

Circle of Concerns Workshop
May 26, 2019

There were about 40-45 people present, maybe 1/3 'new' faces to the group

Mairy summarized financials using the DaPP report

- There has been a decline in pledges over the last 10 years
- highly dependent on top 10 donors who give 24% of total (10 yrs ago top 13 donors gave 19% of total)
- this is a weak foundation and
- salaries have gone up due to the high cost of living – this is the biggest part of the budget

BUT we are managing

- there is over \$1m in funds
- Board is working on legacy programs
- Rental income pays for custodians and upkeep of Hewett Hall (HH)

People assigned coloured dots to their 3 top areas of concern out of the 8 identified in the March 31 forum.

Concern	1st	2 nd	3 rd	Weighted votes
Timing	12	11	1	59
Existential Threats	12	6	5	53
Vision	10	4	3	41
Ability to Complete	1	3	6	15
Site redevelopment	3	0	5	14
Affordable housing	0	5	3	13
During construction	1	1	4	9
Design elements	0	1	0	2
No concerns	0	0	0	0

Groups were formed to hold discussions on the top 3 concerns and group discussions are held. Below is a summary from when the groups reported back. The notes from each group are included at the end of this document.

TIMING

- from someone who participated in the previous search committee she fears that the combination of an interim minister and temporary meeting place in trailers, we will lose congregants and will not be able to attract new people. There will also be great difficulty to continue with our numerous social events. The timing sucks!
- everyone felt very strongly that it was essential to have the new minister in place before continuing with the exploration of redevelopment. Not having leadership under these circumstances would be a recipe for disaster.
- having redevelopment as a front issue for potential new minister would also limit the number and perhaps quality of candidates we would receive. This could drive them away. It threatens us from getting a new minister and threatens the very existence of the church.
- proceeding with the redevelopment under these circumstances would create a lot of stress for members. Under stress people often start to squabble. This situation could easily create an antagonistic, divisive, destructive atmosphere.
- who's agenda is being met here? The city's or UCV's? It seems more like the city's as they are pushing for new housing which although commendable does not fit with UCV's present needs. We need the time to thoroughly research and learn from others who have redeveloped.

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Have the benefits been worth the costs?

- if we wait 5-10 years (when there may be less cars and more public transportation used) the expensive cost of building underground parking could be eliminated. This would allow other options (which were removed due to budget constraints) to be considered.
- it is important that we don't see this exploration of redevelopment as a failure if we don't proceed with it. We are and will learn from it. These learnings will be useful in the future.

VISION

- landlording is a nightmare – and UCV would at least indirectly be in that role. Would we trust a management company to go by our values. Where do we stand in a tenant-landlord issue – How much would we intervene – How much Board involvement would there be
- no evidence of a commitment to environmental / green design – if there was a really green design then there would be more enthusiasm for the project
- why tear down HH – there is a 4-5m cost to re-build it
- current design doesn't reflect our ideals – social and environmental benefits are modest
- we'd then be in the shade of a 6-storey bldg.
- no young members at this mtg. – they will carry the debt
- how have other groups fared under the guidance of Catalyst (the developer)
- we need a formal statement of how this project will exemplify the values of UCV
- 2 huge stresses – new minister and re-development
- final plan has to give major endowment to UCV and also meet a social objective
- the vision is the base – we should start with a vision
- we have a chance to make an architectural statement
- are we thinking about what will be needed in 30 yrs
- look at other housing models – micro communities are formed
- need more imagination – artists / architects – to come talk to us
- a compelling vision would have affordability, environmental concerns built in\
- Joy Coghill spear-headed PAL in spite of obstacles

EXISTENTIAL THREATS

- who will volunteer to carry out this project
- how do you get new members
- how will young people pay
- we are kind of sustainable now – muddling through, financially
- if we are OK financially and HH is ok, let us pass on re-development and grow the members
- how do we continue doing 'church' during construction (2-3 yrs)??

SPECTRUM

Participants were asked to complete the following spectrum to indicate where they were leaning at this point in time.

