

Stirling Land Stewardship: Faith Formation Session to Identify Priorities

April 23, 2023

Tasks for the Session:

- Clarify the priorities previously identified
- Start to examine ideas for development (which have received relatively little attention) – [NOTE: we did not have time to examine this]

Footings for our Land Stewardship

Biblical teachings of shalom, peace and justice, hospitality, love, and grace

Anabaptist understandings of those teachings

Assumptions about any Re-Development of Stirling Lands (church, 5 houses)

1. No decision made about whether or what to do. All options still on the table:
 - a. “Maintain status quo” →
 - b. “Start afresh with all buildings” and
 - c. “All options in between (or beyond)”.
2. **Time Frame:** Decisions will require careful discernment. Priorities identified through various processes will guide choices throughout a transparent process. We are unlikely to see “shovels in the ground” for years.
3. **Crisis:** the current crisis in affordable housing will not abate within the foreseeable future.
4. **Partnership(s):** Stirling will require (and take advantage of) outside expertise in development of any new buildings /renovations. Choice of partner will depend on fit with priorities Stirling establishes. In addition, we will seek *collaborations* within & outside the church to continue energy of project over time and to identify new ways to address needs of populations served.
5. **Financing:** For almost any development beyond simple upgrades to existing buildings, Stirling will need outside assistance to pay for development.

Priorities

Each group added “definition” to the meaning of the priority.

Group 1:	Will W, Katrina M, Isaiah R, Tamara S, Chris G
Group 2:	Laura Bingeman, Sue Klassen, Laura Enns, Carolyn W, Suzanne D
Group 3:	Victor K, Darren Kropf, John Neufeld, Carol Gerber, Kay Rempel, Gary Klassen, Megan Brenneman
Group 4:	Sarah Fretz, Josie W, Pam Albrecht, Julie Armes, Bonnie Murdoch
Group 5:	Ron Rempel, Pat Manske, Ruth Bell, Mila Reusser, Aaron Neufeld
Group 6:	Vicki Albrecht, Richard Albrecht, Reina Neufeld, Gini Bechtel, Steve Brenneman, Sara DeWeerd, Alison Gingrich Regehr

The following table highlights priorities derived from a previous Faith Formation discussion. The initial bullet points identify “definition” for the priority. The remaining bullet points reflect items identified through discussion on April 23, 2023.

Our Land Stewardship choices will reflect Priority:	Description of “Meaning” of the Priority
Creation Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green building standards in both tearing down and building anew should be the minimum • Sustainability environmentally (e.g., energy use; built with quality to last) • <i>Ideas (group 1)</i> • Energy positive build (or passive build) (e.g., solar; geo-thermal, heat pump – but where to place and have efficient use of space) (4 groups) • Rain garden / garden space / green space / landscaping – to care for the land (4 groups) • Locally indigenous species in landscaping • Efficient use of land (i.e., # of units) • Green roofs (2 groups) • Platinum building standards (3 groups) – Green building stds are not a standard term across jurisdictions – so need to be more specific • Demonstration of best practices to witness to the community • <i>Additional Ideas Group 2</i> • Permeable surface parking lot (2 groups) – how to meet parking needs of church AND new residents • Shared space for more than 1 faith community • <i>Additional ideas Group 3</i> • Let’s not assume LEED certification – go further & avoid paperwork • Be willing to pay a premium for creation care • Things like “no parking” will affect who can use the space, even if it is good for the earth • Note that the more people who live in the urban core will reduce pressure for sprawl on greenfield • <i>Additional ideas Group 4</i> • Low water flow plumbing / grey water usage • Sustainable design and materials • Parking: cemetery use / cars off main property • <i>Additional ideas Group 5</i> • Need to consider the financial impact – what might we have to give up – choose certain priorities within the project • Affirm prior initiatives at Stirling • Build quality • Consider how much it is worth to continue to invest in the existing building • What are the risks in new technologies?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Additional Ideas Group 6</i> • Consider existing infrastructure for retrofit – maintain, enhance, restore / retrofit • Build to minimize maintenance – consider what is expected of the user and try to anticipate issues that may arise.
Honouring the original inhabitants of the land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how use of the land can honour the original inhabitants of the land • How do we include indigenous peoples but also the rest of the community • <i>Ideas Group 1</i> • Support indigenous tenant use of community space & facilities • Include indigenous groups in design process; Honour indigenous input (including prior conversations / activities with indigenous communities); offer a seat at the table; indigenous partner like elders from Six Nations / local groups; be more intentional than first bullet; clarify who “they” is to be consulted (5 groups) • Use indigenous architects and designers • Spiritual covenant in case Stirling ceases to exist • <i>Additional Ideas Group 2</i> • Creating green spaces • Offer affordable housing to indigenous peoples / diverse communities of elderly with indigenous supports (in consultation with indigenous community to identify need) • <i>Additional Ideas Group 3</i> • Challenges of insurance and zoning need to be addressed • How to discern well in a reasonable timeline • Caring for the land can be in synergy with this priority • <i>Additional ideas Group 4</i> • Consult in same way as developers and local communities • <i>Additional ideas Group 5</i> • What about Spiritual Covenant? • <i>Additional ideas Group 6</i> • Need to discuss who we would engage with and how that consultation would be decided upon
Enhancing a Sense of Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Among people who use the buildings • Designs that encourage growth of a sense of community • Ownership / rental models that build up participants (e.g., co-op Housing model; Community Land Trust) • Ongoing supports for participants to become their best selves • <i>Ideas Added Group 1</i> • Respect for surrounding neighbourhood in scale & design • Consider varied types of housing e.g., co-op and non-profit rental

