

Feasibility Report following the Annual Meeting

Carol Cole, consultant for the Feasibility Study Committee, at our Annual Congregational Meeting, presented her findings gathered from interviews with community leaders asking how First Congregational Church United Church of Christ of Springfield could partner with the community to provide needed services that would support our building as a center of the community and as home to our faith community.

The Power Point presentation is available on hard copy by the church office. This article is also available on our web site, fccuccspftvt.org. A written report will also be available after the Feasibility Study Committee has met to study it. This is our first big step in the process of finding a way to reclaim and continue our history as a partner in Springfield's future.

The list of suggested options for the use of our building in the report is not surprising. We could and have come up with some of them ourselves over the years. What is really important is that these suggestions are from the community. The more you involve others in planning for the future of our church, the more energy, interest and ownership is created.

Carol ends her written report with the following comment: *"The opportunities are endless as to how the church should or could proceed. Certainly the suggestions both conservative and "out of the box" are worthy of continued discussion. Change is difficult for individuals, organizations and communities and the process is neither easy nor comfortable for all concerned.*

The folks responding to the questions in the interviews offered some very good suggestions for future use but were reluctant to offer a specific use for the buildings, only options. The hope is, that a use will be determined that will be good not only for the Church and its members but the community as well. It was certainly the opinion of all who were interviewed, even those not living in the community, that the church holds a special and significant presence in downtown Springfield and its iconic and historical position should be preserved... There is no clear cut answer to the question, of what to do to make better use of the church building space, and it will be a challenge for the congregation to search out the answer. It may be a combination of uses but there is no question of the importance to the community of maintaining the church presence in downtown and Springfield.

I believe the church has a positive future and the congregation will make the right choices, dependent on the desires and comfort level of the members in moving forward. "

Think about the following options presented by Carol's report.

- *Adult Education offices, RSVP offices, Day Care Center / Child care, Community meeting center, Arts Place, Senior Housing – like a Kendal, Location for community and celebratory events, Office space – long and short term, Community College, Adult day care, Warming Shelter, Lease the kitchen, Youth/teenage space, Town Hall/offices, Senior Center, Bingo*
- *Possible partnership with Vocational Rehab, Teen Groups, Shared food related business/bakery, Educational opportunities, Farmers/Community Market in the winter, Co-share with another church.*

The Feasibility Study Committee will be holding meetings with the church membership early in 2012 to consider the options presented. Our architect, Ann Vivian, AIA will be involved in guiding us in envisioning the building changes that may be needed, the cost and benefits they might provide. This is a work in progress. Thank you for your prayers for our future.

Diane Holme, Feasibility Study Committee