

Special Meeting of North Parish of North Andover

January 5, 2014

The Meeting was called to Order by Moderator Peter Race, at 10:20 a.m. with 123 members present. 53 members were required for a quorum.

Reverend Dr. Elaine Peresluha, Sabbatical Minister, invited everyone to take a deep breath in and then to breathe out. She said: "This is how easy decision making is. With conscious breathing, thinking, and listening you will do wise and wonderful things."

Article I: Cheryl Bachellor, member of the Board of Trustees, moved that Article I be voted on as printed in the Warrant. Once this was seconded, she explained that the Mission Statement states our identity and purpose. She described the process of developing the new statement and introduced the Mission Task Force: Deb Olander, Grace Durfee, Brad Howell, Reverend Lee Bluemel, and Gail Forsyth-Vail. After the applause, the moderator remarked that the vote will be up or down; the article is not amendable. It was unanimously approved.

Peter Race then reminded all speakers to use a microphone, raise their hands and stand up before addressing the group.

Article II. Ann Manson, Chair of the Board of Trustees, moved the article as printed in the Warrant and it was seconded. Margaret Weis then introduced herself and described her youth at North Parish, her training, experience, and career path and how she has satisfied all the requirements for ordination. She described the ordination process, then thanked the congregation for considering her request to be ordained at North Parish in the spring. Article II was approved by unanimous voice vote and Margaret Weis thanked everyone again.

Article III. Peter Calkins, Assistant Treasurer, moved the article as printed in the Warrant and it was seconded. The moderator commented that debate would be allowed for Articles III, IV and V at the same time since they were intertwined. Peter Calkins reviewed recent space planning and strategic planning for North Parish and described this as the finalization of a process that was started 15 years ago. He reviewed the previous project and the launch of a Space Facilities Task Force in 2011 to analyze the unmet needs that remained. He summarized the steps we have taken up to this point and explained that we would be voting on whether to proceed with the demolition of the RE building and the construction of a new wing.

Debb Putnam of the North Parish Building Task Force summarized the Building Task Force report. She said she is continually impressed with all the professionals – the architects, contractors, and attorneys –they feel like a team.

The Task Force has focused on: 1) getting all the approvals needed, 2) refining the design, and 3) hitting the target budget. The Historical Commissions, building inspections, Conservation Commission, and other approvals are now largely in place. They have tweaked the design in small ways to improve work flow where possible; they have tried to make better choices and simplify. For example, they have opted not to pursue geothermal heat because of the costs and have chosen an HVAC system that is more efficient than the one currently in use. The installation of a sun tube and a flexible partition between the chapel and a classroom are on hold for the moment, as they continue to negotiate the time line and budget.

When it became apparent that the time line was too tight, Religious Education Director Sara Schwindt and the Religious Education Committee were very flexible and supportive. Under the new schedule, the hazardous

materials will be removed in March, so the Religious Education Wing will be unavailable starting then. The new foundation will go in in April. The Task Force has looked at the North Parish calendar, worked around the needs of different church groups, and determined where people can land. The sanctuary will remain available until June. The Parish Hall, kitchen, and bathroom will remain available throughout construction.

Peter Calkins, one of the Tri-Chairs of the Capital Campaign Committee, reviewed the budget figures and stated that they are essentially working on the same budget of \$2,150,000, which includes the debt financing numbers.

Fred Glore, another Tri-Chair of the Capital Campaign Committee, reviewed the campaign figures thus far. The total is at \$1,618,059.52 with 154 gifts representing donations from 60-70% of members and friends. A phenomenal accomplishment! The committee will continue to reach out to members and alumni and will solicit foundations in the area, which couldn't happen until this vote. Another substantial six-digit contribution has been discussed which would move the total to \$1,700,000.

He gave thanks to the other Tri-Chairs, Dan Gerron and Peter Calkins, and to the Campaign Committee: Anna Marie Ventura, Howard Amidon, Lisa Alecci, Lisa Tellekson, Pat Edmonds, Pat Grimm, Gary Adams, and Steve Vail. He also thanked Chris Schena for putting together fantastic materials practically overnight. He thanked almost 40 solicitors who reached out to everyone. Finally, he expressed gratitude to everyone who participated and to staff member Carolyn Zimmer for all the wonderful work she did. The committee couldn't have done it without her. Fred said that North Parish is in a great place; and this is a great moment in its history. Each person was applauded as they were mentioned.

Brian Elowe, member of the Board of Trustees, then summarized the conversations about finance. The congregation needs to finance \$1,900,000 roughly. The Board felt that they needed to have pledges totaling \$1,500,000 to support a positive vote since a mortgage of \$400,000 would equate to what is now spent annually on Old Center Hall. The Board feels strongly that the project should move forward; the Building Task Force has a very conservative budget and are meeting the guidelines set forth last June. North Parish is probably looking at a \$400,000 long term mortgage but it could have a lower number depending on future campaign donations; and the campaign has exceeded the amounts the Board put forth as thresholds.

Short-term financing of \$800,000 - \$1,000,000 will be needed to cover the pledge collection timing gap short-term. For a long-term mortgage, Keith Wenzel is working with several banks with a goal of \$400,000 or less for a mortgage.

The following questions from the floor were posed:

“How many years are you talking about for the mortgage?”

Keith Wenzel, North Parish member, replied that mortgages are what he does for a profession and the mortgage will initially be for 5 to 10 years with an amortization of 25-30 years. In other words, it will be reset after 5 or 10 years. This doesn't include future campaigns to pay it down.

“I understand that we'll save money by leaving the building across the street. What are the financial benefits?”

Brian Elowe answered that North Parish currently pays rent and upkeep for Old Center Hall. Equivalent costs will support a \$400,000 mortgage. Costs won't change for the congregation on an annualized basis.

“What are the hazardous materials we are dealing with and has the soil been tested?”

Debb Putnam answered that much of that work was done during the last project. An 8-foot trench was dug and they found sand. Peter Calkins noted that the vinyl asbestos tile and insulation in the attic are

the two hazardous materials in the RE wing. These just need to be treated appropriately when removed. Underground oil tanks will be removed, but the oil was taken out of them a long time ago.

“Which banks will the mortgages be with?”

Keith Wentzel answered that he is investigating local lenders in North Andover, such as People’s Heritage and maybe Enterprise Bank. They have branches in North Andover and local institutions will want to invest in community redevelopment.

Once the questions ended, Article III was passed by majority voice vote. One nay vote was noted.

Article IV. Dan Gerron, member of the Board of Trustees, moved Article IV and it was seconded. Peter Race read the article aloud and it was unanimously passed.

Article V. Dan Gerron moved Article V and it was seconded. Peter Race read the article and it was unanimously passed.

Peter Calkins, on behalf of everyone who has worked on this project, expressed gratitude for the support, enthusiasm, and excitement of the congregation. He emphasized the work to come and the importance of making financial gifts as soon as possible. Money early in the year would be very helpful and keep the short-term loan amount down. Darnell Canada then thanked Peter Calkins on behalf of the church, and the meeting applauded.

Moderator Peter Race thanked the following people for the enormous help they have recently given to him and to his wife Ruth following her surgery: Kim Adami, Leslie Young-Lemire, Joan Blanchard, and Phila Slade. Applause followed.

A new member of the congregation then came to the microphone and introduced herself. She stated that she had been in a few meetings in other churches before this, where people came into the meeting ready to fight. In this meeting, she felt that everyone entered the room with an open heart. “The energy in this room is a beautiful thing.”

With no further business to come before the meeting, a Motion to Adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Carbonell, Clerk