#	
1 maybe	Will likely approve redevelopment project as is or with minor changes
	Will approve only if (check any and all that apply)
13	It is clear that the project fits our values and vision
13	The project is delayed until we have a new settled minister
9	Environmental considerations are given higher priority
8	The design of the building is significantly changed

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8	It is possible to stay on campus, using the sanctuary, during construction i.e. acceptable washroom facilities exist
4	It is possible to create truly affordable housing and still have a significant return to UCV
4	Members step u to volunteer to liaise with developers
4	Other methods to improve finances are unsuccessful
2	Hewett Hall is not destroyed. The new building is built elsewhere on campus
6	Will almost certainly not approve

NEXT STEPS

- To prevent factionalism, there could be an open meeting once / month, with chairs in a circle. The tone of the redevelopment planning meetings is like a train barreling along with high momentum – meeting in a circle defuses the power/authority and helps with dialogue.
- Get input from others who have done similar projects re difficulty of managing rental units, impact on membership, etc. For example UU Ottawa. Also look at Scandinavian housing models – find someone (from UBC) with expertise in this area. A group will be formed to arrange a forum on this topic.
- Co-housing means selling – but selling to UCV members? Housing could knit a community together – this project should be more than just a money-making venture. Who would live here ? – 3-4 said yes but if rent was over\$2000/month then nobody from this group could afford it. Have there been other surveys to see if members of UCV would rent?

Note: 8 architects were invited to send ideas but only 1 replied with any interest – maybe invite architecture students

DETAILED NOTES FROM GROUPS

Vision – Group 1

Vision has got lost. Need vision **first**.

1. Environmental vision
 - a. Why building concrete when so many wood buildings being demolished? Good salvage material. [can only build 3 stories, but experimenting with 4 or 5’
 - b. Roof garden
2. Design – concrete block is unimaginative
 - a. Build for the future, not for us. What will it be like in 30+ years. Think ahead.
3. Combine social housing with social spaces? Micro-environments? As in Scandinavia? Grants from the city may be available. Classic exercise in development (Catalyst)
4. Have people with ideas come in to talk, to inspire us? For example, retired artists, UBC school of community and regional planning, young architects in Vancouver or Victoria?

Vision – Group 2

1. Why is this your major concern?
 - Does the congregation really want to become a landlord? It’s very risky to be a landlord. Could we trust a property management company to operate by our values? In case of dispute, who would we side with—tenants or management?
 - The plans don’t indicate a particularly environmentally friendly design.

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- Why tear down Hewitt Centre building?
- This project doesn't reflect the idealism of the members. The social benefits are modest. We would be giving up a lot. What are we getting that we can be really proud of as a real contribution to this city?
- Where's the green space around the building? A 6-storey building creates a lot of shade.
- There are no young members at this meeting. They are the ones who are going to end up having to carry the debt.
- Have we investigated the experience of other churches who have done something similar?
- The board of directors will spend a lot of time and energy dealing with rental issues.

2. How would you like to see your concerns addressed?

- If it were a really green building, a striking and creative example to the city, there would be much more enthusiasm on the part of the members.
- Keep everyone in the loop.
- A formal statement of how this project demonstrates our values is needed before proceeding.

Existential Threat

- Who will volunteer?
- How will young people pay off the debt?
- How will we draw in new members when we are looking for a new minister & dealing with construction?
- We're sustainable now. Rents will be managed better going forward.
- B&G are looking into heating upgrades and upgrades to building.
- Good news needs to be spread re what we're doing. Attrition is a factor. Every year we gain about 15 members and lose 10. We need new members. We need more info about membership.

If indeed we're doing OK financially and HC is in relatively good shape and won't be too expensive to maintain, we should probably pass the project by and focus on our services and growing memberships.

Timing group 1

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Timing Group 2

CONCERNS

- 1) Can we cope with more than one major disruption at a time? It will be difficult to manage site development and construction while searching for a new minister and having an interim one. Too much stress will be on the congregation. Do we have the depth of volunteers to manage both the site development and the ongoing life of the congregation?
- 2) Don't understand the above; the minister will have nothing to do with the site development. He/She will concentrate on ministerial duties.
- 3) During construction we will lose the use of Hewett Hall as it will be torn down. It will be awkward to have services in the sanctuary and have other ongoing church activities, especially ones on Sunday, at another location. During this time we should strive to rent space for both the sanctuary and the 'activity' centre (Hewett Hall).
- 4) Why do we need to take down Hewett Centre? This building is still in good condition.

Answer: The current building won't maximize the use of the property. (*Aside: it is like buying a \$5,000,000 piece of property and keeping the lower middle-class house on it. Why pay all that money and not build a house to match?*) The current Hewett Centre could not support a building of 5 to 6 stories on top of it nor the digging underneath for parking or whatever other use is envisioned.

- 5) We may have a problem recruiting a minister during the construction period since they may be reluctant to come during this period of upheaval.

OBJECTIVES

There are two major objectives for this project that we should not lose sight of:

- 1) Achieve a major endowment for the church to assure future financial health.
- 2) Serve a major social objective of the church.