

UCM Building Use Symposium ~ April 6, 2017 ~ Minutes

#1: What do we need to do to become a Net Zero energy church?

How can we move this idea forward?

Solar panels on roof.

Research all available technology, example: panels on S facing walls that manage heat.

Sandal Cate: Zone heating. When we open front doors = lose energy. How can we reduce energy lost this way?

Scott Hess: need a complete inventory of infrastructure, what is possible, what costs are.

Jared Duval: take a comprehensive approach e.g. look at all sources of energy...

electric, heating, transportation. Look at baseline usage first. Helps to have 3 to 5 years of baseline data, then we can look at each energy source systematically. We can then compare pros and cons, and financial costs. Jared has additional resources to share.

Priscilla Fox: refer to Barbara Conrey's email for great questions and ideas. District heat? Blower test for air leakage? Improving heating system. Do we need cooling if summer use of church increases (if church is rented out more during warmer months)?

Malcolm Fitzpatrick: We need a long-range, comprehensive fiscal plan to meet needs of various groups within the church. Basement is potentially useful. Need connections upstairs between old and new sections to make building more useful, so new elevator is needed. Before making changes, look at the comprehensive plan. If we make only small changes without considering the big picture, we end up redoing them. With every change, we should ask ourselves if it's within the comprehensive plan that addresses needs of church.

Allen Clark: off-site solar, credits for forest conservation.

Peter Thoms: heat pumps, pellet boilers for heat, on-demand water heating

Vicky Viens: education is needed: we could still improve with energy conservation (example: not leaving lights on). Material use: look upstream to see how we can minimize our impact, what the impact is on trash produced.

Paul Cate: feasibility of district heat connection.

Barbara Conrey: need a user manual for church systems so all have clear directions on how to use everything properly.

Mary Alice Bisbee: transportation and carpooling. Change exterior for more parking.

Install shades for windows to make it easier to show videos on sunny days.

Vicky: make it universal in all we do, everything we are thinking about.

Barbara: We must be sensitive to the historic nature of the building - don't detract from its historic value.

Jared: if and when we are considering specific types of technology, reference those against commitments the church has made in the vision statement. Example: heat

pumps are only as renewable as the electricity used to run them, eg natural gas electricity.

Judith Hinds: VT interfaith power and light is a resource.

Sandal: Cara Robeck with Vt Energy Education Program. She could be a good resource for educating ourselves and our youth.

Vicky: Consider life cycle analysis... sometimes it is more efficient to keep what we have rather than buy new thing.

Concerns

Amy Willis: it's all money! Hard to raise this kind of money.

Scott: stewardship

Malcolm: it's an investment. Within long range plan. Trending toward long-range goal of long-range plan.

Peter Thoms: tension between preservation of character of UCM building and innovation.

Barbara Conrey: need to be extremely cautious about making changes to outside of our building given how important UCM is to city's historic character. We can make many changes without modifying outside of building.

Sandal: we should look at where are we now on the spectrum of where we have been, and where we are going (in terms of energy use)

Vicky: make sure it is an open process, congregation is well-informed as we go along. Also, how much "people energy" do we have to follow through to the end? We should do things in a way that we can see them through to the end.

Mary Alice: those of us without "skin in the game" financially - we can still leave some money to UCM in our wills to help.

#2 Installing an Elevator to Service Second Floor

How can we move this idea forward?

Sam Clark: join accessibility committee, read report (20 pages, published April 2014) located here: <https://ucmvt.org/get-involved/committees/accessibility/>

Scott Hess: need a preliminary feasibility study to look at cost. What is the order of magnitude of the project?

Malcolm: I am in favor of an elevator. Church is built as an old timber structure and we should honor that before renovating it. Two parts of church (front and back) are not connected at same level, so we need to understand how each is built before we make changes. Do we include the cellar and make that accessible, too? Need a study to see what the demands of the church are now and in the future. Also need to consider how the different systems (heating, water, electricity) work together.

Priscilla: Look at renovating existing elevator (elevette) for access to sanctuary.

Vicky: look at all options. Within building limits, there may be a smaller option (ramps, handrails, etc) that improves accessibility without installing a full elevator.

Sam Clark: All, please read the accessibility report. It is on UCM website, published about 2 years ago. It addresses all these issues we are talking about, as best we could at the time.

Barbara: the lift here is not a full elevator and is past its useful life (installed 1989). We need to look at a comprehensive solution to take care of all our needs.

Mary Alice: we could put in ramps on the back. Elevator should go by the accessible door and ramp because that's where folks will enter the building. For a person in a wheelchair, it's a long way to go from School St to front of building where the elevator presently is located.

Concerns

Malcolm: elevator has to be at an accessible level. Security concerns...if it is accessible at ground level, someone has to watch the entry point there, so we need to consider where offices of church are so staff can keep an eye on it... the two are related. Think about changes together, and don't make massive changes all at once, but rather look at long range plans to meet our needs. Locate elevator within historic structure of church.

