

Facilities Development Update, January 2013

On Saturday Jan 12, a Board retreat was held to focus on the status of the development of our new facility. A number of concerns had been raised regarding costs, funding shortfalls, fundraising plans as well as the anticipated timing of future activities. There were over 20 people in attendance.

Donna Dinsmore opened the meeting with a reflection that focused on this project being a lot more than just putting up a new building – it was a reflection of who we were and what we saw ourselves trying to achieve in today's world. A project like this did involve sacrifice but felt that we did have it within our means to make it happen.

Peter Gordon provided up to date details on the project including

- Rezoning by the District of Squamish was now complete
- Have advertised for a Construction Manager – 12 applications received and these will be reviewed with interviews of the top 4 or 5 to occur on Feb 5
- Moving to a phase in the project where planning costs are shared (with Sea to Sky Community Services Society) on the basis of square footage (as opposed to split 50-50). Squamish United Church share of these costs is approximately 20%.
- The next phase involves more specific planning elements (structural, mechanical and electrical) and an early estimate for the entire project was \$200,000 (with Squamish United share approximately 20% of that total).
- This phase of the project should be complete by late June.
- Have engaged United Church of Canada BC Conference offices (they participated in a project review) and kept Presbytery up to date – both offices are very supportive of this project.

Ken Tanner provided a financial update

Current project commitment for Squamish United of \$1.6 M (to be adjusted once final project costs are in).

Currently holding \$750,000 (from “manse” property proceeds) plus income from Capital Campaign and other fundraising - \$300,000 for a total of \$1.0 M. meaning a shortfall of \$600,000.

Options to address this shortfall included:

- taking the entire amount from the housing allowance fund leaving \$400,000 in the housing allowance or
- a combination of housing allowance plus fundraising options (extension of capital campaign for another year, large events etc).

(over)

Rob Waller (our financial consultant for the project) reflected on some of the things he had been told during the initial survey and outlined a number of options for fundraising.

One concern was the wording of the agreement appeared to indicate that the sharing of soft costs on a proportional basis was not to start until “conditions precedent” were met including all funding in place. It was felt this was not the intent and would be reviewed.

A number of other concerns were identified and prioritized including:

- Clear sense where the shortfall (i.e. \$600K) is coming from – what are we going to look like in 5 years? What legacy do we want to leave?
- Pause before spending more on soft costs until we have a clear sense of direction.
- Sea to Sky public portrayal of Squamish United as a partner (not mentioned in newspaper articles)
- Views on spending some of the housing allowance (currently at \$1.0 M) for facility development from other groups (Phillips Hager North (financial advisors) and Presbytery)
- Is there adequate energy available for event fundraising?
- Increase in costs – started at \$1.0 M and now at \$1.6 M. One suggestion was to limit any spending to \$1.2 M.

While all of the options were left open for consideration, no specific decisions regarding fundraising were taken. It was agreed that further work on getting a better estimates of total costs should continue and the committee would report the results of the analysis of costs at the end of June.

All reports received suggested that this meeting was very positive and people appreciated the opportunity to participate in the discussion.