



**MEETING OF
UNIVERSITY PARK MAYOR AND COMMON COUNCIL
RIVERDALE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CUSTIS HALL
6513 QUEENS CHAPEL ROAD
7:00 PM**

**December 17, 2013
SPECIAL SESSION
MINUTES**

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Tabori at 7:20 p.m.

Present: Mr. Brosch, Mr. Gekas, Ms. Christiansen, Mr. Carey, Mr. Cron,
Mr. Alvarez
Absent: None
Excused: Ms. Sorensen

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Mr. Alvarez.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by: Mr. Cron
Yea: 6

Seconded by: Mr. Gekas
Nay: 0 **Abstain:** 0

4. INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING REMARKS ~ Mayor Tabori

Mayor Tabori welcomed all who attended and explained that this gathering was to share additional information regarding the possible acquisition of Riverdale Presbyterian Church. The work that has been done so far has been done by the Council Committee on Public Facilities and Services, the members are Len Carey, Chair, Michael Cron, Dave Brosch and Jim Gekas.

**5. PRESENTATION ON FINANCING AND SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR THE
PURCHASE AND RENOVATION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING AND ANNEX
~ Mayor Tabori**

The potential source of funds for the purchase of the church:

- FEMA shelter funds, which would pay 80% of the construction cost: This option was considered but the procedures changed in 2009 and the state of Maryland does not support this program.
- State Bond Bill: This could be up to \$300,000 to \$500,000 for a two year cycle.
- Sale of the current Town Hall: Quotes were given from \$350,000 to \$400,000.
- General Obligation Bond: This type of bond was issued for the UP road construction and Pension Plans. The interest rate would be 3% or below.
- Construction Loan: This is a variable draw general obligation loan. The interest rate would be 3% or below.

Mayor Tabori stressed that there are other grants available, but a plan must be in order before applying for a particular grant.

The standard operating costs should not change with one exception, which is, Town Hall will need a full-time assistant clerk in order to schedule the personnel and programs if the building will be used as a civic center.

There will be program operational costs that will develop in this process. Those costs are likely to be born by the programs themselves. This is something that needs to be looked at very closely.

There are operating costs associated with the building such as maintenance and utility costs. Calculating this cost is very difficult and it is believed that this cost will double due to the size of the building in comparison to Town Hall, which would be approximately \$60,000 to \$70,000, plus \$30,000 to \$40,000 to hire a full-time assistant.

Mayor Tabori explained that if a bond is issued it would be paid off through an increase in Town taxes. The increase would be approximately \$100.00 on average per household, per year, for each \$1,000,000 of the bond. (Thus, if the bond were for \$2,000,000, the approximate additional tax per household would be about \$200.00 per year.) This increase in taxes would continue for about 15 years. The Town would attempt to make some arrangements for those residents for whom this tax increase would be a significant financial burden. The additional cost of maintaining the building would be put in the budget resulting in an additional tax of about \$10.00 a year per household. Grants and other income would be pursued to offset as much of the cost as possible.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- Would it be feasible to enroll the current outstanding municipal bond into a new loan?
It probably would not. (Tabori)
- Was the land at Town Hall calculated in the selling price?
It may be possible to break it up into three pieces. The problem is that part of the land is a right-of-way which is controlled for the subway system and as a result you cannot build on it. (Tabori)
- Are there other parts of the budget where current operations in the Town could be reduced?
Real costs have been reduced over the past several years. In order to reduce costs at this time, services would have to be taken away. (Tabori)
- Are there services that have been seeded to the Town that could be seeded back, as a way to reduce cost?
Not at this time. (Tabori)
- What are the additional programs?
Some ideas are: servicing the elderly residents, before and after care and continuing education. There are numerous community activities currently taking place at the church at no charge. (Brosch)

There are currently many groups that meet here such as the boy scouts, the Women's Club and Town sponsored holiday parties. (Carey)

- What are the services the elderly need?
To have a center where people could come and meet, and an office where a staff members could help with necessary services. (Brosch)
- Is the idea of elderly service similar to a Village?
Yes. (Brosch)
- Would the Town be responsible for more services or would they be sub-contracted out? This is a significant change and the concern is the additional traffic.
The Town is not planning on any additional costs. (Brosch)

The senior villages are often subscribed to by the seniors that participate in them, so that might be paid for in part by people joining it. (Christiansen)
- If the building is sold to someone else, it may not be available for the current activities. The Town seems to think they have a Town Hall, unfortunately, it's Riverdale Presbyterian Church.

