

**Finance and Property Team Minutes  
Monday, February 12, 2018 – 4 pm  
Toronto Southeast Presbytery Office**

**Present:** Nick Walker (Chair), Fred Angus (Secretary), Joan Chinnery, Clyde Harris, Johmann Kwong, Aubrey Peterson, David Phillips, Randy Stroud, Wayne White. Anne Shirley Sutherland (Staff Support).

**Regrets:** Alan Morson.

**Guests:** Douglas duCharme, Chair Mission Support Team and Ian Manson, Mission Animator

**Call to Order and Devotion:** The Chair, recognizing that there was a quorum, called the meeting to order and asked Joan Chinnery to lead us in a devotion. Joan's message was based on a reading from one of her favorite authors, Jim Taylor – "How humans gave the earth a lobotomy" She also referred to Peter Wohlleben's book, "The Hidden Life of Trees". Her devotion centered around the concept of the symbiotic relationship of communication between trees and how this mirrors the community in which humankind dialogue. Joan closed with a prayer by the Archdiocese of Rochester.

1. **Agenda:** There was consensus that the agenda be accepted as circulated.
2. **Approval of Minutes – January 8, 2018:** The Chair asked for comments and a team member responded that the address for Presteign-Woodbine property was in error and requested a correction. This was done, and the Chair requested a motion to approve.

**MOTION:** Fred Angus / Johmann Kwong to approve the Finance & Property minutes of January 8, 2018 as corrected.

**CARRIED.**

**3. Treasurer's Report:**

- i. **Presbytery Financial Statement – 2017 to December 31:** - Clyde Harris reported that financial statements as of December 31, 2017 are not yet available and there is no update to the 2017 interim financial statement previously submitted to Executive January 9, 2018. The 2018 Presbytery Operating Budget was presented to Executive January 9, 2018; and approved by Plenary January 16, 2018.
- ii. **Presbytery Assessments to December 31, 2017:** no report.

**4. Business Arising from the Minutes:**

- i. **Continuation of the Discussion on TSP "Property Legacy":** At our last meeting, Anne Shirley Sutherland introduced the idea of creating strategies for the future of Communities of Faith properties in Toronto Southeast Presbytery to create a legacy of the United Church of Canada in the Toronto Southeast Presbytery geographic area. In preparation for discussion at this meeting, the Chair circulated two background papers: (i) a summary by Nick Walker of the Conversations at the Finance and Property Team Meeting, January 8, 2018, (Appendix A), and (ii) a summary by Ian Manson of Initial Ideas for a United Church East Toronto Mission and Property Plan, developed in consultation with Anne Shirley Sutherland and Douglas duCharme, (Appendix B) The Chair asked Ian Manson and Douglas duCharme to comment.

Ian Manson opened the discussion by declaring that clarity is desired around mission and property matters. The intent is to develop a strategy for churches to pass on to others – a blueprint. A secondary consideration is how this strategy could be funded, possibly from PTCC sources. There is also the possibility that the holding of the Church of The Master by PTCC could be used as a case study to develop a template for others to use.

Members Wayne White and Aubrey Peterson had questions:

- Does an alternative use of a property fit the United Church of Canada (UCC) beliefs?
- Does an alternative use fit the community or neighborhood needs?
- Is the alternative use sustainable?
- Alternate use may be limited by, for example, the Church of The Master connection to the immediate locality? Is there a conflict between local versus national perspectives?
- How do changing demographics impact decisions?

Douglas duCharme stated the obvious – the current model that worked 50 years ago no longer works. Future models require working with partners, possibly land developers. Whatever the partnership, skills competency is required for mission and property objectives to be successful. Douglas did not find the Edge national inventory of properties very helpful. Opportunities in the Toronto area need to be pursued and handed off to a successor body.

Nick Walker noted that the two major regional clusters, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and the lower BC mainland demand a different approach from the rest of the country. Nick asked about next steps:

- Douglas duCharme and Anne Shirley Sutherland will be visiting BC Conference to discuss different ideas.
- Ian Manson or Douglas duCharme will attend the March or April Finance and Property meeting with an update.

