

**First Unitarian Congregation of Waterloo  
Report from the Long Term Space Committee:  
A preliminary assessment on moving to a larger building  
(Summarised version, December 1, 2005)**

**Committee Members:** Margaret Insley (chair), Liam Morland, Dave Keller, Mark Paul, Ian Kent, Jack Horman, Jay Moore, Theo Raynham

### **1. Actions taken by the committee**

The Long Term Space Committee has assessed the feasibility of moving to a new, larger space. To complete this task, we took or will take the following steps:

- We conducted a congregational survey about our future space needs and dreams
- We consulted with committees on their needs and dreams
- We reviewed the financial details of our acquisition of our current property
- We discussed current market conditions in the area with a realtor.
- We investigated the experience of other congregations which have moved recently.
- With the Board, we met with Paul Mack, a fund raising consultant, for advice on managing a capital campaign.
- We prepared six motions outlining the next steps. We recommend the Board present these motions at the February 2006 Annual General Meeting of the Congregation. These motions are detailed in the January 2006 edition of the Window.
- We will host events on Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> in place of the discussion after the service so that the congregation can discuss this report and the proposed motions.

### **2. Background**

At an open meeting of the congregation with Linda Thomson of the CUC and Grace Flesher (CUC Service Consultant for the Central Region) in January 2004, these space issues were raised:

- Lack of room for growth of our Children=s Religious Education Program.
- Our children's program area is not wheel chair accessible.
- Attendance of 80% of capacity or greater at Sunday services. This deters growth.
- Lack of storage, parking, and office space.
- Poor acoustical separation between different program areas.

A Short Term Space Task Force looked for temporary solutions, but concluded that these problems could not be resolved in our current building. At the Annual General Meeting of 2005, the congregation voted to establish a Long Term Space Committee to address the feasibility and desirability of moving to a larger building.

### **3. What are the alternatives to moving?**

#### **3.1 Building renovation:**

- Modifications to our existing building would be difficult in the space available.
- If we renovate, we will have to conform to City of Waterloo parking bylaws (8 spaces per 100 square metres of floor space, unless we get an exemption, requiring an agreement with the

neighbours.)

### 3.2 Two Sunday services:

- We would need enough teachers and other volunteers for two children=s religious education sessions.
- Two services for a group of our size would be divisive.
- We would not have enough people attending each service.

### 3.3 Splitting the congregation:

- Our congregation is not large enough for this to be a viable option.
- The resulting congregations would be too small for some of our vital programs.

### 3.4 Do nothing:

- We would not be able grow and welcome others into our community.

*The Long Term Space Committee does not recommend any of these options.*

## 4. What do we want in our new building?

The following list is derived from submissions by committees and from a survey of the members of the congregation. We received 63 replies to our survey, approximately half of the congregation. We are also posting graphs of the survey results.

<b>Desirable Features in a New Building</b>	
Location	■ Central Kitchener or Waterloo with Sunday transit service.
Outside	■ Green space and parking
General features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 8000-10,000 square feet</li> <li>■ An energy efficient heating and cooling system</li> <li>■ Windows that can open and are maintenance free</li> <li>■ Wheel chair accessible in almost all areas</li> <li>■ Large area for socializing after service</li> <li>■ Owned, not rented</li> <li>■ Shared with another group if advantageous.</li> </ul>
Worship space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Seating for at least 250 people</li> <li>■ Good acoustics for music and speaking</li> <li>■ Natural lighting</li> <li>■ Acoustically separate from other areas</li> </ul>
Kitchen facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Larger than in our current building</li> <li>■ Convenient for coffee hours and any events</li> </ul>
Entranceway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adequate coat racks</li> <li>■ Room for pamphlets, file folders, sign-in book, name tags.</li> </ul>
Office/Library space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Minister=s office</li> <li>■ Locking</li> <li>■ Functional and pleasant</li> <li>■ Large enough to seat 6 people</li> <li>■ Sound proof</li> <li>■ Office space for DRE, administration, music</li> <li>■ Area for our library, archives and filing cabinets.</li> </ul>