6. REPORT ON THE CONDITION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING AND ON THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING REPORTS.

~ Thomas Ahmann, AIA, Principal, Ahmann LLC Architectural Services

Mr. Ahmann explained the layout of the church and the annex building through a power point presentation and gave a summary of the following reports:

Building Systems Assessments on Riverdale Presbyterian Church and Annex

- Upgrade the water service
- Install an elevator
- Upgrade electrical service
- A phase replacement of the mechanical systems
- Install a fire alarm and an emergency power system
- Upgrade bathrooms to meet ADA
- Replace all supply, waste and gas piping

Hazardous Materials Survey Report on Riverdale Presbyterian Church and Annex

- Removal and disposal of asbestos
- Disposal of window air conditioning units
- Disposal of light fixtures
- Disposal of windows due to lead paint
- Disposal of florescent tubes and batteries
- Disposal of smoke detectors

Initial Structural Analysis of the Conversion of Riverdale Presbyterian Church and Associated Property

- No signs of any significant structural damage
- Adequate for gravity loads and snow loads
- No clearly defined lateral forced resisting system

Mr. Ahmann stated that there are a series of upgrades that are required:

- Additional parking
- New entry stair and stoop
- Platform lifts for ADA compliance
- Install dormers on two stairways
- Minor roof repairs
- Reline gutters
- Replacement of flat roof area
- Thermal insulation at the perimeter walls and the roof area
- Replace windows and exterior doors
- Install elevator for ADA compliance
- Reconfigure bathrooms
- Provide area of refuge in case of power failure
- Replace corridor doors
- Interior build out to meet the problematic needs for hazardous materials

PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:

- In the Structural Engineers Report which was posted on the web-site, it was talked about dealing with the lateral reinforcement and he used the word “cost prohibitive”?
This was his opinion of addressing the Category 4 occupancy. He thought it would be prohibitive to reinforce the building. (Ahmann)
- Considering all that has been said about the renovation and the upgrading, what is the bottom line?
The bottom line is being worked on. A cost consultant is putting the information together from the various reports and the Towns needs. This information will be available at the next meeting. (Ahmann)
- Explain additional parking on Queens Chapel?
When the building changes occupancy, we have to evaluate how parking is done. The parking lot is not large enough for the assembly, office and day care occupancies by a considerable amount.
- The traffic will increase and this is a concern.
- Regarding the structural assessment that dealt with the lateral reinforcement that said it was cost prohibitive that was conditional on the Town pursuing the building meeting a Category 4. Has the Town decided to do that and is that a necessary part of the purchase and use of the building?
There was an initial discussion about shelter in place which has worked its way out based on funding issues. The only issue is the police station. A police station is a Category 4, but the building the police are in now does meet the Category 4 requirement. (Ahmann)

There was a possibility that there was funding available for a shelter in place which would cover 80% of the cost. It became apparent that this funding is highly unlikely. (Carey)

- What happens if the Church decides that they can no longer be in this space? If a Category 4 is required for the police station that becomes questionable whether or not we should keep this building. Interested in seeing the cost ratio in relationship to the renovation and doing a new building.

If the building was demolished, this would eliminate the main proposal which was the Church leasing back. Purchasing the building and demolishing just the annex was recognized as a possibility. What happens after the lease back of the Church is something that needs to be looked at. (Carey)

It was also considered to demolish the Church when it is no longer needed and create more parking. (Cron)

- Purchasing the building and then possibly demolishing it doesn't make sense.
- There are probably other denominations who would want to rent the Church.
- The character of the Town would change if not purchased since the Church is a natural community gathering place. It would be an improvement to hold Town meetings in a proper meeting space.
- If the Town did not buy the Church, what would be the permissible uses of the property under the current zoning?
Church, single family residence, no commercial use of any kind. (Ahmann)
- We were told the present Town Hall was a R55, what does that allow the present Town Hall to be turned into?
The same thing as this building and as your house. (Ahmann)
- What purposes could a new owner use that building for?
Residential, law office, in-home office. The uses are limited. (Ahmann)
- Thirty five years ago there were these same questions and concerns when purchasing the current Town Hall. The purchase of the Church will be beneficial to the Town.
- What is the approximate time plan should it move forward and the sale go through?
From the time it is purchased to move-in would be approximately 1-1/2 to 2 years. (Tabori)
- Will there be clarity to what the renovation cost would be in relationship to what a new building would be at the January 18 meeting?
I believe so, yes. (Tabori)

7. ADJOURNMENT by consent at 8:50 p.m.