

## **Port Nelson United Church - Renovated Facilities Investigation (RFI)**

This briefing provides commentary from RFI on questions and observations received during and after the November 25, 2012 Town Hall meeting. For those who could not be at the meeting, a summary of the material presented at the meeting is also provided.

### **Summary of information presented by RFI at the Town Hall meeting**

#### **HISTORY:**

- RFI started in late April 2012
- 13 meetings of the main team
- Numerous meetings of the 5 sub-teams
- Over 40 quotations and estimates have been obtained
- several professional opinions have been obtained including one on air quality

**RFI:** Mat Ardron, Bill Brockington, Michael Brooks, Bill Carr, Fran Clutton, Leah Driscoll, Gord Gilmore, Cathy Greven, Pat Gilmore, Stan Harvey, June Wright, John Zinkie

#### **INFORMATION OBTAINED SO FAR**

The data gathering is largely complete. There will be additional data needed in focused areas at a later date. The conclusions (areas that need attention) from the five sub teams are summarized as follows:

- Property Health
  - Roofs – leaks, eaves troughs
  - Some exterior doors/windows are failing
  - Chimneys need repair
  - Exterior stairwells, sidewalks need repair
  - Air conditioning – heating system
  - Kitchen improvements
  - Electrical system upgrades (obsolescent parts)
- Property Usage
  - Gathering space (eg narthex) less than adequate
  - Versatility of room usage and under usage
  - Place for parents to take children during service for privacy yet still hear the service
  - Quiet room for meditation, contemplation, individual or small group worship
  - Promotional and display areas are less than optimum
  - Inadequate storage – needs improvement
  - Navigation – both inside and outside building is not good for newcomers
  - Noise containment – need improved acoustics
  - Use of dedicated spaces
- Accessibility
  - Accessible washrooms
  - Accessible lower auditorium, etc. –all levels ie. Access between multiple floors
  - Chancel accessibility

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- Exterior access to building
- Multi-inclusivity – inclusive to all – visual, auditory, mobility
- Energy (Energy Efficiency)
  - Minimize carbon footprint
  - Energy efficiency
  - 8 year ROI – heating upgrade
  - Renewable energies – solar panels
- Demographics
  - Aging population
  - Also young families and youth

## OPTION IDENTIFICATION

RFI has identified about a dozen options covering a wide range of possibilities. At this point the options represent possible ways of addressing the needs and deficiencies. No analysis of the relative merits of the options has been done yet. That is the next step. The range of options looks at:

- keeping, repurposing or removing the original 1953 structure;
- keeping, repurposing or replacing the space between the old and new sanctuary
- leaving the 5 kitchens/kitchenettes where they are or consolidating them

An “Option” is a set of improvements or changes which will ultimately form the basis for a recommendation to council and the congregation. The improvements that make up an “option” may be recommended to take place over a period of time taking into account factors such as:

- the improvement may not be needed immediately
- impact of construction on use of the church
- financing

Within the range of options the four needs identified by the congregation as being most significant prior to RFI being established and which are defined as part of RFI’s mandate are:

- 1) **Accessibility** – supports value of **being inclusive**
  - a) Previous feedback rated this as a high need
  - b) Burlington Accessibility Design Standard is one of the yardsticks we are using; the building code is the other. This covers the range of possible outcomes from minimum compliance to state of the art compliance.
  - c) Limitations of a 5 level building: means there must be either elevators/ ramps/ stair lifts or fewer levels, or a

### Being Inclusive

At Port Nelson we welcome everyone to participate fully in the life of the community, no matter their age, race, gender, culture, belief, ability or sexual orientation. As followers of Jesus we believe that we are part of the body of Christ. The apostle Paul said that "the body does not consist of one member but of many" and all are indispensable. (1 Corinthians 12:14, 22-26)

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combination of both

- d) We asked the congregation at the Town Hall whether we were aiming in the right direction if we use Burlington Accessibility Design Standard as our objective recognizing that fully achieving all aspects may not be practical. The response was strongly favorable.

**Accessibility: #1 importance from earlier Town Hall and reinforced by survey**

**Burlington Accessibility Design Standard:** establishes specifications for door widths, ramp slopes, washroom access and all aspects of accessibility. The standard is available on line at <http://cms.burlington.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=20819>.

## 2) Energy efficiency

- a) Solar recommendation: RFI recommends that an application for solar panels should be processed subject to council approval in December. The benefits are:
- i) Greener footprint
  - ii) Lower carbon burden
  - iii) Showcase new technology resulting in community recognition
  - iv) Off set inefficient use of energy in older parts of the building
  - v) Substantial financial investment opportunity. Greater than 15% annual return on investment.
- b) Boiler replacement: 8 year return on investment by using high efficiency boilers. Also the chimney repairs can be less costly with high efficiency boilers.

**93% of survey responders indicated energy efficiency was a very important issue for them**

## 3) Multiple use of space

- a) noise abatement to improve acoustics for room to room noise reduction
- b) Sanctuary seating – we are looking at the pros and cons of flexible seating: no decision yet. We are aware that unless there is a very good reason to use flexible seating, a lot of people like the pews left as they are.
- c) Dedicated storage and fewer dedicated meeting or office rooms.

**Earlier survey results-60% disagree with replacing pews with chairs, 25% agree with replacement**

## 4) Kitchen(s)

- a) Previous feedback rated this area as needing attention.
- b) There are a range of options from fixing what is broken to improving the efficiency of the layout and functionality to a full commercial kitchen
- c) Current focus is on improving the capability to do heat and serve but not full cooking – commercial style kitchen.

