

NOTES FROM A MEETING ON NOV. 3, 2020 AT 10:30 AM

Attendees:

Rev. Liz Goodman, Pastor, Church on the Hill
Eileen Mahoney, Grant Researcher
Emily Johnson
Ellen Merrit
Ann Trabulsi
Walton Wilson
Ticki Winsor
Jim Hundt, Foresight Architects

- I. The meeting opened with a prayer by Liz.
- II. Jim asked if there were any questions or comments on the Property Conditions Assessment Reports.
 - a. Eileen noted that there is potential funding available for the clock restoration, with a deadline of Nov. 30, 2020. She asked if she could get an estimate for that work prior to the deadline. She said that if there are any other historic restoration issues that could be included in the grant application. Jim will follow up with the two clock restoration firms that he spoke with. Liz noted that she has a third restoration company who is planning to look at the clock as well. Jim asked that their proposal be sent to him. The proposals should all include automating the clock. Eileen has a fourth company to consider as well, if necessary.
 - b. Jim suggested that the grant application include complete restoration of the bell tower as described in the report, including the clock, and the entry doors.
 - c. Liz asked if we could also include relocation of the handicapped ramp to the main entrance. The historical commission dictated its current location, even though it was originally proposed for the front entrance. There is concern that the current ramp is under the drip line of the roof, which creates a hazard from falling ice & snow. Jim suggested that the site designer look at perhaps moving the ramp farther away from the building or around the back where there are no eaves to make it safer. According to Eileen, funding for such a project would have to come from private sources.
 - d. Liz stated that she was very happy to have the reports, which have helped her to see how valuable they are as assets as well as answer various questions about the buildings.

- e. Walton asked what a structural design review is. Jim explained that it is a structural analysis of the existing element based on current codes. (These were not performed on any of the structural elements.)
 - f. Eileen noted that the moisture problem in the Chapel would be fundable.
 - g. Jim suggested that the recommended window restoration work at the meetinghouse might be fundable as historic preservation work. Eileen will look into it. Eileen asked why the windows are not operable. Jim said that he could not figure out how to operate the windows and he didn't want to break them trying to open one. No one on the committee has seen any of them open in the last 40 years. They are probably painted shut.
- III. Jim reviewed the Assets Mapping Report prepared by Partners for Sacred Places. None of the Committee members had participated in the Assets Mapping Workshop. Jim asked if anyone knew who the people there were so that they could be followed up with. Eileen said that she had a pretty good idea who those people were and she would be contacting those people to talk to them about the feasibility of using Church on the Hill facilities to meet some of their needs. Jim asked what non-church uses have occurred in the meetinghouse. So far, it has been limited to musical concerts and dramatic readings. On page 3 of the attached copy of the Asset Mapping Report, Jim underlined the uses that the church has already been providing space for.
- a. Liz noted that IS183 has stopped because of COVID. There may be an opportunity to lease space to them when they reopen if they have no other space to use.
 - b. Liz said that the church has also been approached by the public schools, the Town and a local dance company about providing space for programs that were formerly held at the community center.
 - c. Eileen said that she has already had a conversation with the director of the Berkshire Music School who wants to do some events at Church on the Hill out of Pittsfield and into Lenox, so that is a strong possibility.
- IV. Jim then pointed out that there is a "flip side" to the building assets listed in the report. In other words, while there are assets that exist, some of those assets have limitations. This list is also attached to this report. Some additional comments on the list follow:
- a. Walton noted that they cannot use the balcony because of the low height of the guardrail and the existing. Jim pointed out that if the second stair were not being used for storage, it would qualify as the required second means of egress but the guardrail issue would still need to be addressed.
 - b. The design of any new outdoor parking should be careful to not detract from the beautiful setting for the meetinghouse.