Children=s Program Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A good sized room for baby and childcare with washroom</li> <li>▪ Six class rooms and a baby and childcare room</li> <li>▪ Easy access to washrooms and a kitchen</li> <li>▪ A family washroom where babies can be changed.</li> <li>▪ A room large enough for all the children</li> <li>▪ Easy access to a fire exit</li> <li>▪ Acoustical separation between program rooms</li> <li>▪ A room with speakers for parents with unhappy children</li> </ul>
Meeting Rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Room available for adult RE courses and meetings</li> </ul>
Storage space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Approximately 200 square feet for:</li> <li>▪ Children’s RE items</li> <li>▪ Music items</li> <li>▪ Seasonal decorations</li> <li>▪ Gardening equipment</li> <li>▪ Membership items: extra newsletters, directories, etc.</li> <li>▪ Adult religious education materials</li> </ul>

## 5. How much might a new building cost?

Commercial properties in the Kitchener-Waterloo area can range in price from \$200,000 to over \$1 million. Central Waterloo properties are the most expensive.

## 6. How can we finance the purchase of a new building?

### 6.1 Equity in our current building

A real estate agent estimates that our building would fetch in the range of \$320,000 to \$350,000. We will not know the price until we sell.

### 6.2 Capital campaign

- Several Unitarian congregations in the area have used a consultant to help plan and run their capital campaign and have generally exceeded their expectations.
- A capital campaign is likely to be successful because every member who replied to our survey agreed that a move was required, and because 89% of the 63 respondents to our survey said they were willing to pledge beyond their normal giving levels to help purchase a new building. A feasibility study before we make a final offer to purchase will tell us if we can go ahead.

### 6.3 Long term mortgage and lines-of credit

We can borrow from a commercial lender to increase the funds available to us, or to bridge any gaps in cash flow as pledges are received over a period of several years.

### 6.4 Total available excluding any loans:

From equity and our capital campaign the Long Range Space Committee estimates that we can raise at least \$600,000 to \$650,000.

## 7. Do we need a campaign consultant to assist with a capital campaign?

A consultant would be very helpful. The London, Hamilton, South Peel, Edmonton and Toronto First congregations, as well as the CUC, have used a fund raising consultant, Paul Mack and Associates, to

assist with the capital campaign, and have exceeded their goals. We could use a consultant to conduct a feasibility study, manage a capital campaign and/or provide consultation on an hourly basis.

## 8. How we acquired our current property

### Revenue sources

Proceeds from sale of old building	\$162,000.00
Total pledges	90,078.00
Other income (Chalice lighters, interest, fund raising, etc.	20,852.37

### Cost of present building

Building	\$235,000.00
Legal fees	10,000.00

### Breakdown of pledges by amount

less than \$1000	23	\$ 6,757.00
1000-2999	23	33,500.00
3000-4999	7	24,800.00
5000-10000	3	25,000.00

## 9. What we learned from Paul Mack about running a successful Capital Funds Campaign

- Present a cogent case. The congregation should agree at a congregational meeting at which they are presented with photographs and/or architect's sketches of a target building on an actual property.
- Conduct a feasibility study. This is done by personally polling those members of the congregation who are most likely to be both willing and able to make major financial contributions. At least one donor should be willing and able to contribute 10% of the necessary funds. Other major donors are also needed. Perhaps you will be one.
- We need strong congregational leadership; the minister should be willing and able to play a key role.
- We need a full time professional campaign manager to look after the day by day details. This is not the same person as the campaign chairman. Some things cannot be done with volunteer labour.

## 10. Suggested timeline and next steps

- Feb 2006 Annual General Meeting – Obtain congregational approval that in principle we are in favour of selling our current building and moving to a larger space. Form an Action Committee to look for a new building.
- Between Mar. 2006 and Spring 2007 - Engage a consultant and campaign manager. Make an offer on a building, conditional on approval at a congregational meeting and on a successful feasibility study.
- As soon as we have made a conditional offer – Obtain approval by the congregation at a Congregational meeting and conduct a feasibility study (4-6 weeks).
- If support is there, immediately conduct a Capital Campaign, confirm conditional offer, and put building up for sale; otherwise repeat first three items until successful.
- When new building is available, prepare for moving, including renovations.
- Move into new building.