

AUGUST

STATUS UPDATE REPORT

PREPARED BY
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252 Atlantic Street
Activity Report for the Period Ending August 31, 2022

The first month of preconstruction activities proved to be every bit as challenging as anticipated! Nevertheless, the project team has made progress in three key areas:

- **Architectural Design** – a “preliminary final” architectural design for the new sanctuary, offices, coffee shop and hospitality space has been developed and is available in the Meeting Room at Stanwich Church for review by the congregation. Our architect and internal design team have prayerfully and carefully considered many options to make the space open, accessible, and welcoming. To accomplish these objectives the current design envisions skylights, open staircases, a central elevator and potentially the removal of a pillar from the sanctuary. It’s a large space and interior navigation, acoustics and security are all important considerations. Our internal Design Committee is continuing to work with our architect to fine-tune the design.
- **Demolition and Asbestos Abatement** – as part of our due diligence efforts last year we had the building inspected and tested for asbestos and contamination was confirmed in multiple locations. As we have opened the walls and ceiling to assess any structural issues resulting from the architectural design, additional contamination was found. This led to the decision to conduct a full interior demolition in conjunction with the asbestos abatement process. Bids were solicited and received from five vendors providing these services. A preferred vendor was selected, we will apply for permits next week and begin the demolition and abatement process in late September. The process is expected to take 6 - 8-weeks to complete during which time access to the building will be limited to the abatement team.
- **Structural Engineer** - Some of these design features under consideration require further evaluation by the structural engineer to assess any potential structural impact. The structural assessment and potential design implications will be completed in conjunction with the interior demolition noted above.

Other Project Activities

The project team is moving forward on multiple fronts. A summary of selected activities is presented below.

- **Zoning Approval** – it took 10 months, but we finally received informal zoning approval from the City of Stamford for planting a church in the downtown business district. We are delighted to mark this task as “Complete” on our “To Do List”, but it does set a cautionary tone for the level of effort and time commitment required for City of Stamford reviews and approvals as we move into the construction phase of the effort.
- **Open House** – all members of Stanwich Church were invited to attend an open house at our new church location on August 14th. The event was well attended and enabled everyone to walk through the entire building, ask questions, offer suggestions, and join in prayer that God will continue to guide and bless our efforts to make Him known in the City of Stamford.

As noted above, the building will be “off limits” during the demolition and abatement processes. After that, congregants are invited to join in prayer walks through the building and the community during construction efforts.

- **Coffee Shop Committee** – while we are only 4-weeks into the effort, planning, organizing, and launching a coffee shop has already proven to be a daunting challenge! The Committee has met with a coffee shop entrepreneur to discuss how we might partner to meet our goals of welcoming/serving the community while providing employment opportunities for Pivot graduates, PEHT survivors and related charitable functions. The team has also scheduled interviews with accountants to assess potential tax issues (e.g., unrelated business income taxes) and with attorneys to determine the form of organization (e.g., is a separate 501(c)(3) organization required?). There is much to be done and anyone who wishes to support these efforts should reach out to Kimberly O’Hara at Kimberly@stanwichchurch.org.
- **Church Parking** – there is limited on-street parking available in front of the building and virtually unlimited parking is available across the street at the Bell Street Garage. The Bell Street Garage is a City of Stamford parking garage and parking is free of charge on Sundays. The garage is approximately 400 feet from our front door.

There is another parking garage that is located immediately behind our building. Unfortunately, there is currently no easy access to that garage from our building as the only entrance/exit to that garage is a significant distance away on Tresser Blvd. However, our Construction Manager has a relationship with the owner of that parking garage, and we are having discussions about building an exit behind that garage that will lead directly into our building (a 15-foot walk!). These discussions are very preliminary but their willingness to engage in the conversation is very encouraging.

- **MEP Design** – the MEP design continues in conjunction with the overall church design. The final design will not be available until the Design Committee approves the final church design and the structural questions referenced above are addressed. The MEP report references very lengthy lead times for ordering/receiving key components of the MEP infrastructure. We intend to move forward as soon as possible to order all long lead-time items.
- **Business and Administration** – the preconstruction tasks outlined above are enabled by the oversight, leadership, and engagement of church staff. Insurance policies have been procured, bank loans negotiated and secured, contractor contracts reviewed and approved, events (e.g., the Open House) scheduled and conducted, new accounts established for fire detection, insurance obtained on the property and a host of other activities. This entire process has been enabled and supported by the Stanwich Church Administrative staff.
- **Building Photos** – based on the advice of our Owner’s Representative we engaged the services of a photographer to take photos of the neighboring building and parking lot. The objective is to establish documented evidence of the condition of the neighboring property to avoid (or provide protection against) any claims of damage the owner of neighboring properties by assert.

- **Site Visit/Best Practices** – members of the church staff conducted a site visit to Mission Chattanooga in Tennessee. Mission Chattanooga is led by our former Associate Pastor Chris Sorensen. The purpose of the trip was to learn from their church plant experience, community engagement initiatives and the challenges associated with the operation of a coffee shop (they have two!). Much was learned that we can leverage with our own initiative in Stamford.

Other Issues

At this early stage of the construction effort, we have many questions/issues that need to be addressed. Two items are on our priority list:

- **Construction Timing and Budget** – our Construction Manager has devoted a significant effort to developing a preliminary construction schedule and timeline. To avoid creating any false or misleading expectations on our part, they have not yet shared the results of their planning efforts. They estimate another 2 to 3 weeks to complete the planning efforts and present their findings and recommendations to us. Hopefully, we'll be able to share preliminary timing and budget estimates in next month's status report.
- **Removal from the Grand List** – as noted last month, immediately following closing we filed a State of Connecticut "Application for Exempt Status" to have the property removed from the City's Grand List for property tax billing purposes. We were verbally informed that our application has been approved, but still have not received written/formal confirmation. We will continue to follow up with the City until "formal" confirmation of the change is received.