

First Unitarian Church of Victoria

Location Task Force Final Report

December 2019

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Location Task Force
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1. Background

In 2018 the Board of Directors concluded that the location of the Church was an issue that needed to be investigated further. This particularly became apparent through workshops and a survey completed as part of the strategic planning process. Concern was expressed that our rural setting makes access to some programs difficult for some, and that it limits prospects for future growth of membership. In response to these concerns the Board appointed the Task Force on Location.

The purpose of the Task Force specified in the Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) was to

inform the Board of Directors and congregation on ideas, facts, considerations and options for improving current use and considering new places and formats for church activities. The Task Force will develop a variety of scenarios including expected costs and modes of operation for each. An options paper with the Committee's recommendation will be tabled to the Board of Directors for review and discussion.

In summary, the goal is to ensure convenient access to all activities of this church community.

2. Task Force Members

Liz Graham (Co-Chair), John Hopewell (Co-Chair), Steve Sharlow (Board Member), Shirley Travis, Ex officio: Rev. Shana Lynngood, Marion Pape (President), Rebecca Mellett (Board Member)

3. Process Overview

The task force started work in September 2018 and held a total of 24 team meetings. A detailed work plan was developed. Generally, the plan was to spend the fall planning, winter researching and consulting, spring analysing, summer planning pilot projects, and fall 2019 conducting and evaluating pilot projects.

Throughout there was regular communication with the congregation through eweeklies and the monthly newsletter. The following formal information and consultation opportunities were offered:

- Feb 10, 2018 Face-to-face information session; congregational survey launched
- Mar 31, 2018 Face-to face information session reporting on the results of the survey
- May 11, 2018 Pilot Project Planning Workshop

The survey produced 228 responses, a much higher response rate than anticipated, which should indicate a high reliability of data collected. Details can be found online at

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1J58-wNCILeCcFkr_c9gFO21qAxQ01t03/view

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Pm9M9Pfib9bmsnkG_XFHlzZm8TtkoWv/view

Specific conclusions from the survey are dealt with under the various topics later in this report. Many ideas were generated, and these are summarised in Appendix 9.

It is recommended that council chairs and committees review the ideas suggested for their areas of responsibility.

In addition, a meeting was held with Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

4. Location

4.1 History

Until 1994 the church was located at 106 Superior Street, near Fisherman's Wharf. The building had many constraints and for years prior to 1994 an active search for a new property was conducted. Eventually it was concluded it was unlikely an appropriate and affordable property could be found in the downtown area and the decision was made to relocate to 5575 West Saanich Road. A more detailed history can be found at Appendix 2.

4.2 Member locations

The Task Force was able to identify where in the city our member families lived in 1994, just prior to leaving Superior Street, and where they lived in 2018. Although total membership remained at around 300, it was found that the geographic distribution of member families had changed. For example, in 1994, 84 families lived in the James Bay – Fairfield area whereas by 2018 that number had declined to 43. The Saanich peninsula was home to 23 families in 1994 and this had grown to 58 by 2018. Interestingly, membership in the South East, including Oak Bay, remained steady at 49. It should be noted that Capital Unitarian Universalist Congregation started after 1994 and has membership of around 40. Member distribution maps can be found in Appendix 3.

4.3 Respondents attitudes to location

Overwhelmingly respondents to the survey indicated a strong attachment to our property. 60% responded they agree or strongly agree with the statement "I love our property and would not want to move" whereas about 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. However, many of the same respondents indicated elsewhere that they have trouble accessing the property. 27% strongly agreed or agreed we should sell the property and move south of McKenzie whereas 46% strongly disagreed or disagreed. 58% felt the location is a good compromise in a large region.

The church is a regional church and regardless of where we are located many will have a long drive from home. The survey found the median drive is 16-25 minutes. The Task Force concluded there is no great desire to relocate and other ways should be found to mitigate negative factors associated with our location.

4.4 Issues identified

The Task Force identified key issues related to the property. These were:

- amount of travel time for many to attend services, meetings and other events;
- accessibility for those unable to drive or unable to drive at night;
- inability to reach the church using public transportation;

- remoteness from the wider community in need of social action/outreach;
- environmental footprint;
- exclusivity resulting from the need for a vehicle to attend;
- some concerns about property management and use

4.5 Conclusions

The Task Force concluded our work should focus on four areas to mitigate the issues identified:

- events which could be held closer to our members
- transportation
- social action
- property use and management

These issues were presented to a workshop on May 11, 2019 designed to identify strategies and pilot projects to help overcome the issues. The Task Force then used the output from the workshop to implement pilot projects during Fall 2019.

5 Offsite activities

According to our survey, an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they supported keeping the church at its present location while many respondents would appreciate having the option of attending services and activities closer to their homes. As our objective is to better service our existing members, a downtown location best meets that need.

5.1 Sunday Afternoon Services

The Location Task Force, with the cooperation and participation of our ministers, offered three off-site services in a central location in town, specifically the Multi-purpose Room of the Cedar Hill Rec. Centre. We chose the first Sunday of each month as appropriate because it would provide the introduction to each month's theme. The minister gave the same sermon in the afternoon service as they did in the regular morning service in the Sanctuary. An accompanist provided musical leadership using an electronic keyboard and a hymn leader assisted the congregation in singing the hymns. A portable sound system was used to provide amplification of the spoken word, and in one case, the keyboard. A coffee/tea refreshment was offered following the service.

Attendance: The three services' attendance figures were:

Oct. 6, 4 PM - 58 Nov. 3, 2 PM - 31 Dec. 1, 2 PM - 37

A total of 77 unique individuals attended, several of whom were very infrequent or former attenders at West Saanich. Detailed attendance statistics are presented in Appendix 4.

There appears to be a slight reduction of attendance at the Sanctuary service when an off-site service is held, but it is worth noting that those who attend the off-site service are very grateful and strong in their appreciation. In time, with wider publicity after this pilot project, we hope to gather more newer members. Several people who attended the first off site service have approached to say that they were unable to make the second and third, and fervently hope

there will be on-going afternoon services — in particular, a person with health issues that make mornings very challenging.

Venue: Cedar Hill Rec. Centre Multipurpose Room provided sufficient space for seating as well as a carpeted alcove where children could relax with parents. There was a facility for making tea and coffee, but not for cleaning up of dishes. People were asked to bring their own mugs, and a few did. We provided 10 mugs and took them home to clean. The room was nicely set up with chairs and needed tables when we arrived and we were not responsible for moving any furniture. A projector was available, but we did need to provide our own sound system and keyboard. The rate for this room for 2 1/2 hours was \$122.66 per event. A welcome plus of the venue is the ability to have a lit candle (in a chimney) and some other venues did not allow this.

One downside of this site is that Sunday bus service is infrequent, although several people were delighted that they could walk.