Sam Clark: key point: we need more people energy on the accessibility ctte. That would be invaluable. Without more energy it may fizzle a bit. Next mtg this Sunday!

Judith: at UCM, if you touch one piece (e.g. elevator) then you touch 12 pieces... we have inadequate space for offices, RE classrooms... all pieces are connected.

Mary Alice: keeping some of the renovations in the back would be preferable b/c we could avoid some of the historic preservation guidelines.

Peter Thoms: money is a concern.

Steve Gold: KH Library's elevator replacement across the street is \$100K.

Sam: please consult accessibility report for more info.

<https://ucmvt.org/app/uploads/2016/01/accessibility-tf-report.pdf>

Mary Alice: accessibility meeting this Sunday, 11:30 in the Nursery.

#3 Modifying the church to become a short-term physical sanctuary to accommodate up to 4 undocumented immigrants.

Diane Fitch: I'm part of a group studying UCM becoming Sanctuary Congregation, in consultation with Migrant Justice. Sensitive locations are hospitals, schools and churches, and ICE generally has not arrested people in those places. Could UCM offer sanctuary? People who come to sanctuaries generally have a final deportation order but their lawyers think they have a good chance of having order rescinded, good chance of changing their status. We are also looking at UCM housing someone for a few weeks to few months. We're having conversations with other congregations in Montpelier who already have an existing living space, with UCM playing a supporting role. Those in

sanctuary would need a bedroom that is specifically “theirs” - designated for them; cooking facilities; shower. Why 4 people? Only the person facing the deportation order would have to stay physically within the building (to avoid arrest), but they may have family members with them who would come and go from the building at will.

Amy Willis: is Sanctuary Congregation a legal designation?

Diane: No, not a legal designation. Historically ICE has not come into churches. However, it is illegal to hide someone.

Q: Are there any Sanctuary Churches in VT at this time?

Priscilla: not yet, but there is a UU sanctuary church in Denver.

How can we move this idea forward?

Malcolm: consider whether we could purchase the building next door to UCM and use this for many purposes, including sanctuary, also has parking, etc.

Diane: to be safe, the person must be *in the church or on the campus*, so an adjacent building would qualify (if we owned a bldg next door, for example).

Bill Pelton: assess any codes that might apply to a change of use (from present use to residential), evaluate how it might affect liability, insurance coverage, what level of service would be required from staff, what kind of supervision required on a 24 hour a day basis.

Allen Clark: any tax consequences?

Priscilla: where would we put a shower..what is the cheapest and easiest place?

Scott Hess: if talking about changes to the building, how could we integrate current needs with future plans?

Sandal: what would make the least impact on church's physical space? Look at graduations toward providing sanctuary rather than just end point of housing 4 people here. Look at which churches already have space.

Jeanne Richardson: put a tiny house in the parking lot. Be creative!

Bill P: yes! Tiny house would serve needs and might do a better job of that than making permanent alterations to the church building. Yestermorrow School has been building tiny houses, I think one per year, at a cost of about 25-30K to build.

Sandal: use a camping trailer with a chemical toilet.. This could work for several months.

Mary Alice: Norwich U. tiny houses

Barbara: How would we provide year-round sanctuary? Pop-up camping trailer will not work in winter. Also size... tiny house or camper may not work for 4 people.

Vicky: think about what a person actually needs vs what they are used to? Be open to needs vs wants, consider what standard of living is required. Do they need hot water and lots of space? Also, the person has to make it from their home to sanctuary location. Are there options for helping to move people to a safe place... like underground railroad?

Allen Clark: talk to Sharon Plumb about living in a small space. Also Gwen Hallsmith.

Peter Thoms: could be a wonderful opportunity to involve the congregation and community in cooking, shopping, etc. Volunteer opportunity.

Amy Willis: I think so many people would take people (immigrants) into their homes. This may be a better option than having people here at church.

Sam Clark: we were just talking about how little space we have in our building and that we need more. But in other nearby churches, they have lots of space, along with shrinking need for that space... it may be better to work together to utilize their physical space instead of ours.

Mary Alice: Washington VT church could work better than ours. With the tiny house concept - it could be moved from place to place, and not parked permanently at UCM but able to move to other churches.

Concerns

Diane Fitch: a structure outside or placed in the parking lot seems much more vulnerable to ICE than being inside UCM building. ICE could come into private homes, but they do need a warrant to come in. You can be charged with aiding and abetting if you have someone in your home.

Vicky: space problems, and money.

Malcolm: Arlington St. Church lost insurance, had round the clock watch in church b/c lots of people didn't agree with sanctuary designation. Many people don't like sanctuary effort so we must be aware of their antagonism.

Scott Hess: yes, consider whether we are 100% on board? Is full congregation in support of being a sanctuary?

Q: How would we make the decision whether to become a Sanctuary Congregation?

Steve: committees will continue or form, and ultimately the decision will have be brought to the congregation for a vote.

