was distributed to all members

Susan Reynolds, Chair; Ad Council, Member; Funding/Feasibility Committee: opened the meeting and welcomed the group and explained the purpose of the meeting

Pastor John Taylor offered an opening prayer

Susan Reynolds: Overview and background:

- Susan has attended here since 1994 and considers this church a very special place for her family
- Many hurdles have been cleared to get us to this point including conversations with architects about the actual design of the renovation
- We feel ready to vote on this project and move it forward
- The slide show with data compiled from a fundraising feasibility study was shown on overhead projection screens

Mike Sams; Lay Leader, Co-chair; Building Committee Study Committee:

- Thanked the group for attending
- Mike explained the origin of the 'whereas' clauses and outlined them as follows:
 - 1.) Provide a better and more welcoming space for fellowship
 - 2.) Improve accessibility
 - 3.) Improve safety conditions including an up to date fire suppression system
- Mike also offered an explanation of Book of Discipline requirements

Jim Finger; Chair; Trustees, Co-chair; Building Committee Study Committee:

- Rough stakes are placed outdoors to give folks a better sense of project (though we do not have final plans from architect; our final plans will be similar to our initial ones)
- Group moved outdoors to take a look at proposed changes with an explanation from Jim. Some discussion ensued about the location of windows/entrances and walls while the group met outdoors.

Throughout the course of information provided, there were ample opportunities for attendees to ask questions. The following is a summary of the questions asked, with a summarized response provided:

Questions/Answers from participants:

How was it determined who were interviewed for this project? Is it a fair cross section of the congregation if was selected based on certain criteria?

Yes, the people interviewed are considered 'heavily' involved members. We took recommendations from our consultants on this process.

Is it possible beyond the renovation that we take advantage of the project and help beautify some of our outdoor spaces?

Yes, we will look at adding shrubs, relocating the dumpster and storage shed from their current locations.

Have we considered better storage for musical instruments and equipment so that they do not have to be moved every time they are used?

No, this was not part of the initial plan though we will be able to utilize the elevator to help move them. We will look at all opportunities to help in this area.

Have we considered expanding the actual sanctuary?

While we do not have a plan for a sanctuary expansion, we hope to be able to enhance seating by looking at the following areas:

- *Remove 1/2 wall in back of sanctuary*
- *Perhaps place 1/2 pews in back of sanctuary*
- *Consider better utilization of choir loft for seating*

How long will the renovation project last?

In the best case scenario, we will have architectural drawings within 2-3 months, and if the funding is there, we could complete it within a year after that. There are many things that could make the project take longer, however, this is a best case.

Will supplemental loans be needed if we do not get the project fully funded? Is there a fallback plan for funding?

Yes, we are exploring both bridge and standard loans through banks and the UM Foundation for any funding that is needed. Even if we get the project fully funded, there may be the need for loans to supplement donations that are spread out over a 3-year period.

Many of us remember going through this process many years ago when a pastoral change halted our ability to finish out a capital campaign and building project. With Pastor John's length of appointment already exceeding the 'norm' for many UM Pastors, how do we know that history will not repeat itself?

No one is guaranteed how long our pastor will be here. Our hope is that this project will move forward either way because it is important to us as a church and allows us to be open and welcoming to all. The district is aware of the potential consequences if our pastor is removed at a critical time in the campaign, though they have made us no promises on the length of his tenure. Nelson Ball reminded us also that the stock market failure during the last campaign affected the donors more so than the pastoral change. Additionally, the last project involved many thousands of dollars spent on legal fees because of disputes with our neighbors on 'open spaces' of the proposed project. We have met with town officials and they have indicated that because we already crossed all of those hurdles, and because this proposed project is smaller than the last proposal, we will not have to go through the expensive and time consuming variance process again.

Does the full price of the project take into account increases in materials' cost?

Yes, there is an allotment for cost overrides worked into the budget for the project. We also are looking at contractors who will provide a 'fixed cost' price rather than a project price that is variable with costs and materials.

Will we be able to stay open and operational during construction?

The group feels strongly that we will. While we can not guarantee that there will not be disruption to our normal flow of activities, we will work to minimize the disruption and make the most of it.

Motion:

A request was made to vote on the motion as presented. It passed unanimously.

Susan Reynolds thanked the group and the building and funding committees who have put so much work into getting us to this point. The attendees were offered the opportunity to serve on the building committee and the following people expressed interest:

Carleen Shaldone, Dr. Peter Hellberg, Chip Feazel, Dave Workman

Pastor John offered some words of encouragement and a closing prayer.

A motion was passed to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gina Downing