

Update from the Design Task Force

In late January the Design Task Force received an updated pre-construction cost estimate for the proposed building project. This project would replace the existing Religious Education wing with a new office suite, classrooms, Chapel, and meeting spaces. While plans for the project are not yet as fully defined as construction drawings would be, the additional mechanical and structural specifications provided by our architects have enabled our contractor to estimate more accurate and specific costs.



The current estimate has also incorporated elements from the Design Task Force's review and from input gathered at our meeting with the Advisory Group last fall (the Advisory Group represents a broad spectrum of program and interest groups in our church community, including religious education, worship, coffeehouse, gardens, sangha, and youth groups). Many of the elements suggested have been included in the base price while some remain as "add" alternates.

The new cost estimate is approximately \$125,000 - \$250,000 higher than the previous estimate received early last fall. The estimate range includes some minor flexibility in pricing for items such as floor and wall finishes, however it is mostly dependent on the heating/cooling system selected. Several different options are being considered for the new wing. The options (and their approximate price) include replacing the existing boiler with a similar system (\$15,000), installing a high efficiency variable refrigerant flow system (recommended by our contractor; \$60,000), or a more energy independent and "green" geothermal system (\$150,000). Still another option (with a higher initial cost but more long-term efficiency) could include a combination of variable refrigerant flow and geothermal. The Design Task Force is still gathering information with the ultimate recommendation to be based on first cost/life cycle analysis, how well the option addresses our desire/mission to be "green", and our financial ability to fund it.

The total cost of the project will include the construction costs as well as fees for architectural construction drawings, engineering, legal services, project management, insurance, and furniture/equipment (such as a portable stage for the coffeehouse). We have also included a \$100,000 project contingency (in addition to the contractor's construction contingency) to cover unforeseen issues. With these items included, the projection for the total budget is currently \$2.0-2.25 million.

As the Board and Finance Committee complete gathering information on financing options for the project, we will soon begin information sessions for the congregation-at-large. These sessions, which will be held on Sunday, March 17 and 24 during coffee hours and on Wednesday evening, March 20 at 7 PM, will help us all prepare for a vote on the proposed project at a special parish meeting in April.

Meanwhile, sketches of the proposed design are posted on the large bulletin board at the end of the Parish Hall, will be available at information tables during coffee hour on Sunday, and can be found online through a link on the North Parish home page (www.northparish.org). You can also talk with any member of the Design Task Force or the Advisory Group for up-to-date information.

Design Task Force: Peter Calkins, Darnell Canada, Dan Gerron, Fred Glore, Dan Gobeil, Debb Putnam, Don Schemack, Michele Sherry

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