

Charge Conference

11/16/08

The Building Committee was formed as a result of the vote at the February Charge Conference. The Nominations Committee began selections for the committee in March. Members who answered the call and agree to serve on this committee are: Brand Ahern, Al Beach, Gene Gerber, Suzanne Haehlen, Linda Jenkins (sec), Linda Kelly, Doug Martin, Kay McGuire, Dana Mortenson, Lauren Noble, Tom Padley, Sean Posten, and myself. A big thanks to all of these folks for their hard work to date.

The 1st committee meeting was held on June 23. There have been 10 whole committee meetings since then including: a meeting with a city planner, several meetings with a real estate agent, and a joint meeting with the East Central Committee on Building and Location. We have also presented two reports to the Church Council. In addition, there have been four property acquisition sub-committee meetings and a joint meeting between our fundraising sub-committee and the Church Finance Committee.

Significant time was spent reviewing previous facilities reports with special attention paid to the very comprehensive Exploration Committee report presented in October of 2007. This report can be found on the church website and I would encourage you all to read it if you have not done so.

This report laid the groundwork for the “why” of this project. Their recommendations to build a new church on a new site and to establish a building committee to do this work were then presented to the Church Council.

The Church Council approved a motion to form a building committee to “research funding, hire a design-build firm, purchase land, and build a new church.” All of this to be done within the framework of the supporting church missions of worship, fellowship, and growth.

The February Charge Conference then approved a motion to this effect by a very large majority. This action basically established the set of goals for our committee and outlined our assigned tasks on behalf of the entire church.

Our committee has been diligent in pursuing these goals, to communicate in a continuous manner through multiple means, and to remember the three pronged church mission while doing our work. We see our assignment as a two phase assignment with the first objective... to purchase land.

Our geographic area of concentration has been centered on the demographic study that was part of that extensive Exploration Committee Report. Roughly 90% of our congregation lives north of Wilkins Elementary, east of Alburnett Road, west of hwy 13 and south of County Home Road.

Our preference has been 20-40 acres based on fairly recent projects by other churches such as St. Mark's Lutheran and Antioch Christian churches. We also consider “extra” acres important for future program growth, to “guard the neighborhood” and, if purchased carefully, as a source of potential funding of our church building through the sale of parcels of land in the future.

We have prioritized properties keeping in mind visibility, accessibility, price, available utilities and municipal services, zoning, and potential future development. We started with over a dozen properties in our target area and have reduced that to one or two that we feel best meet the criteria mentioned here.

Land in our target area, with utilities available, is running between \$25,000 and \$40,000 per acre. Land without utilities and further away from City annexation can be purchased for slightly less but the City gives no guarantee on if or when they could provide these services. In the interest of protecting the price and to maintain the ability to conduct further negotiations on a final price in the future, it is probably not in our best interest to discuss the particular properties in much more detail than this at this time.

We may, however, need to do diligence on these properties...for example hire a firm to test soil, determine that proper drainage exists, and check for the presence of hazardous waste to clear the way for an offer on a suitable property. This is the purpose of today's motion.

I also want to add that the consensus of our committee, given the economic times and our mission to be good stewards of our church's finances, is that the property purchase should be a cash transaction without incurring additional church debt.

The East Central Committee's guideline is a four-thirds guideline that we have spelled out in various church publications. In short, they will require 1/3 cash, 1/3 pledges, and 1/3 loan with a loan payment of no more than 1/3 of the annual church operational budget.

Again, our committee feels that for a land purchase, it is wisest to this without incurring debt. Ideally we will be able to raise the money we need through donations to the capital fund or at least move forward with a combination of cash and pledges without a loan.

What steps will be required once the capital fund has cash and pledges needed for purchasing land... AND we have a property that meets all of our criteria? 1st – our committee will have to meet again with the East Central Committee for approval. 2nd – we will need to request permission from the Trustees to spend the money in the capital fund for the purchase of property, 3rd – the Church Council will need to approve the Trustees action, 4th – another charge conference will be required to support the Church Council motion to buy land. This will all take time and a serious fundraising campaign. I think the current balance in the capital fund is in the neighborhood of \$45,000 with a total of \$70,000 in pledges for 2009. We have a long way to go.

We know, based on previous studies, that the potential of our church program and its missions of worship, fellowship, and growth are limited by the current facility. None of us take lightly the prospect of leaving the current building where we all have fond memories and emotional ties.

We are committed, however, to doing God's work now AND in the future...and if moving forward to build a new church can help us meet the Christian needs for our children and future members long after we are gone...we are willing to do the work to get that done. For these reasons, we ask for your approval to take the next steps in this process.

Respectfully submitted,
Jerry Van Dyke, FUMC Building Committee Chair