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- c. Liz asked if it was possible to move the existing organ. Jim said that it could but the entire instrument would have to be moved.
 - d. Liz said that they hope to provide Wi-Fi at the meetinghouse sometime in the future.
 - e. Jim recommended that the church should move forward with moisture testing for the Chapel basement floor so that the cause and the remedy can be determined. This would allow for us to determine the cost and request funding for this repair.
 - f. Jim asked if there were any parking lots outside the Village where people could park and take a shuttle into town. There is nothing at this time but it would be worth considering it in the future. Jim suggested that this be explored as part of the Cultural District or other community organizations so that the potential lack of off-street parking does not limit the potential use of both buildings.
- V. Jim then reviewed the code implications of changing the use of any of the church's buildings. He pointed out that many of the code requirements are based on the number of occupants per space and per building. Jim calculated the building occupancies as noted below:

Meetinghouse:

SPACE	AREA	FACTOR	OCC LOAD	
Boiler Room	149	300	1	
Narthex	443	100	5	
Sacristy	65	200	1	
Assembly Space	2523	18"/person	272	based on existing fixed seating
Stage	265	15	18	
Balcony	1969	18"/person	134	based on existing fixed seating

TOTAL BUILDING OCCUPANT LOAD: 431

Chapel:

SPACE	AREA	FACTOR	OCC LOAD
Chapel	434	7	62
Chapel Stage	81	15	6

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Church Office	168	100	2
Pastor's Office	170	100	2
Parlor	519	15	35
Dining Room	846	15	57
Classroom	117	20	6
Classroom	127	20	7
Classroom	121	20	7
Kitchen	357	200	2
Boiler Room	58	300	1

TOTAL BUILDING OCCUPANT LOAD: 187

Jim also calculated the maximum occupancy of the Meetinghouse without fixed seating (pews) as follows:

Seating area: $2,523 \text{ SF} / 7 = 361$

Platform area: $265 \text{ SF} / 15 = 17$

Total building occupancy for concerts & lectures without pews = $537 > 300$
(requires sprinklers)

Occupancy load of Meetinghouse as a museum or art exhibit space: $2,788 \text{ SF} / 30 = 93 + 159 = 252 < 300$ (no sprinklers required)

Jim provided the definition of Change of Occupancy, per the code:

CHANGE OF OCCUPANCY. A change in the use of the building or a portion of a building. A change of occupancy shall include any change of occupancy classification, any change from one group to another group within an occupancy classification or any change in use within a group for a specific occupancy classification.

The requirements of Chapter 9 shall be applicable throughout the building for the new occupancy classification....

Chapter 9 determines when automatic fire sprinklers are required, per the following table:

TABLE 903.2 OCCUPANCY AUTOMATIC SPRINKLER REQUIREMENTS

Building having occupancy	Provide automatic fire sprinkler system throughout building if one of the following conditions will exist		
	Fire Area	Building occupant	Occupancy location

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		load	
A-1	>0 ft ²	> 0	Any level
A-2 [except nightclubs]	>5,000 ft ²	≥ 100	Any floor other than the level of exit discharge for A-2 Use
A-3 [current use]	>5,000 ft ²	≥ 300	Any floor other than the level of exit discharge for A-3 Use
B	>12,000 ft ²	---	---
E	>12,000 ft ²	---	---

Because of this table, we have to be careful about changing the occupancy of the building in a way that increases the fire suppression requirements. Based on a question from Eileen, Jim clarified that it is only a Change of Occupancy if we change the building to accommodate another use on a permanent basis.

Eileen noted that an automatic fire suppression system would help preserve the building in the case of fire so it may be worth considering. Jim noted that because of the open attic space, most of it could be done without having exposed piping.

The following suggestions for the Meetinghouse allow us to preserve the existing occupancy:

- Worship space
- Wedding venue
- Lecture hall
- Concerts
- Artist studio space in balcony area

Use as an art exhibit space or museum would be a change of occupancy that could be accomplished without having to provide fire sprinklers; however, assuming that the pews had been removed, that would preclude its use as an assembly space in the future, as the seating capacity even with pews > 300. Jim pointed out that once all pews have been removed, it would not be possible to use the space as assembly space again without adding sprinklers.

