

### ***Affordable Housing part 1 – written and presented by Judy Robb***

In October 2009 the session along with ministry team leaders attended a two-day retreat focusing on “change”. Toward the end of the retreat, in 3 groups, we began to put details to a developing vision, and created several scenarios for the future of APC, based on the vision of a multi-use building.

One group was to allow only moderate changes, one intermediate changes and one radical changes. When the three groups came back together, we all had a vision of the church that was similar, including using our property in some way for the community.

The people that were present really felt that God moved us to come to these conclusions.

I admit, that when the possibility of not having to manage the building any more was presented to me personally I was extra excited. No more mopping the fellowship hall when it flooded, no more calls from tenants when they couldn't get in the building, we could really focus on worship and provide a wonderful service to the community at the same time. But of course that is the wrong reason to make the radical change that we presented to the congregation the following February. We intentionally set aside that vision and began the New Beginnings process. Other steps taken are outlined in the Vision report.

We had the vision and we didn't know why. Now that we have talked to so many people in our community, people who wish they could afford to live here, people who do live here and struggle to make ends meet, people who work here and serve the community, and government leaders, we realize that the vision we had in the fall of 2009 is continuously being brought back to us, cemented by the stories of the people around us.

### ***Affordable Housing Part 2 – Written by Susan Etherton, Presented by Lorraine Gardner***

We have heard loud and clear that affordable housing is one component of our vision. Actually embarking on the affordable housing path is anything but clear. There are many moving parts to this aspect of our vision and even beginning requires risk -- initially, fortunately, a small risk. In order to determine if this is a decision we as a congregation want to make, much more information will be required. And so, the time is now to begin to gather that information.

The next steps will take 3 to 4 months at a minimum. During that time, we will engage APAH to provide a first-look feasibility study. APAH has proposed, and session has agreed to, a feasibility study that will preliminarily look at the following:

- 1.) The context of development including the Arlington Community Profile, Columbia Pike market dynamics and demographics, zoning, including the Arlington form-based code, planning and development potential vis a vis Arlington County and a survey of other church/affordable housing redevelopment projects.
- 2.) Community Benefits and Partners -- what space needs might there be for potential community partners. A review of elderly and supportive housing in Arlington. A summary of permanent supportive housing programs in Arlington. Child care needs in the county and interviews with existing tenants.
- 3.) What might affordable housing look like for this area of South Arlington based on need and community context?
- 4.) What might church look like for this area of South Arlington? Including current and future worship, service and administrative space needs, 21st century best practices for houses of worship, examples of other church/affordable housing projects in the U.S.
- 5.) A Pre-Development Timeline, Cost estimates and concept design
- 6.) Financing and ownership structuring ideas and options including condominium, ground lease and/or fee-simple ownership.

In addition, APAH will provide predevelopment sources and uses of funds and project sources and uses of funds.

The cost to APC for this work is only \$2500. An additional \$10,000 will be provided through a grant from Enterprise, an organization formed to assist faith-based communities who are considering affordable housing development .

The commitment to APAH by APC is limited, at this time, to the scope of this feasibility study. We are not obligated or bound, in any way, to move forward with the development of this property. We do, however, need all of the information this feasibility study will provide and more in order to make an informed decision regarding going forward with development. This next step will hopefully identify issues, concerns, logistical hurdles, political hurdles. This next step will hopefully identify if any type of redevelopment of this property is even possible. Therefore, we are committed to go through this next step.

In addition to APAH's efforts during this time, we will be meeting with Presbytery to determine the possibility of this project. Any type of redevelopment we might consider

would require Presbytery approval. What does that mean? What might they approve? There is very little in the way of a track record regarding this type of thing and so we will be exploring new territory with Presbytery. This next bit of time will hopefully identify Presbytery's issues, concerns and hurdles. Similarly, we must pursue this with Presbytery in tandem with the APAH feasibility study in order to determine if redevelopment is even possible.

Rest assured, we are not embarking on this alone. We have bolstered our ranks with experts. We have already identified two attorneys who will be working with us. Mark Viana of McGuire Woods has agreed to represent us as well as Betsey Wildhack who was our corporation's attorney. Both of these lawyers have agreed that this work is for the betterment of the community and they recognize we as a faith-based organization are in need of much pro-bono legal service. They have assured us that their fees will be primarily recovered, and at a much reduced level, if and when the project actually goes forward and is funded.

In addition, we are in the process of interviewing a consultant who worked on the Views at Clarendon to represent us as a project manager. Although Judy and I both have experience in real estate, we realize the importance of having expert help -- legally and from a development perspective.

The affordable housing aspect of our vision is perhaps the most complex, dealing in real bricks and mortar, land, government approvals, neighborhoods, etc., however it is only one part of our three-fold vision and not the driver of the vision. We believe to fully realize our vision, providing affordable housing to our community is critical. However, were this component not to be realized, our commitment to discipleship would not waver. Where and how we might do that might change but that part of our vision would live on.

For now, we believe we need to move forward to explore this possibility. We will take these next steps in pursuit of our vision of providing affordable housing in our neighborhood. And we will listen and discern together as the road becomes clear.