January 31, 2016 congregational meeting concerning master plan for expansion

On January 31, 2016 the congregation met with the architects GSMA Inc. to review proposals and adopt a master plan for our building expansion.

The meeting was opened by Sabrina Neff, chair of the building committee. She introduced architects Carrie Glassman Shoemake, Katie Ormand, and Ernesto Maldonado to present options for a master plan for the expansion. Carrie explained that they were presenting options for a master plan, not a final design. They presented drawings showing existing buildings, additional space needed, suggested placement of new buildings, and proposed phasing of building construction.

Following the presentation the floor was opened for questions and comments. Some of the questions and responses follow.

Q. Could we have labyrinth of paving stones to avoid growth or weeds or use of toxic weed killers?

A. This will be considered with landscaping phase, but there are options that would resolve this problem. Issue will be cost.

Q. Could the office section (bridge between two buildings) be two story rather than one story also?

A. Yes, if funding is available. If not, the foundation could be designed to structurally support a second story when finances allow.

Q. How large will the sanctuary expansion be?

A. The plan is to expand the sanctuary to seat 250 people. (102 more than current seating.)

Q. What about parking? It does not seem adequate.

A. There is no net gain or loss in parking spaces. A neighbor in the next block has a fenced parking area that is not used on Sunday and would be available. Members with mobility issues could be dropped off at the porte cochere.

Q. What about our Caroline address and access/visible entrance from Caroline?

A. This is something to be worked out during the schematic design phase. There isn’t a good entrance focus from Caroline now. A Caroline entrance would be maintained.

Q. Can we build without selling Meeks? Must we have temporary buildings?

A. The plan has always been to sell Meeks. The decision about ***when*** to sell Meeks is being investigated by a Council ad hoc committee now. Any decision about timing of sale of the Meeks property and using temporary buildings during construction will be made by the entire congregation. The ad hoc committee is analyzing the cost benefit of selling now or selling later.

Q. How to prevent noise bleeding into the sanctuary if coffee and conversations are moved to the walkways?

A. Architects are aware of the need for a quiet zone around the sanctuary. Current thinking is that the narthex will be this quiet space.

Q. When all church functions are housed in one contiguous design, will we have to heat and cool the entire building all week. Has heating and cooling in sections been considered?

A. Yes, air conditioning and heating will be zoned.

Q. Where will choir and musicians warm up?

A. Choir wants to warm up in the sanctuary with the organ. Small group musicians can warm up in the parlor.

Q. How was location of administrative office determined?

A. Architects want to minimize disturbing current plumbing and restrooms. Location of the administrative office and the parlor are based on that.

Q. What about a community garden?

A. That would be part of the landscaping phase.

Q. Where is children’s education? Will it be moved?

A. Current children’s space will be for younger children. Children in third grade and older will be moved into the new building?

Q. What about the baptistry?

A. The footprint for the sanctuary expansion is undetermined. This is something to be worked out later.

Q. What is the time table for next steps?

A. Reagan explained the steps of the design and construction process:

Programming-needs, hopes and dreams

Master plan

Schematic design-location of rooms, interior arrangement

Construction documents

Bidding and construction

Sabrina explained that the best thing we can do to help accelerate the time line is to pay our pledges as soon as possible. Extra gifts are always acceptable.

Sabrina then moved on behalf of the building committee that the congregation adopt the master plan in Scheme A and authorize the architects to move forward with schematic design. Van Wheeler seconded. The motion passed unanimously.