

Hillhurst United Church Building Project

Initial Congregational Meeting April 26, 2009

Congregation feedback based on questions handed out at meeting: 43 written responses returned at meeting, 6 emails to follow. Tabulated to May 10, 2009

Questions/ Concerns

FINANCES: The cost to the congregation, What will be the extent of fundraising; Will we get income from the affordable housing? (will this be rental property?); A lot of fundraising; Fundraising/financing particularly regarding ongoing operating costs; \$4 million/13 units = \$308,000 per unit, are you sure that this is the most cost effective way to pursue this mission, plus this excludes the addition \$2 million "church" costs that is assumed to be covered. I'm sure we could do an excellent job effectively renovating the existing building for less than \$2 million; fiscal responsibility; on-going costs of maintaining the low cost housing; Not getting into a financial hole. Will the church encourage more revenue-weddings, receptions, concerts, etc; What on-going costs do we have to cover in this affordable housing; Need more info on establishing a firm financial plan; Considering the challenge in obtaining sufficient operating funds- we need to know that the congregation is confident that 2 M dollars can be raised; Can this scheme cover its on-going costs (2011 forward); 50 yr decision, think big, go for \$4 M in church fundraising- include reno to heritage portion; Small congregation relative to what needs to be raised(How many deep pockets hidden in the pews); Are we building low cost housing or subsidized housing; Why is it low cost and/ or who will be subsidizing the rents; Is our community capable of raising 2 – 3 Million dollars; a much more clear financial picture is required. What are the revenue and cost projections? The idea that there is currently no debt, as stated at the meeting today is misleading as there is a liability concerning the upgrade requirements for the existing structure; Many church building fundraising efforts turn into a drain on the congregation; Controlling our trades/architect costs.(19)

PARKING: Where's parking, all public buildings supposed to provide parking; Will planning permission address parking; Parking; What about parking. My concern is how this will be addressed no matter how people are financially down they still will want transportation to excess everyday; Will the church maintain any parking spots, underground or above; Parking; Parking – is this a concern; consider underground parking in addition to basement space; Parking-is underground parking planned; Greg tells me there are no parking spaces in the design. This will not fly. It's a great idea to have common-use cars available, but that does not help people who already have cars, and almost everyone has one. Parking and traffic are major issues in this neighbourhood, and housing units w/o parking simply will not pass. I suggest you look at part of the basement for parking. I seriously doubt you will get permission for a building w/o parking. (10)

CHURCH SPACE: How will this affect internal space – sanctuary, gym. More space for worship; Is there a net gain for Church common space; Will this include a gym/large meeting space; Making sure that the present church space gets due attention, ie. space for youth (adolescents have no real space here), Sunday school etc; consider modern facilities for youth and children- audio visual theatre etc; How will we address the current capacity issues in the sanctuary, concern that 2 services will negatively impact congregation, will there be funds for reno of existing space ie. heritage room, offices; Large space for youth activities (gym) and for congregational meetings/dinners; With affordable housing being the major development, make sure of enough space for both community and church; Sunday school space; Flexibility- limiting options for the congregation of 20 year from now because we lose part of our space/land forever. How do we deal with the Heritage Building; What improvements are being considered for the sanctuary; What is the increased church space; The church sanctuary on Sunday mornings – solutions; Would it be possible to include, in the meeting space, a coffee house for peace activists and peace entertainment. I'm thinking about Bob Stewarts (www.peace.ca) hope to establish a peace café. He has done this already in a Hamilton, Ontario. Also in Hamilton, a United Church opened a tearoom. During the day, the community comes for lunch (and this generates

funds for outreach), and during the evenings, church people have a beautiful area for meetings. Very cool; (13)

HOUSING MANAGEMENT: Is Norfolk the right choice re non-profit housing mgmt, how will this decision be made; Make sure have good management company—renting can be very challenging if tenants have other values or cultures; Highbanks is tremendously successful and well run. There is no negative impact on the neighbourhood; How did we get into housing; Has assisted living (old or disabled) been considered; How the operating costs of the affordable housing will be covered on an ongoing basis; I don't recall from the presentation on Sunday the name of the potential operator for the accommodation component of this development – however again through David Smith the model that Norfolk Housing promotes is seen as a very good approach to subsidized housing. As you can see from their website they advocate a 50/50 model with subsidized and full market rent occupants. As stated on their website, this “approach helps the buildings and their tenants avoid any stigma that may be attached to social housing, and allows people from all socio-economic backgrounds and all levels of ability to be integrated into a larger community”. See the website for additional advantages. <http://www.norfolkhousing.ca/> A point as this project moves forward – it is very important that the future operator of the accommodation be involved in the design/development stages and that the contractor is selected not only on the basis of cost but also on their history of similar projects where community/volunteer involvement is planned.(6)

COMMUNITY: How do we deal with resistance from the neighbours; NIMBY –ism is rampant in Calgary. Committee should include rep from community association, the community is the key ie. They have to be on board and someone from the community association is critical to any further work on this project for it to go ahead; How would you envision the “common spaces” to be used by the community; kind of like Knox United where big events can happen. I think that would be powerful and innovative; As part of community consultation – determine locations, history of other community low cost housing as part of marketing concept –gaining community support; What's the potential for additional partners from the community like local businesses; Is there a budget for marketing to the community; Will the community of Kensington be accepting of the low cost housing; I strongly urge you to include the community association

from the start of planning. Do not count on Dru Farrell to represent the community. If you do not include the Community Association, you run grave risks. Give this community support for supported housing, I am sure that the C.A. will support, if they are included. This is not Vancouver; How are people living in homelessness being invited into the planning process;(8)

QUESTIONS/ CONCERNS:

I don't want the feeling of this older church and the comfort and security to leave in a "New" building.

