

Building Project Update 3/1/2019

Dear Clonmelians,

It has been a few months since I've put out an update on the progress of our building committee. This is a longer than usual overview of the work the building committee has done over the past eight months, including how we have come to adopt current positions. The findings of the building committee are not final; however, they are positions that will be proposed at the next set of town hall meetings. Similar to the first town hall meetings, your input will be encouraged both verbally and in writing. In order to move forward with any project, I intend to seek consensus among the community. Consensus does not require us to unanimously agree, but is instead a process of coming together as much as possible so that everyone is informed, has the opportunity to provide input, and can be comfortable with the direction we are moving as a community.

This Lenten season you are strongly encouraged to continue the work of prayer, asking the Lord to enlighten all of us and to move our hearts in accord with His will. Without prayer at the heart of our project we will not be able to move toward consensus as a community nor toward living out God's will for our parish.

Starting the Process

In May of 2019 our Town Hall meetings helped to identify current needs of our community and our current church building. Community members offered their first reactions and thoughts to the proposal of comprehensively addressing those needs. Much valuable information was gathered from those meetings. Parishioners were also invited to nominate individuals they believed would represent them well on our building committee. Over 60 people were nominated. A top nominee, Don Klausmeyer, was chosen to be the chair of our building committee. His first task was to work with me (Fr. Joe) to identify 3 men and 3 women to serve on the building committee. Selected were Jami Buck, Juliana Handy, Jason Martin, Angela Solomon, Wayne Youngers, and Brian Zimmerman. Our parish office manager, Madelyn Halstead, also attends our building committee meetings to assist with documenting and organizational needs.

Master Planning Phase

Master planning looks at the needs of the parish community and how well our current facilities are meeting those needs. The building committee looked ahead three generations (90 years) to identify projected needs to be taken into consideration during the current project. This phase looks at the entire plant in order to offer rationale for the current project in relation to future growth and direction.

In August of 2019 we requested and received permission from Bishop Kemme to hire an architect to assist us with our master planning phase. Randy Crook of Shelden Architects was selected by the building committee for these services. Randy is a parishioner of Blessed Sacrament Church

in Wichita and has extensive experience in designing additions, renovations, and new-build churches for the diocese of Wichita.

The building committee began our master planning phase in July of 2019. Our architect, Randy Crook, joined our building committee in November, 2019 to guide us through the process of determining the hierarchy of needs, helping to determine which option best met those needs, and assisting us with coming up with a design layout of our parish plant.

Elimination of Option A

On September 23, 2019 the building committee determined that Option A (renovating the church as is without adding any additional space or accommodations) would not meet the identified needs of our community. Although Option A would have left us with a beautiful church, it would have neglected the growing needs of families, those with special needs, and generally needed space. Option B and Option C remained for consideration for several more months.

Elimination of Option B

The choice between Option B (renovating and adding onto the current church) and Option C (building a new church) took considerable time for the building committee to discern. The building committee worked with Randy Crook to plot out numerous architectural options of how to add onto the current church in order to accomplish the identified needs of seating, ADA accommodations, additional restrooms, etc. On February 3, 2020 the building committee determined that Option B should be removed for consideration. This decision followed numerous drawings of the current church structure with additions that would accommodate identified needs. Configurations needed to accommodate those needs left little of the original building.

Selection of Option C

After much prayer, reflection, and discernment the committee concluded that accomplishing the identified goals and to most effectively use the monetary resources of our parish we would be best served to build a new church building. To be clear, the building committee and I have reached consensus that it is within the best interest of our community and future generations to build a new church at this time in our history. This is a complement to those who established and nurtured our parish throughout its history. It is also encouragement to the young who will be drawn to the area in search of a faithful, welcoming, and family centered parish to raise the coming generations.

Location of a new church

Master planning then addressed where a new church would be located, recognizing that a new building means there is an opportunity to reconfigure the layout of the parish plant. Many options were presented to the building committee over numerous months. A few key factors played into the decision of the committee. First there was a desire to have the church away from K-42 for the purposes of noise reduction and safety of children. Second, it was desired to have the church in a location where children would not be crossing parking areas in order to access

different buildings (crossing from church to parish center). Third, it was important to have the church close to the cemetery.

The building committee and Randy Crook put together numerous layouts of the parish that took into consideration the identified key factors as well as possible projects in the future of the parish. These included expanding classrooms in the parish center, space for CGS, adult education, nursery, RCIA, Confirmation classes, and parish offices. It also included an updated kitchen and expanded parish hall and/or gymnasium. All of these projects were discussed but are not being considered as a portion of the current project. They were discussed in order to identify what possible projects should be taken into consideration when deciding where to build a new church.

The building committee is working toward a final consensus about the location of the new church building. Once that determination has been finalized we will present that to the parish along with some plot layout drawings of the parish plant.

New Church Design

The design of the new church includes the seating arrangement, confessional location and layout, inclusion of an Adoration chapel, sacristy size and location, placement of the music ministry, etc. The building committee is just starting this process. To date we have only identified the need for the church to seat 350 people in the nave with an additional 50 in the gathering space on chairs (for use on special occasions). Stylistic and material decisions will become part of this process as we continue the work of this phase.

Moving Forward

Upon completion of the Master Planning phase the building committee, Randy Crook, and I will present another set of town hall meetings to the parish. During those meetings we will present the process of how we came to the current positions and make a proposal of what to build in order to meet the needs of our community. Visual plot drawings and a conceptual drawing of the new church will also be available.

The town hall meetings will provide individuals an opportunity to make suggestions, ask questions, and express concerns. All comments will be documented in real time on the projection screen. Parishioners will also be given forms for providing written feedback. All comments, suggestions, and concerns will be taken into consideration by the building committee.

Questions/Comments

You are welcome to discuss the project, ask questions, or make comments to any member of the building committee at any time. Those serving on our building committee have my blessing to transparently share with parishioners about the process and decisions made in the building committee meetings. Pictures of the building committee are posted in the entrance of the church and in the parish center to assist in identifying them. You may also contact me via email at frjoetatro@gmail.com.

Fr. Joe