

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Topeka
Space Development Action Plan, April 2007

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The Charge from the UUFT Board

The Action Plan Committee has responded to the following charge from the UUFT Board -

Provide clarity of vision, concrete goals, and a path of action for UUFT space improvement; report to the Board at the April 07 board meeting.

The Action Plan Purpose

Improvement of UUFT programs and services for members, friends, and for the people who have not yet found us is at the heart of this action plan. The research and reports of several UUFT committees show that the limitations of our building space are severely limiting our programs. The reports confirm that our buildings are being used at full capacity and beyond. Our crowded, heavily used spaces and the safety issues these conditions create have raised concern in the membership. The critical nature of these space needs and safety issues compel us to take action.

Critical space needs and the expressed preferences of many of our members speaking about UUFT education, spirituality, social concerns, fellowship, and stewardship of the environment motivate us to create this plan. And through the results of this plan we want to help UUFT better serve our members and community in the ways and values of the Foundational Principles of Unitarian Universalism.

We are a growing Fellowship and the growth adds to our diversity. It enhances our humanity and our capacity to help each other. Growth strengthens our ability to respond to compelling social concerns and the needs of environmental stewardship. Growth adds new aspects to our spirituality.

All of these together add vitality, excitement, and enhanced value to UUFT offerings to our members and the community. But it requires safe, efficient, highly functional, and economical space to do this. For the programs that serve the congregation and the community at large, this action plan addresses the essential issues of improved building space and program environment for the Fellowship.

Background -- Reports Preceding This Action Plan

In recent years several committees of UUFT have analyzed building and program characteristics and member preferences about the related space issues. The reports of all of these committees have been used in the preparation of the action plan. The earlier reports are:

1. 2006 - UUFT Board Space Needs Sub-Committee Recommendations, October 6, 2006

This report provides information supporting the sub-committee's recommendation that the Board go on record with a commitment to stay at this 4775 SW 21st Street location. Further, the sub-committee recommended that the Board appoint the Space Development Action Plan Committee. In response, the Board has committed to the development of this location for the long-term future, and the Board convened the Space Development Action Plan Committee.

2. 2006 - Report to the UUFT Board of the May 2006 Soup and Dreams Dinner

Responding to the question, "You go away from Topeka for 10 years, and you come back, what would you like to see here?", members expressed activity and program dreams and dreams for improvements in Fellowship characteristics, some of which related to space needs and desired activities which require improved building space.

3. 2005 - Report of the UUFT Space Needs Task Force, June 2005

This report provides detailed analysis of UUFT building space, the crowded condition of classroom areas and the "main hall" (Scanland Fellowship Hall), and the congested traffic patterns there are when these spaces are used. The report includes space and occupancy numbers for each room in the main building and the annex.

4. 2004 - UUFT Long Range Plan Objectives 2004-2008

The Long Range Plan speaks to desirable program objectives most of which have implications for space needs. There is the specific directive to assess UUFT space needs to determine if the needs are best met at this location or another location. With regard to the question of location, the Board addressed this with the Sub-committee in 2006, followed by the board policy action to commit to long term development of space at this location.

These four reports are available from the Action Plan Committee.

Preferences and Ideas From the February 07 Town Hall Meeting

The Fellowship's Town Hall Meeting, on Sunday, February 25, 2007, was specifically about member's preferences and concerns related to program, services, activity space , and related issues. Because of the specific focus of the discussion and with the timeliness of the expressions, this information was very helpful to the action plan development. The following is a summary of the ideas and concerns:

GENERAL COMMENTS

Connect with nature

Lots of natural light

"Green"

Investigate acquisition of available surrounding property

Consider two stories or a basement

Good security

Curb appeal, beautiful

More parking

Current building is not sacred, can be changed

Think outside the box

Focus on program needs, design accordingly

OFFICES

Offices to be in close proximity to each other

Acoustical and physical privacy

Capable of monitoring entries during the week

Fully computer capable

Need to designate sizes

Need building security – locks and video security

MINISTER

The office large enough to meet with at least four people

Floor space twice the current size;150% of existing size

if storage is conveniently available elsewhere

Private entry door that allows access to the Fellowship Hall

LIFESPAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION DIRECTOR

The office twice current size

Be able to meet with six people

Storage!, here or conveniently elsewhere

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Copier

Files

Work room

MINISTERIAL INTERN

Provide an office for a regular position

Can be small

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

Future office space

SCANLAND FELLOWSHIP HALL

Large enough for 250 (75% larger than current size/capacity)

Put minister in easily visible location without elevating onto a platform

Place for worship leaders away from congregation

Sloped floor or level floor?

Stage

Back Room for ministerial duties

Back area restroom

Dressing Rooms

Grooms Room

Nice sound system

Cry Room

Good acoustics from surrounding spaces

Social connection with Multipurpose Room

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

Seating for 250 at round tables (120 now in Scanland hall, a tight max)

After service dinners

Would be GREAT to not have to set up and tear down table all the time

Wedding Receptions

MULTIPURPOSE ROOM, cont.

