



Building Project Update - December 2013

Each week, the email news reminds us that we are counting down the Sundays. One of the countdowns is for the upcoming vote for the proposed project to replace our existing RE wing with a welcoming, expanded and accessible “together under one roof” programming and office space. The vote – and the project – is on the forefront of many of our minds.

Years ago Bill Cosby did a comedy skit – “Noah and the Ark” (check it out on YouTube). The Lord asks Noah to build an ark – and Noah has a lot of resistance. “What’s an ark? Are you sure we need this? This is too much work! I don’t think I can do this...” you get the picture. After much back and forth, things come to a head with an ominous thunderclap, heavy raindrops, and the Lord’s voice booming, “Noah, how long can you tread water?”

Do you see the rainclouds building? Can you hear the thunder? OK, so maybe we aren’t facing a torrential downpour – but we do have deadlines to meet.

Now – Will we declare a financial pledge to support this project?

January 2014 – Will we vote to move ahead (meeting to vote, January 5)?

Spring/summer 2014 – Will we be ready to build?

So where do we stand in our preparations for these deadlines?

Past experience taught us that planning and agency approvals can take a long time. Since our vote last June to move ahead with the planning, the BTF has worked with our attorney and building professionals to secure the necessary approvals from various town and state agencies. We recently passed a major hurdle when North Andover’s Town Counsel ruled that the church can be exempted from zoning, site, and similar planning reviews, and expect to have most or all of our remaining approvals completed by end of this year or shortly after.

Just before Thanksgiving, BTF members met with our contractor and architect to review pricing on the latest design development drawings. As expected, an upsurge in the construction business is driving prices up due to availability of subs and the cost of materials; however, our contractor came to the meeting well prepared with a suggested list of deletes, design modifications, and materials choices to help us meet our target budget. We will continue that discussion over the next couple of weeks so that we can finalize a contract budget before our January vote.

We have also taken a hard look at the construction timeline. Wanting to ensure that we can complete the project in time for In-Gathering services in early September, our staff and program groups are working on how best to manage the activities on our church calendar. Current projections are to begin site work in March 2014 with building demolition possibly as early as mid-April.

Is this new news to you? For more information, contact any member of the Building Task Force – Debb Putnam, Peter Calkins, Don Schemack, Michele Sherry; Ron Zelle and Dan Gobeil (advisors); or check previous updates posted on our church website (under the tab Support Us: Capital Campaign).