- ii. **Timothy Eaton Memorial Church. (TEMC):** Request by the Board of Trustees to use \$789,500 of their \$961,100 Manse Fund. TEMC received conditional approval January 8, 2018, subject to receipt of a signed motion from the Trustees authorizing this request. The requisite trustees motion has yet to be received by Presbytery. A delay in receipt has occurred due to the recent death of Deputy Chair, Sid Gillespie of TEMUC.

5. **TSE Presbytery Insurance Coverage Report – to December 31, 2016** – The report was circulated for information.

6. **Updates on Communities of Faith or Property Matters:**

- i. **Victoria Park United Church, (VPUC):** – The congregation asked to close Sunday, April 15, 2018, the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its formation. The Presbytery Consultative Task Group (PCTG) team suggested that VPUC might consider the end of June as a closing date. A plan of disposition of assets is ongoing.
- ii. **West Hill United Church (WHUC) – report from the Presbytery Consultative Task Group (PCTG):** - no report available from either PCTG or the West Hill Board.
- iii. **The Donway Covenant United Church (DCUC):** - Communication was received from Maureen Hall that DCUC is entering a Memorandum of Understanding, (MOU), with

Options for Homes who is looking at site redevelopment. A signed copy of the MOU has been requested for Presbytery files.

- iv. **Glebe Road United Church, (GRUC):** Discussions are ongoing with the German UC, **Deutsche Evangeliums Kirche, (DEK)**, current trustees of the property at 20 Glebe Road East, Toronto, where both congregations worship. In 1992 GRUC transferred trusteeship of the property to DEK and now DEK wishes to engage in a reverse trusteeship with GRUC. Talks are ongoing.
- v. **Wexford Heights United Church, (WHUC):** Edge will be hosting a community round table at Wexford Heights to discuss site options. A possible update may be available at the F & P Team March meeting after WHUC’s Annual Meeting.

**7. Other Business:**

- i. **Toronto Southeast Presbytery Major Capital Fund Gift Agreement with Toronto United Church Council, (TUCC):** Nick Walker advised that the Gift Agreement has been reviewed by legal counsel, Mills & Mills, and will be forwarded to Executive for approval.
- ii. **Glen Ayr United Church & Iondale United Church Seniors Transportation Funds held by Toronto United Church Council:** Nick Walker advised that the two funds are in the process of being wound down.

**8. Adjournment -** There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting be adjourned and closed with a benediction.

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 Nick Walker  
 Chair

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 Fred Angus  
 Secretary

**Next Meetings:**

<b>Monday, March 12, 2018</b>	<b>4:00 pm to 6:30 pm</b>	<b>Devotion – Aubrey Peterson</b>
<b>Monday, April 9, 2018</b>	<b>4:00 pm to 6:30 pm</b>	<b>Devotion – volunteer required</b>
<b>Monday, May 14, 2018</b>	<b>4:00 pm to 6:30 pm</b>	<b>Devotion – Randy Stroud</b>
<b>Monday, June 11, 2018</b>	<b>4:00 pm to 6:30 pm</b>	<b>Devotion – volunteer required</b>

**Appendix A (page 1 of 2) January 27, 2018 update of TSP F & P Team Discussion about Legacy for the United Church of Canada from Sale of TSP Church Properties.**

**Discussion by TSE Presbytery Finance & Property Team – Legacy for the United Church of Canada from TSE Presbytery Properties – F & P Team Mtg. Jan. 8, 2018**

**Prepared by Nick Walker**

**1. Background**

The Finance & Property Team of Toronto Southeast Presbytery (TSP) has been involved in closing churches and amalgamations of churches at an anticipated rate over the last eight years since the realignment of Toronto Conference (TC) in 2009. Most of the closures have occurred in Scarborough, almost one per year.