Timing: The first service (October 6) was offered at 4 PM and the remaining two services were offered at 2 PM. It was felt that there may have been a preference between the times and that the earlier time slot would be good as later in the year it gets darker earlier. A few people wrote that they preferred the later time, even though it was getting darker.

Our follow-up survey shows that 2PM is the preferred time by a ratio of 60:40.

Logistics: Providing the equipment for sound, music and coffee was a challenge. If a venue could be found where those were in place, it would make these services much easier to do. The sound system from the church worked very well but had to be reserved and collected for each event and did not easily accommodate a cordless mic, so we were somewhat limited to a corded mic on a stand. Likewise, the keyboard depended upon the availability of an accompanist with a vehicle. Travelling with a used coffee urn also presented a challenge.

Children: The children's area of this venue was set up with quilts and soft toys, books and activities for children, looked after by Jane Wilson. At the first service there were 4 children, none the second and 3 attended the third. Had there been more children on a regular basis, it would be possible to provide a separate room for them, but the carpeted alcove worked well.

Aesthetics: The provision of a couple of tablecloths, a chalice, flowers, music stand and hanging for a podium, and vase of branches for clooties created a pleasing space for worship. There were several comments that the atmosphere in the room felt calm and worshipful

Service format: There is scope here for more experimentation. We were asked to provide time for connection and for reflection. To that end, the services allowed for a time to connect with neighbours and an extended time for meditation, which people appreciated. There were some comments that it still felt like a rather traditional service. The sermons were appreciated, (in a few cases people attended twice and liked having another chance to concentrate on the message!) and the ministers commented that the services felt different from the morning service.... a different energy in speaking to a smaller, more intimate group.

Costs: Costs for these three services included \$122.66 for rent, \$85 for musician, and \$250 for ministry, for a total of \$457.66 per service.

5.2 Soul Matters (Adult RE Groups)

Three groups were offered in the fall term, one at the church and two in the community (Fairfield and North Quadra).

All groups filled up with 8 participants. The one at the church was the slowest to fill, while the Fairfield group started slower but had a waitlist. The church-based group has had a drop out and another may have a drop out or 'on leave' person in Fairfield.

Following the success of this pilot, the next ARE course (5-part indigenous film series in Feb. to April) will be offered in two groups — one in James Bay and one at the church. The workshop on indigenous perspectives will be offered at UVic in January.

5.3 Conclusions and Recommendations:

- The offsite service program should become a regular church activity by having it placed under the Worship Committee's umbrella. This would relieve the crew looking after the logistics of the off-site venue from also providing a Worship Associate, modified Order of Service and Publicity. As it was, information about these services was not well integrated with the other services in our website and newsletter. Off-site services should be treated like the Jazz Vespers in that regard.
- Survey results indicate that one service per month would be most desirable. 84% of respondents to the follow-up survey prefer a traditional service format
- A team of volunteers should be dedicated to look after the aesthetics, refreshments and child program in an off-site venue.
- Consideration should be given to locating an offsite venue which could provide the sound, keyboard and kitchenette that we require. Sunday bus service is an issue.
- If the West Shore communities demonstrate a significant desire for a service in their region, it should be tried there, but there is already a strong desire from a core group of Fairfield/Oak Bay/Grand Central area members expressed, and they may form the leadership of an in-town team for these services. Convenience for our members also offers convenience for area residents like our members, so offers growth potential.
- After these successful pilot projects, and once a more permanent venue is secured, publicity for these services should begin to increase the attendance.
- Costs: The costs going forward will depend on the rental rate secured and the cost of ministry, plus the current rate for a collaborative pianist. Currently the ministers are being paid the rate for a service by an outside minister. It will be up to the ministers and their committee to determine if this rate is satisfactory.
- Adult RE programming should continue to be offered in members' homes as well as the church. There is no cost incurred by this and it is popular with members.

6. Transportation

The congregational survey identified travel time, distance, and environmental impacts as being issues for many members, as well as concerns about access for non-drivers. At the workshop on

May 11th the need for some sort of robust ridesharing system was identified, as well as the need for some members to access the church without relying on volunteers or planning days ahead.

The task force concluded that further investigation was needed and appointed a sub-group of John Hopewell, Nancy Dobbs, Rev. Helen McFadyen and Gloria Turner to find ways to make all church activities easily, freely and consistently accessible to those for whom transportation to and from our West Saanich location is a barrier. The group focussed on access to Sunday services, with consideration to people who prefer to travel independently with minimal reliance on volunteers and without having to book ahead.

After exploring van services, various shuttles, buses and Handy Dart, it was concluded the most realistic option would be to run a taxi shuttle from Royal Oak Transit Exchange to and from the Church, for anyone who could travel to that point independently. This was supplemented with an online list of drivers willing to pick up passengers in their neighbourhoods and along their routes to the Church.

6.1 Report on Royal Oak Exchange Shuttle

The Royal Oak Exchange Shuttle was designed to provide transportation by taxi to Sunday morning services for those who could get to Royal Oak Transit Exchange (ROE) by bus or other means. It was intended to allow riders to travel as independently as possible and get to services without the need to book a day or more ahead. There were potentially four bus routes which could deliver passengers to the exchange in time for departure of a taxi of 10:05 am. Covered bike racks are available at ROE. A single volunteer overseer was required each week to monitor ROE and be a contact at Church for return riders. Three volunteers were recruited with two additional people as potential back-ups.

The pilot ran for 12 weeks and after 4 weeks the use of taxis was abandoned due to lack of use. Instead the volunteer overseer provided the ride. Over the twelve weeks, four rides were provided to two different people – one to the church and three from the church to Royal Oak. In three of the four cases advance notice was provided by the rider. The total cost for this pilot was \$32.40 for 2 taxi rides.

There was a suggestion that there would be more interest from riders in bad weather; however, it was also found that two of the three volunteers would not drive to Church in snowy conditions, so the service would not be viable.

6.2 Report on Online Ridesharing List

In the February survey 37% of respondents indicated more formalized carpooling would help them get to Church more easily. In response to this, the Task Force established an online ridesharing list. A list of volunteer drivers with contact information and their approximate routes was posted on the Church website on October 13th. Rides were offered to Sunday Services, Jazz Vespers and choir. The list was publicised on the banner page of the church website and in the e-weekly and newsletter. Riders were asked to contact drivers directly by phone or email.

18 of the 23 drivers responded to a request for feedback indicating that there had been three requests for rides with one ride provided during the two-month period. Although the take-up has been very low and additional drivers are needed to assure coverage of some areas, the system as currently constituted is passive and takes minimal effort to maintain. Despite continual promotion many members are not yet aware of it so more creative publicity is needed.

Feedback from drivers included a concern that non-internet users are excluded, that more publicity is needed and a suggestion that there should be discussion at Neighbourhood Groups. The Environmental Action Team (EAT) recommended a focus on electric vehicles and may be interested in enhancing and maintaining the system.