Removing some of the pews might be an option for avoiding a change in occupancy while still increasing the use of the space for other functions, such as art exhibits.

Other potential uses of the buildings, in increasing order of necessary modifications, are listed below:

1. Non-assembly uses (no fire sprinklers required)
 - a. Business occupancies
 - i. Educational occupancies for students above the 12th grade (adult learners, such as OLLI)
 - ii. Training and skill development not in a school or academic program (this shall include, but not be limited to, tutoring centers, martial arts studios, gymnastics and similar uses regardless of the ages served, and where not classified as a Group A occupancy).
 - iii. Food processing establishments and commercial kitchens not associated with restaurants, cafeterias and similar dining facilities not more than 2,500 square feet (232 m²) in area.
 - iv. Artists' studios are not specifically listed for this occupancy group but would most likely fall into this group.
 - b. Educational occupancies
 - i. Educational Group E occupancy includes, among others, the use of a building or structure, or a portion thereof, by six or more persons at any one time for educational purposes through the 12th grade.
 - ii. Day Care Facilities - This group includes buildings and structures or portions thereof occupied by more than five children older than 2 1/2 years of age who receive educational, supervision or personal care services for fewer than 24 hours per day.
2. Assembly uses (fire sprinklers required for change of occupancy)
 - a. Group A-3
 - i. Lecture halls (if pews are removed)
 - ii. Community halls
 - b. Group A-2
 - i. Banquet halls
 - ii. Restaurants, cafeterias and similar dining facilities (including associated commercial kitchens)
 - c. Group A-1
 - i. Concert halls
 - ii. Theaters

Eileen asked about multiple uses of the buildings. Jim explained that multiple uses are permitted, as long as you meet the code requirements for the most restrictive use.

Another code issue is handicapped accessibility, which effects building renovations, as follows:

3.3 [ACCESSIBILITY FOR] EXISTING BUILDINGS

All additions to, reconstruction, remodeling, and alterations or repairs of existing public buildings or facilities, which require a building permit or which are so defined by a state or local inspector, shall be governed by all applicable subsections in 521 CMR 3.00: JURISDICTION.

For specific applicability of 521 CMR to existing multiple dwellings undergoing renovations, see 521 CMR 9.2.1.

3.3.1 If the work being performed amounts to less than 30% of the full and fair cash value of the building and

a. if the work costs less than \$100,000, then only the work being performed is required to comply with 521 CMR

or

b. if the work costs \$100,000 or more, then the work being performed is required to comply with 521 CMR. In addition, an accessible public entrance and an accessible toilet room, telephone, drinking fountain (if toilets, telephones and drinking fountains are provided) shall also be provided in compliance with 521 CMR.

Exception: General maintenance and on-going upkeep of existing, underground transit facilities will not trigger the requirement for an accessible entrance and toilet unless the cost of the work exceeds \$500,000 or unless work is being performed on the entrance or toilet.

Exception: Whether performed alone or in combination with each other, the following types of alterations are not subject to 521 CMR 3.3.1, unless the cost of the work exceeds \$500,000 or unless work is being performed on the entrance or toilet. (When performing exempted work, a memo stating the exempted work and its costs must be filed with the permit application or a separate building permit must be obtained.)

Finally, the Plumbing Code requires that where the occupancy of an existing building or part of an existing building is changed such that the new occupancy is subject to increased or different plumbing fixture requirements or to increased water supply requirements in accordance with the International Plumbing Code, the new occupancy shall comply with the intent of the

respective International Plumbing Code provisions. Therefore, **any** change of occupancy would require compliance with current plumbing codes.

- VI. Jim said that he felt that the next step would be to assess the building as to its capability to meet the needs of the potential users. Eileen will lead the charge on gathering the information from potential users in the community. She noted that smaller venues are starting to be created to allow expansion of programs.
- VII. Jim said that he would like to discuss the worship needs of the congregation at the next meeting. Liz said that it is important to keep what is working while looking to change what doesn't work. Liz will get back to Jim on the best date for the congregation.

Notes by Jim Hundt