

Progress Report of Parish Centre Development in Fall River

My name is Jim McAllister.

Last Fall I spoke to you about the possibility of building a new hall. I mentioned we were exploring new ideas on building and financing the structure. At that time, I told you that the time was right to move forward with the long overdue construction. That remains true today. What I did not tell you at the time was that the idea around building and financing began with a discussion over coffee with a friend.

So here we are ...

Since then we have been busy primarily with financing considerations, building size and uses as well as location for the new structure and parking for approximately 100 vehicles. So bear with me while I tell you what we determined and what is proposed.

St. Rose of Lima Church sits on eight acres of prime real estate here in the heart of Fall River. We have satisfied ourselves that approximately five acres of that land is surplus to our current and anticipated future needs. Over the past months we have been working with engineers, architects and real estate companies to determine market demand and value of the surplus land. We have also been working with personnel at HRM Municipal Planning on necessary processes. We want to thank our own Counsellor Cathy for assistance in expediting those discussions.

In our deliberations on surplus assets, we realized that a strong business case existed to provide room in the new building for our administration offices, Religious education and storage. To accomplish this, sale of the Jamieson Street Glebe house would need to be part of the overall plan. This sale would happen after a new building is completed and ready to set up our administration.

So what would a new building look like and where would it be situated?

The Current Proposal is that the structure would be located in what is now the parking lot and attached to our Church by way of a covered breezeway

to the doors entering the Day Chapel. The building would accommodate 140 persons seated at tables and several times that, seated theatre style. The proposed building would not only contain a hall but also a stage, a bar, a commercial kitchen, washrooms, mechanical room etc. Included would be administration offices and storage. Our Pastor and Deacon will finally have a confidential office for the difficult conversations they are too often called to have. Parking for 100 spaces would be located at the current site of Mitchell Hall which would be removed and in the portion of the existing parking lot not needed for the Parish Centre.

On the financing side real estate brokers and appraisers and other available information lead us to believe, with an abundance of cautious optimism that sales proceeds from the sale of the surplus 5 acres of land plus the Glebe House will be sufficient to cover a large portion of our cost to construct the proposed new centre.

We have a ways to go and more detailed planning and design to take place before there are shovels in the ground. Maybe mid year 2026. Completion is projected for two years from now plus or minus. We are moving forward on schedule.

Before I close I have an ask ... This is a large project for our parish with less than a half dozen parishioners involved so far. This will require an approach of "All Hands on Deck"! It is a large commitment for a few but would be a much smaller commitment for many. We are doing God's work and really need your help. Please take a look at your time and try to squeeze out some time for this project and St André Bessette Parish. I promise not to overwhelm or overload you. Members of the Knights or CWL will help direct you to Phil Francis, Paul Miller or myself. You can also contact Father Gerald or Deacon Dan. We will also set up a project email so you can offer your services and skills into the project pipeline. Next week, look for it in the bulletin or on the website. It will be ParishCentreProject@standrebessette.net.

In closing, I hope you now have a piece of the growing excitement for our Parish.

LET'S NOW GO AND BUILD US A PARISH CENTRE.