Several people commented in the survey that the biggest impediment for their attendance was travel time rather than availability of transportation, and this may explain the low participation in both the shuttle and ridesharing.

6.3 Conclusion and Recommendations

- A formal ridesharing system available to members and visitors should be maintained and widely publicised, although experience so far suggests few people will use it. The Environmental Action Team has expressed an interest in maintaining a ridesharing system.

7 Social Action

The object of this project was to involve the FUCV community in a program that directly affected the communities that we live in. A hands-on project that our members can participate as a Church group on a regular basis.

Poverty and lack of ability to provide good and healthy food on a regular basis seemed to be an opportunity for all of us to do something useful on a timely basis. Over the last few years there has been a push to stop the waste of food that is thrown out for lack of sales or excess product in the grocery stores. Hence the development of the Food Rescue project. The processing of all this food and distribution became a very large task.

Volunteers were needed. So, we started with a group of 5 of our Church members on a monthly basis to help between 1 to 3 hours in the warehouse for the Food Rescue Project. It has worked great and as of this week we have a total of 18 volunteers. We go in on the scheduled time, sign in and head into the back of the warehouse and get to work. At first, they seemed a little suspect whether we could handle the work, but we quickly have become a dependable, eager and friendly group of volunteers. We are about to add a second day to the schedule about two weeks from the now scheduled slot. That may not happen until January due to Christmas concerns. Evidently more people help at Christmas and less in off times.

Our members all have a button stating that we are members volunteering from FUCV. The staff of the program have reported to me that they are very pleased at the energy and willingness to do the work. We have told them about how pleased we are to have the opportunity to help out. A number of our volunteers have also said that it is so nice to meet some of the other volunteers that are helping. Some have said that in days we have not scheduled time they sometimes just go in and sign into the volunteer group and proudly put Unitarian next to their name.

This program costs us nothing and is positive to the community and to our members.

7.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

- We recommend that this program of group volunteering at the Food Rescue Warehouse be continued and expanded — both with more days of service and potentially at other agencies.
- The use of Victoria Unitarian buttons should be expanded to congregation members and friends who offer volunteer service throughout our area as a way of increasing the congregation's visibility in the community and indicating our congregation's support for social justice initiatives.

8 Property Use

The Location Task Force identified property use and optimization as a priority. A survey was compiled of all the factors under which we inhabit our property, including the local area plan, rural nature of the property, zoning restrictions and property tax issues involved with our status as a church and zoning as 'institutional'.

Examination of our current leases and contracts was undertaken and some issues identified.

We have concluded that, based upon this consolidation of information, a working group should be struck to narrow down and prioritize options for optimizing revenue and use of the property, and then move forward.

Four areas of potential action were identified: Basement under the sanctuary, farmhouse utilization, Sanctuary and Lion Hall, and the use of gardens.

Summary: The following issues arose when we considered our leases in 2019:

- We cannot lease to a commercial venture.
- We must consider licensing restrictions within the lease.
- We must ensure that maintenance, and occupancy costs are clearly addressed, and that signage and environmental concerns are consistent with municipal and provincial bylaws and licensing.
- Any lease must be managed by the church, be reviewed annually for payment and compliance, and have person(s) that the lessee can speak to and address concerns with.

The Location Task Force survey and workshop focusing on our property sorted many suggestions and ideas. From 25 workshop people contributing ideas on property, the four ideas below were chosen as priorities to work on for 'space use'. Five participants from the initial survey identified that the most significant idea was Space Analysis of the buildings as a preliminary step to improving use and developing any plans. This included the proviso "to optimize funds while meeting the increasing church and congregational needs". Contributors on property issues were Shirley Travis, Andy Lee, Rebecca Mellett, John Worton, Glenyss Turner.

Much needed updates on the Montessori Lease are being reviewed by J. Tiffany, J. Worton and S. Travis with input from Nadia in the office which also provided impetus for the analysis.

While Ideas were creative, only two persons pursued ideas #1 and #2 and the Montessori Lease negotiations. These kept the space analysis moving forward. Information was gathered about the property and will be accessible to the membership through this paper and forwarded to the property committee and church administration.

A full discussion of property issues is included as Appendix 6

IDEAS FOR THE PROPERTY UTILIZATION REVIEW

8.1 Area under the sanctuary

- Finish the basement and rent it to organizations such as schools or daycare facilities for seniors or people with special needs that fit our current P-2 zoning restrictions. Occupants could be selected so they reflect UU values and broaden our neighbourhood's sense of community.
- Finishing the basement would require rezoning in order to increase the allowable floor space on the property. Given our good history in the neighbourhood and the fact that the footprint of the building would not change, the likelihood of approval is high. The need for septic field changes may depend on limiting rental to days when the church isn't using the building.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Identify rental markets and estimate income. Prepare a schematic floor plan. Identify construction costs and consultants' fees. Prepare cost-benefit study to decide whether to proceed.

Presently the Montessori school stores items and will reduce their used space as only 10% can be used for storage according the Building Code for complex buildings in BC. To change the 10% situation fireproofing includes dry wall and fire damping ventilation system. This is just for storage.

8.2 Farmhouse

The farmhouse residence comprises 3500 sq ft (approx.) and is currently leased below market value to our tenants with a service contract in place. The residence has been well maintained by the current tenants. This lease is in effect until 2024.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Consider long term options to better utilize the suite for purposes in line with our church values, after 2024.

8.3 Expand the sanctuary and/or Lion Hall

The Alban Institute, church consultants, say that when sanctuaries reach about 80% of their seating capacity, church growth stalls. FUCV has experienced a plateau in its growth in spite of our wonderful ministers, vibrant community, and appealing property. While other factors, e.g., our location away from population centres and the West's general decline in church attendance may be factors contributing to our plateau, the Alban Institute's observation may also explain it. In this case,

creating more space may allow the church to grow. Advantages to growth include spreading UU values and increasing the church's revenue.

The need for creating more space could be resolved through offsite services, a second service at West Saanich Road, or by enlarging the existing sanctuary.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Determine whether we are currently overcrowded. If we are, we should look at alternative solutions prior to considering expansion of buildings. We should consider holding a second service either in the sanctuary or offsite. Spending money on ministry rather than property is more in line with our values.

8.4 Use of Gardens

While the vegetable garden is currently being used in part by a group of church members, they may or may not continue their operation in coming years. The task force understands that the option of leasing the land to a commercial organic grower is not an option, given our tax status.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The current use seems to be a good use of the property, feeding congregation members and raising funds for the church. We need information on the location of pipes under the garden to ensure cultivation does not damage them.

The 2019 Location Task Force supplied structure and congregational input into our property use and limitations report. Ideas are abundant, but commitment is the key to fulfilling ideas. Thanks to the Board of Trustees for supporting the initiative and the long-lasting information researched from documents and people. These documents are to be shared, saved, edited and amended where they can be of most service to the congregation.