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore non-market ownership options to avoid creating “investments” and private equity • <i>Additional ideas Group 2</i> • Intentional community building work – potentially using a group like Community Justice Initiatives or Working Centre • Large, multi-use community spaces available • <i>Additional ideas Group 3</i> • Gardens (see also creation care) • Church building can facilitate community building via kitchen, gathering spaces • Consider Stirling members’ roles in community functions • Note that what works now may not work in the future • Multi-generational populations can be valuable • The population(s) we choose to serve will help define community – how do we decide? • <i>Ideas Added Group 4</i> • Co-op model – discernment & commitment • Provide volunteer options • Examine who needs affordable housing • Invitational model – committed to a greater vision • <i>Ideas Added Group 5</i> • Is there a community centre-type space nearby for new residents? • Stirling would still be here within this community • <i>Ideas Added Group 6</i> • Use research-based approaches to how the building can be used to support community – push the architect • Consider European-style stairway buildings instead of hallway-based buildings • Group found it difficult to discuss since they have a poor understanding of ideas like “Land Trust” and not having a good idea of where develop might be. • Keep Stirling connected to the broader housing community
Affordable Housing Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attainable / affordable • Supportive • <i>Small groups had no discussion of this priority due to time</i>
Efficient use of communal spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spaces for common amenities for families (or others living in the complex) • Outreach AND “InReach” – hybrid model of use (e.g., partnership with Muslim community for worship space) • Immigrant supports (e.g., <i>medical and other</i>) • Flexible designs to enable multi-purpose usage (e.g., worship <u>and</u> community classes, other programs) • <i>Ideas Added Group 1</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the existing church’s fabric sacrosanct? • Multipurpose space for worship, etc., etc. (2 groups) • Respect for built and community heritage • <i>Additional Ideas Group 2</i> • Build on relationship with CJI • Hire a coordinator to develop other spaces (e.g., Downtown Community Health Centre or Sanctuary) • What would office, storage space look like) – “hot desk” style office space that can be used by church staff and/or community members / organisations • <i>Additional ideas Group 3</i> • Recognise that existing space can be better utilized, for sure • Will being “a church” turn off some people from using it? • Current church space is pretty awkward for a lot of uses – most flexible space is basement. • <i>Additional ideas Group 4</i> • Feel the bigger question of whether the church building will be included in the development needs to be answered first • Could offer space to a group like Community Justice Initiatives • <i>Additional Ideas Group 5s</i> • Sharing space with another faith community – determine day(s) of the week and a shared understanding of other community use • <i>Additional ideas Group 6</i> • Creative use of spce to minimize parking spots • If worship space is shared space, parking will need to be considered – snow clearing is an issue if we reduce parking
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We had no time to consider additional priorities</i>

Support for the priorities

Not all groups indicated the level of support but for all that did, support was unanimous.