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- d) We asked the congregation at the Town hall whether we were aiming in the right direction if we improve the main kitchen functionality to do heat and serve but not focus attention on a full commercial kitchen? The congregation was about 70% supportive.

**69% of survey responders felt that a kitchen appropriate for light meals and catering capacity is desired.**

## WHAT IS NEXT?

The next step is to prepare preliminary cost estimates and evaluate the merits of the options using a scoring system that takes into account the congregation's priorities (including costs). We are working toward having a preliminary recommendation ready to submit to council and the congregation early in the New Year. If that is approved, detailed plans and cost estimates will be prepared.

## Comments and questions from Town Hall meeting

Several questions related to cost and priorities for improvements. In particular for improvements related to accessibility and the kitchens the RFI noted that if new construction is considered for parts of the building then there are more opportunities for low cost improvements. If the current building is retained, then improvements in those areas are likely to be more modest. RFI understands that cost is a significant factor and that any cost will come under close scrutiny.

Concerning the possible installation of solar panels there were several comments. The need for an engineering assessment of the roof to be able to take the additional load is a requirement. A Professional Engineer's assessment will be done on the roof loading. Also noted are the changes needed to the electrical panels and electrical connection between the utility and the church. RFI explained that these costs are included in the capital cost of the solar panel project and are paid off from the electricity revenue produced by the solar panels .

Some improvements can be done at low cost, such as improved signage so newcomers can find their way around.

Comments were noted about keeping the current sanctuary as a "sacred space" and not using it for a broader range of functions.

## Comments and questions following the Town Hall meeting

*Comments are listed verbatim with names withheld.*

Having attended the RFI update earlier today, I have a few thoughts that I would like to express. I currently serve as a member on the Port Nelson maintenance committee and so appreciate the issues that the RFI committee has to deal with.

- I think the meeting was very well presented and gave us the needed information on the RFI progress.
- I endorse the installation of solar panels on the south side of the sanctuary.
- I am starting to realize that the sanctuary MUST become a multifunctional room. That is, the beautiful fixed oak pews may need to be replaced with something moveable.

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- I am sorry to say, but I think the Lloyd Auditorium presents too many structural problems and should be removed.
- All the floor areas of the middle section should be made level with the upper Narthex and all the flat roofs above it should be made on one level as well.
- Since it is an integral part of the church, there should be only one kitchen and it needs to be modernized for safety and convenience.

Current functionality should be maintained.

- The library and possibly the offices could be moved under sanctuary by the south windows.

This presentation seemed to assume that the replacement option versus renovation is off the table. Is that what the church decided? I thought that renovation was an option to replacement and that the two would both be considered. That is not the impression conveyed today!

As a Christian I am saddened by the comment that “we can’t change the sanctuary, (ie get rid of the pews) as it is our only sacred space.” Where ever we are living out our mandate of what God is asking us to do is a “sacred” space. Think of ways we could invite the community to share our journey by having a multifunctional space.

If the building was not built to today’s standard and is not insulated, should it be wise to start over? Redoing a substandard building can often have unseen costs and end up being more expensive than first anticipated. LEAVE THE CHURCH ALONE!

RFI: The placement of offices and the library are significant considerations in the options under review. The usefulness of these functions can be significantly affected by their location and ease of access.

RFI: Both replacement and renovation are being considered for the older parts of the building. For the two levels of the newer sanctuary building, only renovation to optimize use of the space is being considered. There are some significant opportunities to use space under the sanctuary more effectively.

RFI is considering alternate uses of the sanctuary space to accommodate large dinner seatings in options where no other suitable space is available. There is a major cost saving to using the sanctuary space rather than building or renovating an equivalent size space. Also the sanctuary space is highly under used compared to other spaces. No decision has been made. At this point flexible use of the sanctuary is just one of many options.

RFI: We agree that the decision to reuse the old building or not is one of the main considerations in deciding among the options currently under consideration. The commenter is correct in noting that upgrading an old building has hidden costs and risks but that does not rule out the possibility.

RFI interpretation is that “Church” here means “Sanctuary” and this comment is noted and is discussed above.

What are the public health standards needed for the kitchen? I resent putting into the church when it is floating out the windows and roof!

RFI: Public health standards will be met. The extent to which we exceed these minimum standards will be highly dependent on costs which in turn are highly dependent on whether new construction is involved where the kitchen (or kitchens) is to be located. This has not been decided.

RFI interpretation is that the commenter's resentment is with respect to spending money on a church that is wasting it through wasteful heat losses. This will be addressed by the energy efficiency initiatives.

Comments received verbally:

The term "Renovation" as used in RFI mandate is not understood to include tearing down part of the building especially to 1953 building. Tear down is out of scope.

RFI noted this possible concern with the interpretation of the work "Renovation" at its first meeting. Quoting from the minutes of the first meeting:

"The phrase "*renovated facility*" is interpreted in the broadest sense to mean any form of renovation including but not limited to repairs, replacements, demolition and new construction."

This interpretation has been reviewed with council to confirm the RFI interpretation is aligned to the mandate from council.

## Additional congregational comments

RFI is open to comments at any time. Comments with the author's name are more useful than anonymous comments and will get a response. An author's name will not be used outside of RFI. Comments can be:

1. given to any RFI member verbally or in writing
2. put in the RFI suggestion box in the narthex, or
3. e-mailed to [pnucrefit@hotmail.com](mailto:pnucrefit@hotmail.com)

## RFI closing comments

RFI understands that the consideration of renovations and new facilities is stressful for many members of the congregation. Consequently RFI is working as quickly as is practical while also doing a diligent job of understanding the needs, desires, costs, and options. RFI commits to listening to congregational input and keeping the congregation informed on progress.

Stan Harvey

RFI chair