The financial proceeds from closures of churches are dealt with by Toronto Conference by their "Property Policy". In almost all cases the properties are sold, and the funds distributed within Toronto Conference and some to PTCC and other charitable organizations. TSP requested TC in 2017 to hold the recently closed Church of the Master site for two years while the Presbytery discerns if there is an alternative use for the site that would benefit the United Church of Canada and the surrounding community. There has been no decision by TSP on this matter at this time.

However, as in most cases of closure of churches, there is a considerable cost being incurred at Church of the Master to maintain it in good condition as roofing needs to be replaced and heating and air-conditioning units also need to be replaced. These costs are being borne by TC and TUCC has been retained to project manage such projects and also to provide property management while the property is being held.

The amounts of funds required are considerable, in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, to maintain buildings at the end of their life and also to manage them while decisions are made on future uses.

It has been very rare for there to be many examples of a residential/ commercial revitalization project where the church land has been utilized for redevelopment and a church presence is obvious through a part of the project being dedicated as church. There will be more in the future possibly as the need for more affordable housing becomes a driving force in major urban areas.

Each occasion where TSP has seen a possible closure of a church, the Finance & Property Team and other Teams in the Presbytery have reviewed what kind of a legacy might be left for the United Church of Canada, money, land and buildings, or land where the buildings have been demolished.

The major impediments for a Presbytery in trying to get involved in such forward thinking of leaving some legacy related to property are possibly:

- The lack of authority under The Manual for a Presbytery to hold and maintain property into the future,
- The precedent for and desire by amalgamating congregations to retain and dispose of the "proceeds of sales" on local causes, regardless of the priorities of the Presbytery.
- The desire in the past by the United Church of Canada to insist that properties held by Conferences be sold and not held for future uses, except under exceptional circumstances, and
- The difficulty of Presbyteries to get into the "land development game" when they have little recourse to funding at the level that is required – it is a "rich persons business" as it takes so long to get through the trials and tribulations of City Hall and others who seem opposed to new development – NIMBYism.

**Appendix A** (page 2 of 2)**2. The Questions Posed by the F & P Team**

There were more questions posed than answers formulated at the F & P Team meeting on January 8.

Some the questions asked were:

- i) How does a Presbytery decide which church properties have location and amenities to serve an existing new church community and a future church community?
- ii) How, after appropriate demographic study by a competent research firm skilled in such studies and discernment by Presbytery, would the Presbytery be able to proceed and formulate a long-range strategy for a site if it is currently a marginal congregation, but not closing within the foreseeable future?
- iii) Where will the financial resources come from to hold and maintain church properties once they have been designated by a Presbytery as a legacy for the United Church of Canada?
- iv) Which body within the United Church of Canada will own the properties designated by Presbytery as legacy sites or hold the funds for future development of legacy sites where a number of church sites are sold, and the funds allocated to a special Presbytery “super fund” for future legacy project funding.

**3. Some Suggestions for Addressing the Property Legacy Issues – Nick Walker’s memory of the discussion.**

There were some suggestions as to how a Presbytery and the United Church of Canada might approach the “legacy issue”.

- i) Perhaps the United Church of Canada might look at the major urban centres and suggest some policies that not only preserve a legacy of church sites but also provide funds to enable development to take place when it is needed.
- ii) Presbytery might bring forward a position during this time of transition towards Regionalization that sets as a major goal for the region, better stewardship of the lands being sold when churches close (having a voice in what the re-development entails) and the better stewardship of funds that are generated where properties are deemed surplus and sold.
- iii) In amalgamations, Presbyteries may impose conditions on the disposition of assets and it was suggested that the amount of money raised from these transactions should be increased to provide more legacy funding to enhance the future possibilities for the United Church of Canada in areas where there are currently no United Churches.
- iv) *The question of re-purposing church properties - Urban vs. Rural Properties:* As congregations decline in major urban areas and rural areas, there is a likelihood for these properties to be sold. Much higher value is achieved by selling properties in the major urban areas than a rural property. As there are currently alternative United Churches in the urban areas within a reasonable driving distance, perhaps the sale of properties is preferable in the urban areas and the focus on re-purposing for community use should be within the rural areas.