9 Summary of recommendations

A. Off-site services

- i.** This program should become a regular church activity by having it placed under the Worship Committee's umbrella. This would relieve the crew looking after the logistics of the off-site venue from also providing a Worship Associate, modified Order of Service and Publicity. As it was, information about these services was not well integrated with the other services in our website and newsletter. Off-site services should be treated like the Jazz Vespers in that regard.
- ii.** Survey results indicate that one service per month would be most desirable. There is not a great demand from current attendees for an alternate service format.
- iii.** A team of volunteers should be dedicated to look after the aesthetics, refreshments and child program in an off-site venue.

- iv. Consideration should be given to locating an offsite venue which could provide the sound, keyboard and kitchenette that we require. Sunday bus service is an issue.
- v. If the West Shore communities demonstrate a significant desire for a service in their region, it should be tried there, but there is already a strong desire from a core group of Fairfield/Oak Bay/Grand Central area members expressed, and they may form the leadership of an in-town team for these services.
- vi. After these successful pilot projects, and once a more permanent venue is secured, publicity for these services should begin to increase the attendance.
- vii. Costs: The costs going forward will depend on the rental rate secured and the cost of ministry, plus the current rate for a collaborative pianist. Currently the ministers are being paid the rate for a service by an outside minister. It will be up to the ministers and their committee to determine if this rate is satisfactory.

B Transportation

A formal ridesharing system available to members and visitors should be maintained and widely publicized, although experience so far suggests few people will use it. Several people commented in the survey that the biggest impediment for their attendance was travel time rather than availability of transportation, and this may explain the low participation in both the shuttle and ridesharing.

C Social Action

- i We recommend that this program of group volunteering at the Food Rescue warehouse be continued and expanded — both with more days of service and potentially at other agencies.
- ii The use of Victoria Unitarian buttons should be expanded to congregation members and friends who offer volunteer service throughout our area as a way of increasing the congregation's visibility in the community and indicating our congregation's support for social justice initiatives.

D Property

i The task force has identified potential for optimizing the use and revenue generating potential of our buildings and grounds. A working group should be struck to actualize these potentials, keeping in mind the complexity of our regulatory environment.

i.e. The following issues arose when we considered our leases:

- We cannot lease to a commercial venture.
- We must consider licensing restrictions within the lease.
- We must ensure that maintenance, and occupancy costs are clearly addressed and that signage and environmental concerns are consistent with municipal and provincial bylaws and licensing.
- Any lease must be managed by the church, be reviewed annually for payment and compliance, and have person(s) that the lessee can speak to and address concerns with.

ii The farmhouse residence comprises 3500 sq ft (approx.) and is currently rented below market value to our tenants with a service contract in place. The residence has been well maintained by the current tenants. This lease is in effect until 2024.

Consider long term options to better utilize the suite for purposes in line with our church values, after 2024.

iii Determine whether we are currently overcrowded. If we are, we would look at alternative solutions prior to considering expansion of buildings. We would consider holding a second service either in the sanctuary or offsite. Spending money on ministry rather than property is more in line with our values.

iv The current use of the garden area seems to be a good use of the property, feeding congregation members and raising funds for the church. We need information on the location of pipes under the garden to ensure cultivation does not damage them.

Costs and Funding:

At this point, the only project which requires church funding is the off-site services initiative at approximately \$500 to \$700 per service, depending on venues costs and ministerial cost. A schedule of 8 first Sunday services (omitting September, January, July and August) would result in a net annual cost of \$4000 to \$5600.

Research of congregations which have satellite locations reveals that after a time, these satellites become revenue generating, especially if ministry is attached and communities form within the satellites. While this is not the model we are recommending, it is worth noting that there is a possibility that the offsite services could become self-sustaining.

Other initiatives are either no cost (social action and transportation) or self-funding (property).

Funding could initially continue to come from the Ruth Humphreys Innovation Fund until our grant of \$4000 is exhausted. Future partial funding could be requested from the CUC's Sharing Our Faith (\$2500) or Northern Lights (15% of members participate as donors to generate a grant of more than \$5000).

Respectfully Submitted

Liz Graham & John Hopewell (Co-Chairs), Steve Sharlow, Shirley Travis
Location Task Force

APPENDIX 1

Rev. Sept. 7, 2018

FUCV Task Force on Location Terms of Reference

Background

In considering long-term sustainability and vibrancy of the First Unitarian Congregation of Victoria (FUCV), the Board of Directors, with the help of the strategic planning team members and members of the Congregation have identified the issue of location as an area requiring further investigation. In order to consider all options and implications, a thorough consideration of facts, history and options is required to inform what choices will work best for our community.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the *FUCV Task Force on Location* is to inform the Board of Directors and congregation on ideas, facts, considerations and options for improving current use and considering new places and formats for church activities. The Task Force will develop a variety of scenarios including expected costs and modes of operation for each.

An options paper with the Committee's recommendation will be tabled to the Board of Directors for review and discussion.

3. Values & Process

The *FUCV Task Force on Location* will uphold UU principles and strive to ensure an inclusive and well-informed process. All members and activities will practice collaboration, communication, balance in views, and respect for different perspectives. It is understood that this topic holds great passion for many people. All views will be welcomed and heard.

The Task Force will identify stakeholders and offer opportunities for consultation.

4. Membership

The *FUCV Task Force on Location* will report to the Board and congregation. Expressions of interest to serve on the Location Task Force will be sought from the Congregation, and members will be appointed by the Board and consist of the following:

- 1 Minister ex officio
- President ex officio
- 1-2 Board members
- 3-4 members from the congregation

In addition, subject-matter specialists, when required, may be sought as advisors throughout the process. Skills will be requested in the following areas: finance, property, research, programs, communications and congregational engagement.

Criteria for selecting Task Force members:

- A church Member or Friend, familiar with Unitarian Universalism

- Objective and open to other points of view
- Available to do the required work and to attend meetings
- Able to meet deadlines
- Has available time to do the required work
- A good listener, and diplomatic in handling opinions and emotions
- Representative of diverse geographic areas, ages and genders
- Members will have some understanding of the history of our church.

5. Timeframe

The Task Force will start in the fall of 2018 and conduct its work throughout 2019 with the aim to bring findings to a special Congregational meeting in 2020.

The first task will be to develop a work plan with methodology, research teams, communications and timeframes.

6. Communication & Reporting Back

The Task Force serves the whole congregation and will keep the FUCV community informed on updates through a variety of media throughout the process. The Task Force will decide the best way to address each of the topics of enquiry.

Ongoing information sessions, discussions and updates will be shared as needed throughout the process and as soon as a draft options paper has been prepared.

The Task Force will present a report to the FUCV Board of Directors for December 2019 Board meeting based on complete and thorough research.

Final options will be presented to the Congregation for discussion and feedback.