_____ Funeral and other Dinners

Play Area

Summer Camps

Choir Practice and storage

Drama opportunities

-Stage

-Dressing Rooms

Possibly use as RE rooms during service

YOGA

More storage

Floor that is easy to clean

KITCHEN

Need more and better of everything

(counter space, storage, more and better appliances)

Better access to the Multipurpose Room and Fellowship Hall

Think about remote coffee locations instead of just in the kitchen

Be able to lock off from rest of building

Make a soup kitchen (would require commercial kitchen).

NARTHEX (Entry Hall or Main Entry)

Air locks

Foyer with membership table

Area to greet people

Space for entry/exit from Scanland Fellowship Hall

Close to kitchen (or a wet counter for coffee).

Place for intermissions

Lounge chairs – casual seating area

Small tables and chairs

Easy access to parking lots

Covered entry for drop off

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

One or two classrooms – for 15 adults each – could use Library or conf. room

Board Room/Conference Room – seating for 50

Library – possibly combine with other spaces

Bookstore? (Storage closet or kiosk?)

OWL

YOUTH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

8 Classrooms – 25 kids per class – at least as large as current Emerson Room

Flexibility in being able to adjust classroom sizes to meet changing class sizes

Need ability for gross motor activities

Space for a week day daycare program

Outdoor playground access

Restrooms in younger grades

Beeper system for younger grades

Storage and cabinets for each classroom

Sinks for each classroom

Youth room needs couches. Lounge, TV, ping pong, foosball, lots of flexibility

and storage

RESTROOMS

Bigger

Close to new Fellowship Hall

Handicapped accessible

Disperse around building – include in younger age classrooms

TORNADO SHELTER

There should be one.

Proposed Time Line and Recommended Actions

- April 07** The UUFT Board endorses the action plan and recommends it for discussion and adoption at the June congregational meeting.
- April - June 07** Investigate site acquisitions for space improvements, playground, and parking. Plan to make purchases as funding and opportunities allow.
- June 07** The congregation acts on the project proposal with a Go or No Go decision at the June Congregational Meeting.
- June 07** The Board hires the Fund Raising Consultant; the consultant works with the Board and congregation to assess UUFT fund raising ability and plan a capital campaign.
- August 07** Board appoints a Capital Campaign/Fund raising Committee and a Building Project Committee
- Sep 07** Interview and hire the architect.
- Sep - Nov 07** Working with the architect, develop the schematic design and conceptual design plan of the improvements, and estimated costs.
- Jan - March 08** Conduct and complete the capital fund raising campaign.
- March 08** Action at the Congregational Meeting approves or directs modification of the conceptual design plan.
- March - May 08** Architect completes construction documents and prepares bid process.
- May 08** Advertise for bids
- June 08** Open bids

Proposed Time Line and Recommended Actions, cont.

June 08	Ground breaking ceremony
June 08 - May 09	Site development and construction
Summer 09	Building dedication, including UUA President

Space, Activity, and Function Recommendations

1. To serve Youth RE, eight (8) classrooms, each 350 sq. ft. or larger
 1. Nursery
 2. Preschool (ages 3, 4, and 5)
 3. K - 2nd, 450 sq. ft.
 4. Grades 3 - 4
 5. Grades 5 - 6
 6. Junior High, 600 sq. ft.
 7. High School, 700 sq. ft., with center divider
 8. An additional room in to which to split any oversized class

2. To serve Adult RE, one class room, 350 sq. ft., and a library, 450 sq. ft., with wall book shelving, a conference table and chairs, and casual seating.

3. A Narthex, or main entry hall, to accommodate people gathering, a greeting table and two chairs, a signature stand with supplies storage, and a wet counter for coffee and supplies storage.

4. Restrooms, sized and equipped to meet the needs of the adjacent area:
 1. Near the new or renewed Fellowship Hall
 2. Near the office area
 3. In the Nursery
 4. In the Preschool room
 5. Near the other classrooms
 6. Adjacent to the Multipurpose Room

Space, Activity, and Function Recommendations, cont.

5. A Multipurpose Room (Dining Room) adjacent to the new Kitchen, large enough to accommodate a meal function for 250
6. A new or renewed Scanland Fellowship Hall, large enough to comfortably seat 200 (this is a seating increase of 75% beyond the current Scanland hall). Possibly with a floor elevation higher at the rear, sloping gently toward the speaker platform. Other desirable details are included above, page 4, Town Hall Meeting data.
7. A new Kitchen, with more and better of everything.
8. Office needs are detailed above, pages 3 and 4, Town Hall Meeting data, and are recommended for the plan.
9. Adequate storage for furniture and equipment, audiovisual equipment, religious education supplies, maintenance equipment and supplies, and Sunday service and other ceremonial supplies, without encumbering the offices with these items.
10. The incorporation of a Tornado Shelter into the plan is recommended.

End of the plan statement.

Action Plan Committee members:

Duane Johnson, Melanie Kitchner, Kevin Maxwell, Jane Newman, Gary Price, Micah Rolfs, Judy Sasser, Lisa Schwartz, Mike Wilson