**Appendix B (page 1 of 2) Initial Ideas for United Church East Toronto Mission & Property Plan****DRAFT - Initial Ideas for UC East Toronto Mission and Property Plan – January 2018**

*(A paper written by Ian Manson, in consultation with Anne Shirley Sutherland & Douglas duCharme)*

At the present time, no guidelines are in place to help the United Church determine what areas of the GTA are ripe for possible new or renewed ministries. While some individual pieces of research have been done that have been helpful, no overall plan exists – the absence of which makes the task of making thoughtful and strategic decisions about property and the allocation of mission \$\$ to be rather challenging.

With the GCE ruling that the contract for the Presbytery Mission Animation project is to end in December 2018 rather than in June 2020, it is possible that some or all of the remaining money from this initiative could be transferred to a new project that would allow work on this specific topic to occur over the next several months. Indeed, these funds could be used to begin developing a strategic property and mission plan for this part of Toronto – work which could provide the new Region with a helpful reference point in making future investment decisions for this area. But any such project would need to be completed before Presbyteries disappear and a new Region begins to function in 2019.

Such a project could begin to answer two of the questions that were recently raised by the Presbytery F & P Team in a discussion paper of January 22:

- “How does a Presbytery decide which church properties have location and amenities to serve an existing church community and a future church community?”
- “How, after appropriate demographic study by a competent research firm skilled in such studies and discernment by Presbytery, would the Presbytery be able to proceed and formulate a long-range strategy for a site if it is currently a marginal congregation, but not closing within the foreseeable future?”

A new research project could address these questions – and perhaps have two related components:

**1. Mission and Property Mapping Project.**

- This would be coordinated by an ad-hoc oversight group that would hire one or more qualified individuals to help identify the demographic and congregational indicators that would suggest that the UCC might have a future in a particular area. This person (or persons) would then:
  - Work with the advisory committee to identify several specific areas where there might be opportunity for some type of new ministry, and/or a revitalized ministry of a different sort, especially where our existing presence is weak or nonexistent;
  - Undertake an initial demographic analysis of these selected areas to clarify if indeed there might be a constituency that could be receptive to what the UCC might offer;
  - Identify current resources, including key community groups and faith-based (UCC and otherwise) communities and organizations;
  - Identify one or more of these communities that seem especially ripe for a new/ and or revitalized ministry and identifying some new possibilities.

**Appendix B** (page 2 of 2)**2. Case Study on Church of the Master Site**

- The site of 3385 Lawrence Ave. E. would be the site of a “case study” in which a designated researcher would work specifically in that neighbourhood to identify some possible approaches to repurposing this building that are consistent with our church’s mission. The research would help the church determine whether this property should be kept but could also establish a template for how similar work in other places could be done. Related activities would include but not be limited to:
  - Undertaking a detailed demographic analysis of the surrounding community;
  - Connecting with leaders of other faith communities in the area to identify areas of possible mutual interest;
  - Initiating conversations with interested school trustees, city councilors, provincial politicians, and federal politicians to identify pressing community needs
  - Reaching out to groups like the United Way to explore the possibility of Church of the Master becoming a “community hub.”
  - Outlining some possible options for re-purposing this building and offering some specific recommendations about preferred possibilities.

There are, of course, a host of other property-related matters currently under discussion. And these conversations may well reveal that any such a project should have a somewhat different focus. But this proposal may at least help us begin a focused conversation on what work could be done in the next 10 or 11 months.

So, the questions to Presbytery Finance and Property Committee are:

- Does this idea, in principle, have enough merit to warrant further development, and to warrant a more thorough proposal being brought to F & P in March 2018?
- If so, should the scope and focus of the initiative be altered in any significant way?

Thanks in advance for consideration of this idea.

Ian Manson, in consultation with Anne Shirley Sutherland & Douglas duCharme  
January 2018