The impact on PLAY- will it need to close?

As the economy improves, the cost of construction will go back up. It may be a good idea to accelerate the process so construction can start before the next boom.

Can we be more environmentally friendly than Leed?

What is the vision for the relationship between the low cost housing and the church? Many low income individuals do need support. Is the church ready to be that support or are we intentional about how to "resource out"?

Communication plan?

Are there more creative ways of building commercial space (eg café)that could cover on-going programming costs for low income associated, examples youth economic development?

Is the church mature enough to see the plans through.? Does enough of the congregation understand commitment and are they ready for it?

How about Inn from the Cold, will it be lost?

Need to give presentation to congregation and to community why people are homeless(some think "their own fault" "they are lazy")

Fire Safety, general security, respecting our heritage, spirituality comes first;

On-going maintenance

Will the church allow alcohol @ receptions; Ability to keep up momentum given long timeline?

Possibility of a “Peace Care” or similar gathering place – coffee, sandwiches etc;

I still want a rooftop veggie garden; Garden on the roof

Will we have partners with other churches in town to help with \$, Partnerships with local businesses?

Naming rights for new building

Are there ways to make significant \$ from whoever we do build on this site and dedicate those funds to an on-going campaign that dedicates X % of operating to those in the business of building, running and maintaining affordable housing. What happens if this congregation dwindles again and goes back to holding its own hoping further new rebirth (happened lot the last 100 years),

Are the unintended ways this could alter us that might not be what we want for communities future-particularly kid, who are our future?

Limited land for growth, is it absolutely necessary to build? loan climate; Has this been done by any other church? What was the outcome? Can we learn from others?

I spoke to David Smith who was involved in the McDougall UC redevelopment program. A point raised at the meeting on Sunday regarding volunteering involvement brought to mind previous conversations that I had had with David, where McDougall members were welcomed by their contractor to get involved in the project. This is not always the case with contractors. The McDougall general contractor was Hurst Construction – the building committee was very pleased with Hurst work and cooperation.

You may wish to think of architects who are authorities on sustainable architecture. They could be brought in as consultants or as designers, They are Helen and Jorg Ostrowski. Phone number is 239-4449.

Is there an overall height restriction? After the presentation and standing in the school yard there are many buildings on the horizon that are much taller. The presentation suggested a building height in line with the condo development to the west – however we wonder what the street will appear like 10 or 20 years down the road. There is a squat 3 story 1950's apartment block that will most likely be replaced next to the condo (this could be multi-story high end condo development?); the existing development to the NW is 4 floors; what is the long term prospective for the school and yard, will this area be turned into a major multi-story housing development; and finally what does the City see happening in this area in terms of the 50 year plan. In terms of economics this development could maximize the footprint – with parking (underground for rent through the week and available for church functions); and as many floors as the City will permit for church and residential use. To stretch the point, could this redevelopment wrap around the existing church to maintain a component of the historic structure but expand the footprint to the entire lot(s)?

May I suggest that the planners think about another aspect of socially responsible housing. Co-housing design principles create community through intentional design. Marc Paradis is an experienced builder/project manager and authority on co-housing design and construction. He resides in a co-housing community here in Calgary called "Prairie Sky." His phone number is 869-6622.

By 2011 the capacity will be very limited, which is a great thing because it means the church is alive but it's wise to begin planning now.

Jeromy Sturgess is a good choice for architect. I live in one of his early buildings and I love it- very well built.

Sounds like University of Southern California Outreach program which has transformed a difficult relationship;

The congregation will be critical in selling this to the community. Great start today.

Do not get frustrated with the community. The only reason that we are still here is because we have fought to survive. Otherwise, we would be like Eau Claire (entire community bulldozed in one night) or Connaught (beltline) which is being absorbed in highrises. If people are a little tetchy, it's because they are under constant assault from developers and the noise of construction.

When meeting with the community, try not to call the area 'Kensington'. It is Hillhurst/Sunnyside. Hillhurst is where the church is, west of the centre of 10th st. I know this sounds stupid to some people, and that the rest of Calgary and newer people may call it Kensington, but when addressing the community, do try to remember where you are. "Kensington" was what the BRZ started calling it because they wanted to separate the business areas from the residential. Try to avoid fighting old battles. Long history there.

Concerns:

A chance to care and share with the community