Appendix 1A Suggested Approaches

A) Theory and values

- What questions should we be asking?
- What theoretical guidance can inform the decision-making process? How important is physical place to spirituality and worship? Community building? Attachment?
- How would the current location make an ongoing contribution to environmental sustainability and climate change and is there a scenario that can help to offset this impact?

B) Stakeholders & interests

- Who are the key stakeholders? What are their interests? Where will funds come from for ongoing maintenance of the buildings and land?
- Summarize FUCV views from strategic planning discussions (2016-17), survey (2017), and possibly another survey to include willingness to fund a maintenance campaign

C) Current land use and buildings

- Fact-finding on what we know about our property? e.g. history, title map, land use, research, covenants, environmental information, ability to incorporate housing, zoning, other.

D) Location & format of current and potential programs and services:

- How are FUCV buildings and land presently used? What are the terms and dates of agreements? Are there improvements that can be made to present contracts and leases?
- Could the land and buildings be used differently or better, for spiritual context and practice?

E) Alternate models of worship, looking at location and formats

- What are some examples of innovative models of worship with emphasis on Unitarian Congregations throughout North America? What lessons can be drawn on how and why they are working/not? How similar is the context to FUCV?

F) Putting the pieces together:

- What advice to guide decisions of the Board? (e.g. Revenue and cost \$\$, time, demographics, other)
- What are the main options and scenarios for current and future location and worship? How can we improve the value of the land? e.g. Future development options including rezoning, senior's housing.

Potential Scenarios could include:

Scenario A: Sell this location and buy someplace elsewhere. Include research on the highest and best use of the land in terms of future revenue and expenditures

Scenario B: Keep this location and invest in holding services elsewhere. Look at other models with several campuses e.g. San Diego, Albuquerque, Houston, etc. Include collaborating more with Capital.

Scenario C: Stay in current location and expand its use. Project revenue and costs, including all maintenance, into the future.

Scenario D: Sell the location and rent premises

APPENDIX 2

Why the Unitarian Church of Victoria relocated to West Saanich Road

In the early 1990s the 300 member Unitarian Church of Victoria was located in a historic brick building with a small garden and no on-site parking, at 106 Superior Street near Fisherman's Wharf. There was a sanctuary with seating capacity of 100, a large lounge area, a kitchen, and upstairs a boardroom and office space. The basement had a large open area and a couple of classrooms where children's religious education classes were held. There was little daylight and some dampness and the building was believed to be seismically unsafe. For adults, there were two services each Sunday which led to complaints that some members went weeks without seeing each other.

Various solutions were explored. Adjoining property was on the market from time to time which might allow expansion. Structural change such as removal of a bearing wall to combine the lounge and sanctuary was looked at. These options were ruled out because the building was non-conforming and structural changes or expansion to adjoining lots would also require the church to conform with zoning and parking requirements which was likely not feasible.

A property search committee was established in January 1990 to find an affordable suitable building or development site. The committee was initially chaired by Faye Sturrock who had connections with some developers. The initial plan was a phased approach with Phase 1 the purchase of land (about 1.5 - 2 acres to meet zoning requirements) estimated at about \$300,000 and Phase 2, construction of a building (\$550,000 – \$750,000). Meetings were held with social housing organizations to consider joint proposals, but a consultant advised such a project would be very complex because of the need for multi-level government approvals.

In July 1993 City of Victoria advised that disposal of city property would be priced around \$1 million per acre. Options considered over the years included:

- Old Baptist church just north of Quadra and Pandora (now condos)
- 7th Day Adventist at Pandora and Vancouver
- Former St. Mark's Anglican on Boleskine
- A large residential site at Pat Bay Highway and Sayward Rd.
- A proposal to share space in a new development with Montessori school in Selkirk
- A condo development with ground floor community space similar to Fairfield New Horizons
- Christmas Hill

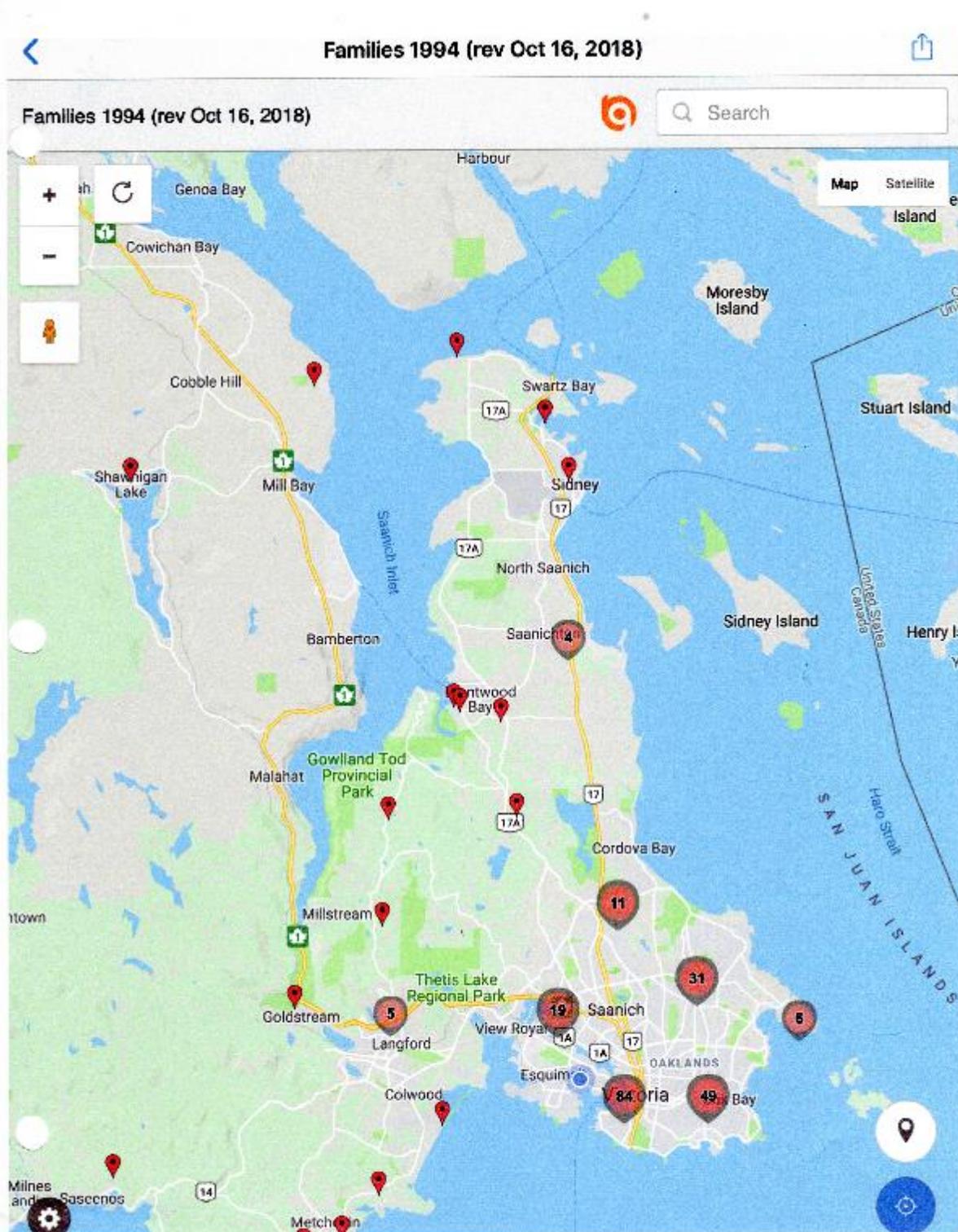
None of these proposals was viable for various reasons.

