



Williamsburg
Unitarian Universalists



Social and Food Service Functions Small Group Meeting Notes

February 27, 2014

Narthex Space

- Currently the sanctuary and narthex are the “social hall”
- Very narrow, funnels folks in, but is a bottleneck – look at Presbyterian church on Jamestown Rd. – wide open commons space – wide, welcoming, very accessible
- Acoustic problems – can’t hear anything when in narthex
- How do we enter space, connect to everything else – some of current narthex functions may need to relocate – where does new kitchen go, and how to recoup space left from vacating existing kitchen?
- The overall flow – look at Hellenic center – flow is excellent, connection between social hall and into sanctuary, kitchen at rear
- Narthex is an entrance, not an exit – two separate locations?
- **Flow is key – how to get people in when others are leaving – between services or functions – if everyone is coming out at once, there’s nowhere to stop without creating a bottleneck**
- Looks narrow and unwelcoming
- Need more space to greet and welcome visitors
- Need multiple exits from sanctuary to narthex and other spaces – maybe existing narthex becomes wider, then becomes a commons area – coffee out here, social activities, receptions – larger conversations without having to relocate to large social space located remotely or elsewhere
- If social hall and large kitchen are elsewhere, there still needs to be some kitchen space for refreshments, etc. – also, if Church of God is here, and WUU is meeting at social hall, how do we accommodate both or all three functions with multiple kitchen-type spaces?
- Acoustical separation between kitchen and social/worship spaces
- Tables, easels, etc., circumscribe the narthex now
- Successfully allow concurrent use of space
- Signage and display that pulls people to informational areas – i.e., a “kiosk” idea – visitors need to be able to see what WUU is about, outreach, information – also for WUU members to see information about events, etc.
 - Pathway out front is used currently
 - Clear, visible membership welcome spot – check-in point, welcome, name tag
- Clear religious education site – new members with children don’t know where to go when they first arrive
- Not just an entrance for Sunday worship – must be a doorway into WUU and all of its activities and functions – “this is who we are”

- By locating offices closer to narthex/entrance, front door can then be open and church can be accessible all of the time
- Narthex could be “hub” to social spaces, worship, education, and offices/administration rather than the main social gathering area
- Consider the impact of having only one main entrance if WUU is having concurrent events with two separate groups – a way to rent space that’s lockable or limited access independent from the rest of the complex
- Coat spaces – convenient but not in the way

Fellowship/Social

- Social hall could become chapel, overnight room for lock-ins, adaptable for start-up space during week or “off” times, flexible and acoustically sound – don’t want it to look too “basic,” i.e., low ceilings, etc.
- Seating for 150-200 – auction, large dinners (current sanctuary seats 125 for auction, with tables, displays spaces, auction items)
- Will sanctuary be empty when fellowship hall is built? Keep non-food related functions to sanctuary, worship-related functions here
- Think about combining spaces to preserve space and conserve systems, not waste space – WUU values
- Commercially viable space? – competitive with other reception halls locally
 - Pro: increases financial support and growth
 - Con: may limit ability for WUU to be able to use
 - Pro: could donate use of space for outreach programs
 - There’s a delta between what WUU needs and what would make income
 - Mission is to provide space for all – not to make a fundraising wing
 - Studies of market/need, ROI
- Large room that can handle 10 to 15 tables, 10 people per table
 - Seating for 150 minimum, with table and chair configuration
 - Raised level, platform for seating, multifunctional
 - Ability to separate into at least two smaller spaces, acoustically, visually
 - Could one of the smaller spaces be the small chapel? Meditation, children’s chapel space? Seat 30 to 40 (small chapel at Bruton Parish or UMC?) – dedicated space, or multi-use space? Explore...
 - Kitchen that has access to each of the two smaller spaces independently
 - Kitchen that is acoustically separated from spaces
 - Hallway that allows separate access to each room, kitchen, storage, etc.
 - Storage room for tables, chairs, gives flexibility of configuration
 - Audio-visual accommodations for room(s)
- Chapel for meditation, sacred dedicated space – feels different from social hall
- Connection to outdoors – ability to have social functions spill over to outside spaces

Kitchen

- Kitchen is still too small, even though it was “upscaled” during initial design
- Needs to accommodate more people
- Cabinets on rollers that go under wall cabinets – flexibility
- Leave kitchen where it is?
- Closets for coffee – kitchenettes – carts can move items from kitchen to other areas
- Mix of commercial catering kitchen and “people kitchen”
- Serving window with ability to secure it – serve directly from kitchen
 - Kitchen at downtown UMC similar
 - Option for flow of people on both sides of serving line to speed up serving – folks serve themselves – configure both ways
- Kitchen to accommodate educational spaces – WALT use, for example – instructional cooking
- Equipment needs:
 - Reach-in cooler and freezer – large occasions, outreach support (i.e., homeless support preparation, storing frozen foods) – multiple refrigerators (2) 20 cf
 - Triple sink
 - Easily cleanable equipment, services
 - Cooking – requires commercial hood
 - Preference is for stoneware and glasses – commercial dishwasher
 - Icemaker
- Vegetarians – crock pots – lots of receptacles
- Catering - access for caterers from drive aisle, prep areas, storage of carts
- Pantry
- Storage, plus temporary staging area for food, supplies
- Currently, folks cook at home and bring it in
- Coffee for up to 250 people
- Drawers, pull-out shelves, washer/dryer for linens?

Other Thoughts and Ideas

- Fahs could be upgraded for small group social events – comfortable furniture, more home-like
- How to connect it all together, flow is key
- Art center – space for music, drawing/studio groups
- Virginia Center for Justice – office spaces, Sunday meeting spaces
- Daycare (international?)
- How to tie spaces to various missions of WUU – flexibility, multiple uses/options
- Showers available
- Ability to go to other foundations for funding with designs/options
- Fully handicapped accessible, parking, etc.
- Storage enables flexibility
- Flooring – how to maintain, how to have durable, cleanable surfaces
- Social spaces – display walls – but how to dress up same space when there’s a formal function?