

## **Harmony United Methodist Church Capital Improvement Process**

In January 2011, Harmony United Methodist Church approved the establishment of a Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) and charged it with development of a comprehensive plan for improvement and possible expansion of all church properties. Additionally, the CIC was charged to develop recommendations for a financial strategy to implement the plan's recommendations.

To successfully develop a plan, the CIC embarked on a thorough assessment of the current facilities as compared to the approved church vision, mission and goals as well as to the needs of various church ministries. The facilities review included the present church building, parking lots, and adjacent properties.

After the assessment of existing facilities, the CIC visited several churches in the area that had gone through similar expansion programs in the recent past to learn what went well and what did not. Next, the CIC consulted the District Superintendent (DS) to ensure that the CIC understood the steps identified in the Discipline.

Based on the facilities review, church visits, and consultation with the DS, the CIC formulated a plan for the way ahead to be considered by the congregation. The next step is to begin to communicate this plan, to listen carefully to member feedback, to improve the plan to reach consensus, and hopefully then implement the plan.

This set of frequently asked questions and answers (FAQ's) below is the beginning of the dialog. As the dialog continues over the coming months, this set of FAQ's will be expanded and modified to become a resource that church members can access at any time.

### **Questions and Answers**

#### **What is the Capital Improvement Committee and what is its charge?**

At the January 2011 Harmony Church Council (Council) meeting, the Church approved establishment of a Capital Improvement Committee (CIC) and charged it with development of a comprehensive plan for improvement and expansion of all church properties. These include the present church building, parking lots, and adjacent properties. Additionally, the CIC was charged to develop recommendations for a financial strategy to implement the plan's recommendations.

### **What is the composition of the CIC and how long has it been meeting?**

At the February 2011 Council meeting, the CIC members were approved and a Chairperson (Tom Gatewood) was named. The thirteen members of the committee have been meeting at least once a month since March 2011. The CIC serves under, and reports directly to, the Council.

The Committee: Tom Gatewood (Chairperson); Doug Evans; Alice Farris; Roy Fuller; David Jackson; Carroll Laycock; Lewis Leigh; David Nash; Rhonda Paice; Mary Preston; Tom Sullivan; Biz Tandy; Steve Vineyard; Rick Yochim

### **What has the CIC accomplished to date?**

The CIC reviewed the Church Goals approved by the Council and agreed that its work should support the Goals. The CIC also reviewed the 2007 Church Evaluation as well as the United Methodist Church Discipline's requirements for facility planning and development.

The CIC was organized into subcommittees to conduct an assessment of the following five areas of the church facility and property: Worship; Education; Administration; Fellowship Hall/Kitchen; and Facility Usage Beyond Sunday Mornings.

Members of the Committee visited four churches similar to Harmony's size that had expanded onto a historic structure.

### **What have been the major findings of the assessment?**

Significant space shortages were reported for every Sunday School age group from age six through adults. For Education programs that are held beyond Sunday mornings, like Vacation Bible School and youth fellowship, there are also significant shortages.

To alleviate Education space shortages, many spaces not primarily intended for Education usage are being used. Examples are Driscoll Hall and the Old Social Hall.

If established guidelines for seating (row spacing, seat width, aisle width) are applied to the Sanctuary, then present capacity is below standards. In addition, the Old Social Hall and the Sanctuary are not well-integrated because of the separating wall and ceiling. This makes it difficult to have a unified worship experience. The audio and visual systems are outdated and nonexistent, respectively.

The Church Goals call for 5% growth annually for worship and education attendance. So when present attendance numbers, already suffering

from significant space shortages, are projected over the next ten years, the shortages reach severe levels.

Storage space is inadequate, requiring use of space like Driscoll Hall not intended for this purpose.

### **What is the next step?**

According to the UMC Discipline, the CIC has been in the Study Phase. For the completion of the Study Phase, the CIC will recommend to the Council in February 2012 that a professional architectural planner (planner) be selected to assist with this by forming focus group meetings with the Congregation to determine desired outcomes, identify key questions, and elicit recommendations.

### **Why should we hire a planner?**

Hiring a consultant will help us save time, effort, and money. They know the questions to ask and can provide objectivity in what could be emotionally driven decisions. The people at the churches we visited, as well as District Superintendent Larry Thompson, strongly recommended a planner be integrated into the process as early as possible.

### **Has the \$40,000 contributed by Harmony members to the 2011 Matching Fund been used for debt reduction?**

Yes. At the January 2012 Council meeting, a motion was approved to transfer immediately the \$40,000 of the matching fund donated by church members to debt reduction.

### **What about the other \$40,000 donated by anonymous individuals? How will it be used?**

Up to \$40,000 from the 2011 Marching Fund will be requested from the Council at its February 2012 meeting to pay for the services of a planner. This figure was determined by asking several professional planners for estimates of the amount required to complete the planning phase.

There has been a perception by some in the congregation that all money raised in the 2011 Matching Fund Campaign was for debt reduction only. On the contrary, the anonymous donors who promised \$40,000 for the Fund authorized the church to use their portion to further the Capital Improvement process in whatever form that took. This was reported several times in worship in early 2011 and was recently re-confirmed by the donors that this was indeed their intention. Any portion of the \$40,000 not used to pay the planner's fee will be applied to debt reduction.

## **Does this mean we are committing ourselves to build something?**

No. The purpose of the planning and focus group meetings is to hear from the congregation where they see the mission of the church and if they see limitations in our current space that require action. The focus groups will be the main avenue for thoughtful interaction with your fellow church members to work together on the future of His church.

## **What happens at the end of the Study Phase?**

Using the input from these focus group meetings, the planner will help the CIC and Council determine whether or not to proceed to develop a set of recommendations, with conceptual drawings, for renovation and/or addition to the church facility.

If at the end of the Study Phase the decision by the Council is to proceed, the CIC will then develop a report with these recommendations and drawings to be presented back to the Council and then to the Winchester District Building Committee. The report will also include an analysis of the church and community, project potential membership, include the church's program of ministry, and present an accessibility plan.

Finally, a HUMC Charge Conference will be scheduled by the Council to present the completed Study Phase Report and request approval of a Building Committee to enact the next Building/Renovation Phase, with an accompanying plan for capital fund raising.