

2013 Annual Meeting: Building our Future Step by Step Narrative
Les Solomon, BOF Chair
Sunday, February 3, 2013
Williamsburg Unitarian Universalists Sanctuary

Building our Future: Step by Step. This is the Board's name for the committee that is beginning to investigate how our vision and mission relate to our facilities needs.

Building our Future starts by reflecting on our past steps and beginning the creative and visionary conversation about what we want to become.

It is only after we have built a vision and built a consensus that we can begin to address the elephant in room—does that future include actual construction of new facilities? And, if so, how and when?

Our story regarding facilities includes steps of various sizes. Some were small and some were big.

- Clearly Home 95 was a giant step. One member for the Home '95 kickoff campaign said: We are building "A central place for the meeting of minds and melding of hearts; a staging base for action to build a better community, not an end in itself but a means to the fulfillment of our covenant." Two years later, in January 1995, more than 200 excited congregants walked from their most recent home at Clara Baker Elementary School to their new home at 3051 Ironbound Road.
- Step 2 was to renovate Fahs and purchase Parker. Even with these changes, there was always the understanding that our home was not complete. Franz Gross helped to author a report in 1993 that said the Fahs House space which will be available is something the congregation can **Live With** but probably not **Grow With.**" I think he was correct.
- In the years that followed, we took many small steps. However, few resulted in action.
 - In 1997, we prepared a detailed vision of what WUU would look like In 10 years. In that picture our campus included the addition of a 2-story Religious Education & library wing.
 - In 2002, another report said that WUU would have a growth of membership, resulting in the construction of a religious education wing & a social hall.
 - In 2006, a report said that "WUU needs better facilities, particularly for Religious Education.
 - 2 years later, an exercise gave the highest ratings for physical expansion with a variety of classes and services offered. As one congregant said, when we

came to WUU we were told that we would soon have more space, now my children are leaving home and they still don't have that promised space.

- Then, in 2009, we moved to Step 3. The Leadership Team, formed a committee to "collect information and develop a process for expansion funding", Their report said "We are in a crisis on space! Our WUU mission is endangered. The Sunday Service itself is served but not the activities surrounding it." Their work still serves as our most comprehensive report on the severity of the crisis and it detailed recommendations about the next steps.
- In its role as congregational visionaries, the Board has taken several preliminary steps to address this crisis.
 - First, Reverend Hart met with congregants and leadership groups to assess our readiness to address these needs. She made 4 recommendations, including dreaming, strategic planning, staffing research, and stewardship. Her recommendations resulted in the following actions.
 - Since stewardship is so critical to the success of our financial future, in 2011, the board initiated a stewardship charter and appointed Chris Faia as chair. We also began work on the Strategic Plan.
 - Last year, we presented the strategic plan and used it as a guide for leadership action.
 - And we initiated a Facilities charter and the Board asked me to chair its work. Our committee (please stand) consists of Linda Lane-Hamilton, Roger Guernsey, Tracy Lord, Dave Neiman and ex-offical member Jennifer Ryu.
- So that brings us to our next step—Research. It includes cottage meetings this summer, assessing community needs, and reporting to the Board in the fall. Already we have heard the following: (Utube 9 minutes) Thank you to each of the members in the movie who spoke from their hearts with such passion. We want to hear from many, many more of you.
- Let's begin that conversation right now by using the post-it on your agenda to write down one word that captures your primary thought about Building our Future. Please post these on the sheets at the back of the sanctuary as you leave today so we can make a word collage to share with you.

Thank you!

This is the collage created from the words that Annual Meeting Attendees wrote after the presentation (see above).

extended-reach
community-building
very-informative
affirming/worthwhile ideas
very-good
advocacy-to-be
useful thoughtful
connecting worthwhile
interesting networking
competent
good-start
informative
inspiring
beneficial
welcoming
intrinsic
informational stimulating
camaraderie sharing
supercaladoucex
hopeful connections