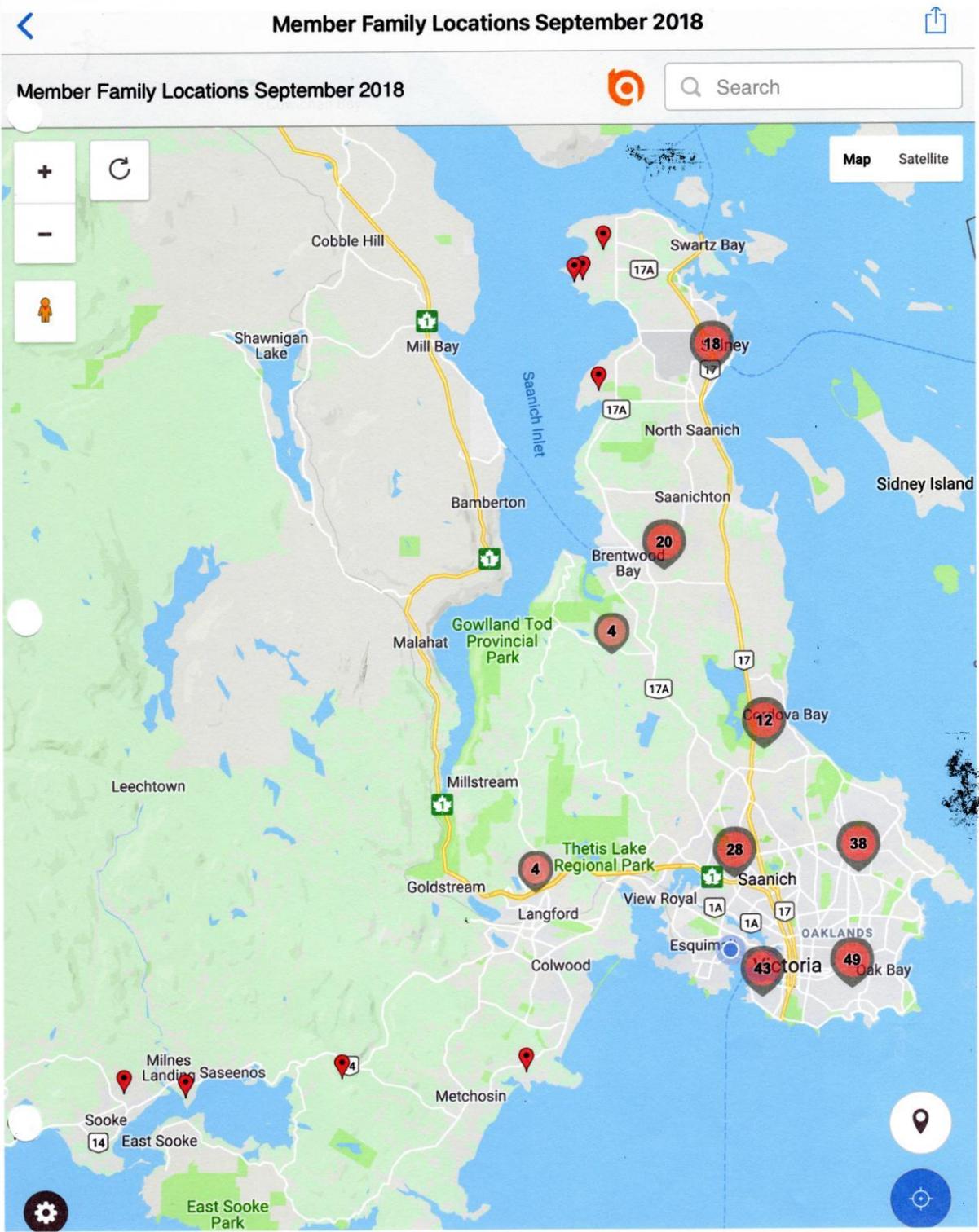
In September 1993 a 6 acre residential property was found at 355 Atkins Road, Colwood. A conditional full price offer of \$480,000 was made and accepted. Future construction costs were estimated to be about \$1 million.

In November 1993, 5575 West Saanich Road, with existing usable structures, was identified and a conditional offer of \$800,000 was accepted. At a congregational meeting on December 5th 1993 the congregation rejected the offer on 355 Atkins Road and agreed to the offer on 5575 West Saanich Road.

John Hopewell
November 23rd, 2018

APPENDIX 3





APPENDIX 4

Offsite Service Attendance

Date	Sanctuary Attendance	Cedar Hill Attendance	Total	Minister Sanc. w no offsite	Sanc. w offsite
Oct. 6	142	57	199		142
Oct 13	188		188	188	
Oct. 20	142		142	142	
Oct 27	(Lay led)103		103		
Nov 3	129	31	160		128
Nov. 10	177		177	177	
Nov 17	(Lay led) 120		120		
Nov. 24	160		160	160	
Dec. 1	124	37	161		124
	Total = 1285	Total = 125	Total = 1410		
	Average = 128.5	Average = 42	Average = 141	Average = 167.75	Average = 131
		Total individuals 77			

Appendix 5

Results of the survey assessing Offsite Services

Summary Data

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VRtvDvHDp3f8h5i8bJfLkOAgOT8UtFVh/view?usp=sharing>

Open-ended Responses

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1cZTRc0E3GMZ5AAvWgDz5G4p0ocle_PJK/view?usp=sharing

APPENDIX 6

NB – This is a research paper which contains a great deal of relevant information; however, not all recommendations were accepted by the Location Task Force.

Property Uses and Limitations
Location Task Force,
prepared by Shirley Travis,
Updated Dec 20, 2018 and finalized December, 2019

This report has been prepared to inform our congregation about issues concerning the use of our property and limitations to that use. In order to move forward we should know where we are. Topics needed for informed use or any proposal cover; 1. use and limitations, 2. current and future maintenance costs, 3. existing contracts or jobs that influence site changes.

Current land use and buildings was the number one priority selected for focus by the May 11/19 Location Task Force workshop.

