

April 15, 2024.

Minutes of Special meeting with Pacific Mountain Region Council

Guests: Rev. Treena Duncan, Don Evans

Brechin Council: Gloria Le Gal (chairperson), John Bullas, Linda Braid, Marilyn Huffman, Rob Russell, Bruce Wilson, Linda Wilson, Kathryn Baverstock, Anne Manikel, Eileen Carolan (secretary), Keith Allen, Grace Skomorowski, Rev. Tif Bradford- McNaughton, Blaine Wilkins

Redevelopment Team: Randy Manikel, Val Neilson, Kathy Torhjelm

Gloria opened the meeting by reading “Predicting the Future” from *Who Ordered This Truckload of Dung* by Ajahn Brahm.

Rev. Tif lead an opening prayer.

Don Evans explained that the legal documents to transfer ownership of the “airspace parcel” back to the church are ready to go. The airspace parcel refers to the church building not the land which has a single registration number for the entire building and is held by the Community Renewal Society.

Rev. Treena Duncan provided an overview of the history of this project. A change in funding model was required after the developer declared insolvency. The new funding model does not allow for surplus funds to be directed to Brechin. To avoid foreclosure and by BC Housing which would have resulted in loss of the building, PMRC paid the 3-million-dollar shortfall in funds that was due to cost overruns.

While PMRC vows to continue to find ways to provide additional funds to Brechin, Rev. Treena proposed that the transfer of ownership is contingent on Brechin Council agreeing to remove the annuity from the agreement. Rev. Treena stated, “We still have a strong interest in finding money and will act in good faith to find additional income for Brechin.” Cell/ telecom towers were considered as a revenue stream but have not been realized yet – uncertainty about when this will move forward. When the Lakeview church (Vancouver) redevelopment moves forward there may be more funds available.

Answers to questions posed and comments:

- All property in the UCC is held in trust by the trustees. As such we are responsible for its maintenance and use. If a congregation closes the property reverts to the UCC.
- When the funding arrangement changed, and BC Housing put foreclosure notice on the property nothing was put in writing to amend the 2017 agreement with Brechin.
 - Brechin was given verbal notice that the annuity was no longer guaranteed by BC Housing and that PMR was trying to find ways to provide the annuity.

- Once the transfer of the air space parcel is completed, Brechin will own the building free and clear. If we decide to move, and carry on in a different location, we (trustees) can sell the building and use the proceeds.
- Due to our dire financial situation (reserves deleted and revenue and expenses both increasing) we were counting on outside assistance.
- The lot/land is owned by the Community Renewal Society of the UCC
- BC housing has filed legal action against Colliers and the contractor. Brechin will only receive 8% of any judgement (based on our air space parcel).
- The redevelopment was sold to the congregation based on the annuity that would keep us strong in the future. This is difficult to let go of. We have been good stewards of our finances. Our Property Team has taken on building maintenance with little outside help. We have increased our rental income, but we continue to struggle financially.
- Rev. Treena commented that PMRC will still try to find a miracle but will not be contractually obligated. “We will do what we can to fulfill this promise. For me to be responsible in my role we can’t give you \$3 million and then you sue us for the annuity.”
- The air space parcel was adjusted to reduce the budget shortfall from 5 to 4 million. This was done by working with BC Housing to allocate some of Brechin’s space as amenities for the housing side which reduced the airspace parcel from 10 – 8% (actually 7.9%). The land appraisal was increased to 1.5 million. The final result was to reduce the shortfall to \$3 million.
 - Shared utilities, landscaping etc. are paid based on the 8% airspace parcel.
- Rev. Treena agreed that she could write a letter stating that there continues to be a commitment to providing funds similar to the annuity payments but that it could not be included in the final agreement. “We’re really going to work to try to find that income, we just can’t guarantee it.”
 - “Looking at your situation you should be successful. If finance and stewardship need support, we (UCC) have people who can “get new eyes on it”
- BC Conference approached Brechin. We entered into this plan on the strength of 3% back. We had a legal contract.
 - Rev. Treena commented that we could take on the \$3million mortgage and then the annuity would be paid however the annuity would not be enough to service the mortgage.
- Status of other redevelopment projects:
 - Como Lake – annuity has been cancelled
 - Brighthouse – church closed and funds from sale redirected to other churches including Brechin
 - Lakeview – currently no financing to proceed.
- Need to show financial ability to support minister for 3 years
 - Rev. Treena feels Brechin should call a full time minister

- She pledged to work with Rev. Gail Miller to assure that this is possible- even said that PMRC could offer a guarantee.
- Brechin will only receive 8-10% of the award from the lawsuit against Colliers and the contractor. It is expected that most of this will be used to cover legal costs.
- Cell/ telecom tower was structured to provide \$30,000 annually with an increase over time.
 - It is not possible to say when this might happen.
- We have a commitment to provide amenity space to the residents – The residents make a request and Brechin complies if space is available ie not rented.
- Brechin Stewardship and Finance Team welcomes consultation with UCC.
 - Treena suggested applying for Provision grants for short term projects. Rev. Tif pointed out that these funds do not cover core staff or fixtures. Rev. Treena commented that this is being reviewed by the PMRC executive.
- Thank you to Rev. Treena and Don for coming to the meeting and answering questions.
 - Transition funding of \$167,500 was intended to support us for 18 – 24 months while we were without a church building. The transition lasted 5 years and as a result we used \$250,000 of our reserve funds.
 - Would the PMRC revisit the transitional fund allocation so that it reflects the 5-year period before we moved into the new facility?
 - Will PMRC agree to increase the transition funding as part of the agreement to transfer ownership of the airspace parcel back to Brechin without an annuity.
 - Rev. Treena agreed to “speak to Gail and PMRC Executive Committee”. “The only place it can come from is capital funds.”
- Installation of Cell towers take a lot of time due to numerous permits that are required – if and when this moves forward it will not happen quickly.
- Thanks to Rev. Treena and Don for their work on Brechins’ behalf.
- Rev. Treena “We want this congregation to proceed, otherwise, what is it all for?”

Rev. Tif offered a closing prayer.

Gloria Le Gal, Chair

Eileen Carolan, Secretary