Janet Poeton: insurance... check all legal avenues regarding implications of sanctuary status, for staff, volunteers, etc.

Amy Wales: who else could be involved? What if all churches involved purchased a building together?

Peter Thoms: purchasing building would only work (as a sanctuary) if the building is literally on church property.

#4 Renovation of Church Kitchen to meet safety codes & support current use.

Noah Sexton: Consider renovating kitchen to support current level of use. We are feeding 100-150 people every Monday through Community Lunch. Churches in Montpelier, including ours, provide not only a free meal, but also companionship for anyone, not just those down on their luck.

We've adapted to using the kitchen as is, but we need some analysis of the work flow, and how we could improve it (space, layout). We are growing, but the building is not. How can we use our space more effectively? We are doing more and more lunches for the community. The kitchen is a central part of our community.

How can we move this idea forward?

Scott: this could be a revenue source. Our kitchen is not in compliance with many things, but if we were, the kitchen could generate revenue via rentals.

Allen Clark: my wife, Claudia Clark, has significant restaurant experience, quality assurance experience, etc and I volunteer her for the team!

Vicky: we need a well-defined analysis of problems and solutions/options.

Sandal Cate: if we assess what we have, there is probably some space that could be used better or differently. Check out cupboards, high shelves, where things are stored. We could take a couple of hours to walk through together and decide how to rearrange.

Amy Willis: this might be one area where a capital campaign could be easier than in other areas. Everyone loves having the community lunch here. Combined with ability to generate revenue, this could be appealing to people to support financially.

John Poeton: every Monday we are feeding 120 people. We are constantly operating in a way that's not in compliance with codes because there is no other option (for example, dirty dishes passing by food to be served). Our dishwasher washes the dishes but does not sanitize them. Trinity Church's dish sanitizer was \$8000. Our stove is historic and people love it because of its history, but we need a contemporary stove (and this would save electricity because wouldn't have to warm it up 90 minutes ahead of time).

Mary Alice: basement stairs are not accessible, so I can't help with lunch because of the need to go up and down stairs. Could we move part of kitchen to basement, and that could free up space for the elevator?

Malcolm: our kitchen is not adjacent to where meals are served. Why not move kitchen into the storage area behind the stage so it is closer? Let's not get fixated on where things are now vs. what most efficient use of space would be. If we redesign the kitchen, let's put it where we really want it for long-range purposes.

Bill Pelton: community lunch has done an awesome job of using the kitchen as is. Assess whether community lunch is wise for the long run and do we have a legacy group to support its long-term upkeep?

Vicky Viens: does another facility have a space we could use? Is there a better place for the community lunch?

Priscilla: I agree with Malcolm. Lots of issues here. Do we need an architect here to draw up plans for best use of our space (not just kitchen)?

Diane: accessibility and kitchen must go hand in hand. Bizarre to have wheelchair access to building via kitchen.

Concerns

Peter: money

Jeanne: space

Malcolm: major route of travel thru kitchen. Look at vertical access, access to adjacent areas. Can we generate revenue from any of these changes? We must think long-range, one step ahead so uses are adjacent to each other as needed.

Amy Wales: if we moved the kitchen to another space, we need to consider proper ventilation. Could be a problem if it was more toward interior of building.

Closing Words, Next Steps, How you can get involved

Paul Ohlson: When our river wall fell into river, we made a very fast decision about what to do because we could see the immediate need. The proposals we discussed today will only move forward if we have groups that take on the next steps. Need to come up with something that is easy to understand and explain. The challenge is to take ideas you are passionate about, sign up, work them through to a point where the rest of the congregation can easily understand the needs and suggested solutions. If you are willing to convene the first meeting, please indicate on sign up sheet.

If we don't take this next step, we'll probably revisit these ideas every year or two without making much progress. The Property Committee will not be able to work on these alone.

Janet: someone needs to coordinate the different committees and see how they tie together.

Paul: Board can help serve in this role of oversight and coordination.

Priscilla: Board's task force looking at UCM's growth trajectory is looking at last 10 years and next 10 years. Strategic Plan says Board will convene group to look at ramifications of growth. All of the pieces we talked about today are a part of that. Task Force (when convened) will talk to all the groups set up today and figure out next steps.

Paul: the Property Ctte can't do all of this work alone. We need more people involved and passionate about projects to make progress.

Diane will contact those interested in sanctuary issues.

Sandal: timeframe? When should groups start to meet?

Paul: timing depends on each group and what they decide.

Mary Alice: we need to move on this before Annual Meeting. We've been studying and talking for so long already, and we need to move forward. Also need to involve more younger members of congregation in the conversation, and meeting mid-afternoon on a workday is not conducive to this.

Vicky: how will results of this meeting be communicated? Post minutes on website?

E-news report on what happened today, solicit more input from people. Send minutes to email list.

Mary Alice will talk with Judith about getting minutes posted on website.

Minutes recorded by Emily Seifert.