Fact-finding on what we know about our property is a work in process – ever evolving. We can identify building history, title, site maps, land use research to date, covenants, environmental information, ability to change zoning and more.

1. Property uses and limitations:

- a) Our property is included in the 2007 Rural Saanich Local Area Plan, which can be read online at http://www.saanich.ca/assets/Community/Documents/Planning/plans/Rural_lap_web.pdf . A new area plan process has started, but it may be 5 years before we are surveyed for this 12-part update.
- b) We are part of the Prospect Lake advisory area.
- c) We know: We are Rural Saanich (1 of 12 districts)
We are not in the ALR. We are zoned 'Institutional' by Saanich definition, Map 11.2 of the General Plan.
Our single residence is limited to 4300 sq. ft.
- d) Saanich's Active Transportation Master Plan indicates that we are outside the urban growth area, therefore are not high on the list of improvements.
- e) Tod Creek Action Plan is separate, but affects the neighbourhood. Follow <https://www.todcreekwatershed.ca/> , or <https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs>
- f) We are on a 'major greenway' within Rural Saanich, but have not registered a significant tree nor heritage building. This is good as they require reporting and include restrictions.
- g) We are close to the Saanich 'trail network' which may be of interest to church members. Might we connect?

- h) See Maps 13.1 of the Local Area Plan. Our zoning is Rural Zoning is P1A – Basically allowing day use and allows for 1 residence, limited to 400sq. meters or 4300 sq. ft. Regarding day use; our ‘Purposes’ (registered provincially and federally) should cover concerns such as CISV (Children’s International Summer Village) lease.
- i) Map 16.1 of above document – Streamside development permit and map show we are not on the map. Good. Although we are good stewards of our seasonal stream, we are not monitored. We are part of the Prospect Lake Feed area.
- j) **Utilities and private servicing.** Our well capacity is 500 gallons per day and we use significantly below its maximum. We monitor the well and water. Our two septic fields would be maximized with any moderate change in population and we believe there is an option for a third field. Local cost estimates are no less than \$30,000 and probably higher for an approved new septic system. Our property team can be referenced for architectural, engineering and structural issues about the history and present day condition for the property. Although many are retired, knowledgeable property volunteers are part of the church resources.
- k) The school building was built first, before the church got the property. It was built in the 1980’s. The church got the property in 1993; Lion Hall was used for services until the Sanctuary was built in 1996.
- l) There is currently just the one electric panel box serving all three buildings (School, Lion Hall, Sanctuary). Three meters at this time.
- m) British Columbia Building Code deems our building ‘complex’, requiring architectural input for changes.
- n) Land Title to our property includes covenants, rights of way, and priority agreements which have been searched and may be viewed in the church office. There is a previously unknown easement which can be seen in Schedule A of the plan.

2. Current and projected future maintenance costs: July, 2019.

- We have a planned maintenance projection until 2033 and are reportedly up to date in 2019. Property chair and Archive hold copies of this large document.
- Grace Mersereau Fund will fund a second heat pump within the coming year.
- There is a \$25000 - \$30000 yearly maintenance expenditure, covered by our annual budget and Property Fund. The only extended future issues beyond the yearly maintenance might be roof and windows, however these are in good condition and do not present a concern.

3. Existing contracts and leases affect our ability to change budget issues including activity on the site.

The following **contracts** are in place within the community:

- a. **Utilities:** Contracts for solid waste, recycling and hydro services are month-to-month. Telephones and internet are on a contract with Shaw expiring Dec. 2023. Our copier is on a lease until July 1, 2020.
- b. **Office subscriptions:** We also have various software and online subscriptions that are not on contract per se, but either month-to-month, quarterly or annual payments, i.e.: church database (monthly); website hosting (quarterly); Quick books (annually); SmugMug (annually); Soul Matters social media packet (annually); DNS (live stream) service (paid annually); Social Responsibility Committee have annual subscriptions.
- c. **Property related;** Emergency services agreement with Saanich fire department; Property insurance, (Robertson Hall); Mortgage - Coast Capital.
- d. **Lease agreements** - Montessori School, Farmhouse residence rental plus other consistent rentals;
 - Ishiguro Yoga (Lion Hall, Monday afternoons)
 - Wado Kai Karate (Lion Hall, Tuesday & Thursday evenings)
 - Wavelengths Community Choir (Sanctuary, Monday evenings)
 - United Church of God (Lion Hall, Saturdays afternoons)
 - Eine Kleine (Sanctuary, June Sundays)
 - CISV will not be renting in 2019 nor 2020.
- e. **Human resources;**
 - Employees of the church:** The Ministers, Spiritual Education Director, Office Administrator and Communications Assistant.
 - Independent contractors:** The maintenance person/handyman (Brad Clarke), child minders, SELCY assistants, custodian, Rental Coordinator (Michael Ramsey), Music Director (Nick Fairbank), Collaborative pianist (Jennifer Mitchell) and IT support person (Alex Tang).
- f. **Other;**
 - **Canadian Unitarian Council** - annual membership.
 - **CUC contract** for Licensing **Lay Chaplains** renews annually.
 - **Victoria Foundation** - annual grant to indigenous Camosun College students.
 - **First Unitarian Church of Victoria Foundation** has annual society
 - **First Unitarian Church of Victoria** has filings for taxation and society registration.
 - **Trust funds** (fund commitments listed in the church's annual report) including most recent Refugee Fund commitment.
 - **Financial services:** Genus Investments, TD Waterhouse, Accountancy Firm, Coast Capital banking. Our mortgage has been renewed in favour of Coast Capital.
 - **University of Victoria** - Multifaith Council renewal, and
 - Greater Victoria Acting Together (**GVAT**)

Discussion: Pam Hartling, Planner with Saanich, stated we are probably 5 years away from another District Plan Survey. We appreciate her assistance in clarifying zoning and use. Example: Applications for

'commercial zoning' (example; storage lockers for lease) would need to be made for any commercial, or public offering of our space. We can however use such space for members. Rezoning from 'institutional' to 'commercial' would impact our tax status as a church.

Further conversation with the Saanich planning department indicated the 'efficiencies of costs' and return on moneys need to be calculated when looking at change, along with the zoning, provincial and municipal regulations plus identifying the target population. Restrictions on most housing faith-based projects, or any commercial endeavour will require extensive documented planning.

Research to date, indicates there is a strong public will to keep Rural Saanich, rural. Public input is often organized in resistance to development changes which will require neighbours' agreement.

The following issues arose when we considered our leases in 2019:

- We cannot lease to a commercial venture.
- We must consider licensing restrictions within the lease.
- We must ensure that maintenance, and occupancy costs are clearly addressed and that signage and environmental concerns are consistent with municipal and provincial bylaws and licensing.
- Any lease must be managed by the church, be reviewed annually for payment and compliance, and have person(s) that the leasee can speak to and address concerns with.

The two items 'property uses and limitations' (a-n) plus "current and projected future maintenance costs" provide a framework for considerations of any significant proposals or change to church property.

Conclusion: The physical and regulatory influences that effect our property for daily, weekly, monthly and yearly function are complex. Consideration of the any or all activity (from leasing and hiring to construction) can influence church direction and outcomes. The responsibility is ours. Hopefully this research and the lists influence prudent but knowledgeable action.

Completed by Shirley Travis, 12/2019.

The Location Task Force survey and workshop focusing on our property sorted many suggestions and ideas. From 25 workshop people contributing ideas on property, the four ideas below were chosen as priorities to work on for 'space use'. Five participants from the initial survey identified that the most significant idea was **Space Analysis** of the buildings as a preliminary step to improving use and developing any plans. This included the proviso "to optimize funds while meeting the increasing church and congregational needs". Contributors on property issues were Shirley Travis, Andy Lee, Rebecca Mellett, John Worton, Glenyss Turner.

Much needed updates on the Montessori Lease are being reviewed by J. Tiffany, J. Worton and S. Travis with input from Nadia in the office which also provided impetus for the analysis.

While Ideas were creative, only two persons pursued ideas #1 and #2 and the Montessori Lease negotiations. These kept the space analysis moving forward. Information was gathered about the property and will be accessible to the membership through this paper and forwarded to the property committee and church administration.

A full discussion of property issues is included as Appendix .5

IDEAS FOR THE PROPERTY UTILIZATION REVIEW

1. Area under the sanctuary

- Finish the basement and rent it to organizations such as schools or daycare facilities for seniors or people with special needs that fit our current P-2 zoning restrictions. Occupants could be selected so they reflect UU values and broaden our neighbourhood's sense of community.
- Finishing the basement would require rezoning in order to increase the allowable floor space on the property. Given our good history in the neighbourhood and the fact that the footprint of the building would not change, I think the likelihood of approval is high. The need for septic field changes may depend on limiting rental to days when the church isn't using the building.

Actions needed: Identify rental markets and estimate income. Prepare a schematic floor plan. Identify construction costs and consultants' fees. Decide whether to proceed.

Presently the Montessori school stores items and will reduce their used space as only 10% can be used for storage according to the Building Code for complex buildings in BC. To change the 10% situation fireproofing includes dry wall and fire damping ventilation system. This is just for storage.

2. Farmhouse

- Rents in the Greater Victoria area have risen sharply in the last few years. Review whether our tenants are paying fair market rate (rent + services rendered) for the property.
- Alternatively, turn the upstairs suite into shared housing for four church members, and achieve some balance between rental income for the church and social value of providing low-cost housing.
- Saanich zoning allows up to four unrelated people to live in one suite, so Saanich approval for a shared suite is not needed. The septic system was approved for the current number of bedrooms, so changes should not be necessary. The suite has five bedrooms and two and one-half baths, plus large communal areas. Although a stair lift could be added if needed, the suite would be best suited for people who can live independently or with minimal care.
- To encourage energy conservation and reduce their capital expenses, residents could share ownership and use of a vehicle (hybrid or electric?), and residents could share a garden.
- Rooms in Victoria rent for about \$650 to 800 per month plus utilities. Multiplied by four people, the farmhouse could bring in \$2,600 to \$3,200 per month, which exceeds (to be confirmed) the value of rent plus services paid by our present tenants.
- If we apply for rezoning, a second suite could be added north of the farmhouse for caretakers. Given our good history in the neighbourhood, the acute need for (seniors') housing in Greater Victoria, and the fact that the new suite would be out of the public view, the proposal believed there is the likelihood of rezoning approval is high. Our present tenants could be accommodated in the new suite if they wish.

Actions needed: Discuss with our tenants. Identify interest in shared housing within the church. Identify likely rental income under both scenarios. Identify cost of improvements to the suite if rented to a group. Decide whether to proceed. If a separate suite for caretakers is

needed, identify construction costs. Negotiate terms of occupancy with the church's present tenants. Decide whether to proceed. Apply for rezoning if necessary.

A 5-year lease is in place with present tenants to 2024.

3. Expand the sanctuary and/or Lion Hall

- The Alban Institute, church consultants, say that when sanctuaries reach about 80% of their seating capacity, church growth stalls. FUCV has experienced a plateau in its growth in spite of our wonderful ministers, vibrant community, and appealing property. While other factors, e.g., our location away from population centres and the West's general decline in church attendance may be factors contributing to our plateau, the Alban Institute's observation may also explain it.

- If the Alban Institute is right, expanding the sanctuary would probably allow the church to grow. Advantages to growth include spreading UU values and increasing the church's revenue.

- The sanctuary could extend north by 25' as planned when the sanctuary was built. However, people in the new rows would be a long – and probably uncomfortable – distance from the pulpit. Alternatively, the sanctuary could be widened by expanding it to the east.

- Many people find the Lion Hall too crowded and too noisy, so they stay away from coffee after the service. Acoustic treatment could reduce noise, but physical crowding would remain. The hall could be expanded to the west, perhaps doubling its size.

- Any expansion would require rezoning. As with items 1 & 2 above, I expect rezoning would be approved.

Actions needed: discuss in the congregation. Prepare schematic floor plans. Estimate construction costs and consultants' fees. Apply for rezoning.

An extensive capital fund raising campaign and identified membership focus would be needed but at present, the demand is noted for more diverse acoustics.

4. Rent land to an organic farmer

- While Earle's vegetable garden is currently being used in part by a group of church members, they may or may not continue their operation in coming years. There is additional sunny land available west of the garden that could be leased to a commercial grower. Should the current church members not wish to garden next year, that area could be leased as well, while removing the existing raised beds would make mechanical cultivation of the whole area possible.

- The church's well reportedly supplies more water than the church uses. To avoid frequent turnover in tenancies, rent to a grower with a proven track record.

Actions needed: determine how much land and water are available. Determine market rates for similar leased land. Decide whether to proceed. Select a reliable grower and negotiate a lease.

Further to all ideas; a plan would need presenting, Arts and Aesthetics committee would need consultation, then a survey of the members for changes. Beyond that of the property committee

scope, approval of any major change requires of 75% membership approval as expected in our society by-laws and FUCV constitution.

To establish Rental agreements and maintain them or to propose of capital expense, the costs of an enterprise but also the team to initiate such an effort would want to be included in a plan. A qualified and energetic team of focused and committed volunteers over time is needed.

Appendix 7

Survey Themes

Key themes from the February 2019 survey can be found here

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1q5pOjvDHUS4pvB2jk0y23q_v-mqaVxds?usp=sharing

Appendix 8

Survey Ideas

A summary of ideas generated in the February survey can be found here

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GSA_kf9F-x0EX2MVwaonNd_azZklhPZ8/view?usp=sharing