



St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

"at the corner of Suffolk and Norfolk"

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January, 2010

At the 2008 AGM, a motion was passed requesting that the Board of Managers investigate the feasibility of a circular driveway on the south lawn to facilitate access to the secondary Norfolk St. door for individuals with mobility difficulties. A subsequent engineering study indicated that such an initiative would compromise the stability of the foundation of the Christian Education wing. In an effort to improve accessibility to the church, however, an array of other possibilities was subsequently investigated.

With the aid of donated professional services from several people with no connection to St. Andrew's, planning committee members spent an enormous amount of time investigating various alternatives and pulling together what proved to be the only really viable proposal, for presentation to the 2009 AGM. At that meeting, two motions were passed. These were:

- that the proposed plan to construct accessible parking spaces adjacent to the south end of the Christian Education wing and provide ramp access to the nearest entrance, be accepted and executed.
- that no building begin until all of the funding for the estimated cost is in place.

In the period since the 2009 AGM, minor modifications have been made to the plan...primarily to change the orientation of the proposed parking spaces.... and economies have been proposed which will reduce the cost from the previously estimated \$50,000 to something slightly under \$40,000. In addition to the presentation made to the 2009 AGM, subsequent presentations have been made to both the Board and Session, paper and CD ROM versions of the proposal have been available for consultation in the Church office for some time, and an enlarged version is soon to be posted in the Church Hall.

Concerned individuals continue to offer alternative suggestions; however, without exception, these had all been investigated by the planning committee before the accepted proposal was made to the 2009 AGM. For further clarification, these are listed with explanations at the end of this letter.

The Board of Managers is of the opinion that this initiative is ready to proceed. It lacks only fundraising leadership. The proposal has been that a fundraising committee should consist of two members each from Session, the Board and the congregation at large, with a Session member as Chair. Two volunteers from the Board will be identified as soon as a Chair is in place.

In the meantime, while this deliberation has been taking place, the City of Guelph has begun reconstruction of Norfolk St., in front of the Church. As part of that project, the two sets of concrete steps and the short driveway, all of which gave access to the front of the church from the road level, were removed. Initially, there was no plan to replace them; however, as the result of considerable persistence on the part of Board members, the City has now agreed to install a wheelchair ramp in the boulevard, immediately in front of the main front door of the church.

It has now been suggested by some members of the congregation that this ramp might preclude the need for accessible parking elsewhere on the church property. The City's plan is for parking spaces on the east side of Norfolk St., so it would be possible to deliver passengers with reduced mobility directly to the wheelchair ramp, allowing them to access through the level entrance at the secondary Norfolk St. door.

It should be noted that one of the priorities of the planning committee of the Board, throughout their deliberations, was to keep users of the accessible parking system sheltered from the elements as much as possible by finding a plan with the shortest possible outdoor distance from vehicle to building. Individuals arriving at the front of the church would need to travel the length of the sidewalk to the secondary door. The distance from the proposed accessible parking spaces to the south end of the Christian Education wing is much shorter.

After considerable discussion at its most recent meeting, there was consensus among Board members that a final decision on the issue of accessible parking should be requested at the 2010 AGM on February 28. The questions will be:

- Should we abandon plans to build accessible parking spaces adjacent to the Christian Education wing, in light of the City's plan to provide wheelchair access from Norfolk St.?
- Should we proceed with the approved plan to create accessible parking spaces adjacent to the Christian Education wing?

If the decision is to pursue the plan approved in 2009, volunteers and nominees will be invited in an effort to expedite the initiative to raise the necessary funds to allow construction to proceed.

Under the 2009 motion, the initiative cannot go forward until the funds are raised. Volunteers are necessary to make that happen.

In the next few weeks, please take the time to inform yourself of the details of this situation if you have not already done so, and please make every effort to be present at the AGM on February 28, so that a final decision on this initiative can be confirmed, and, if appropriate, next steps can begin.

Thank you

Virginia Gillham, Chair,
Board of Managers

ACCESSIBLE PARKING ALTERNATIVES INVESTIGATED AND CONCERNS RAISED, 2008, 2009, 2010

No work will begin until the estimated required funding of about \$40,000 has been identified. At the moment there is about \$6,000 in hand. The balance will be raised from targetted donations.

All reasonable cost-cutting measures have been factored into the planning. There have been discussions about having the manse garage taken down by volunteer help. The suggested heating coils in the ramp have been removed from the planning, although their usefulness would be considerable in light of our winters and the cost of snow removal.

An exhaustive search for funding assistance has taken place. Elected officials and a number of granting agencies, both governmental and non-governmental were approached; however this particular initiative does not appear to qualify for any of them. The parameters of granting agencies have been significantly tightened recently in light of the vicissitudes of the economy.

The suggestion of paving a curved driveway on the front lawn adjacent to the secondary Norfolk St. door was investigated; however, an engineering study indicates that such an initiative would compromise the stability of the foundation of the Christian Education wing.

Paving the parking lot would be a much more expensive venture than the current proposal. To do so would require that drainage be installed to meet City standards and connect with City sewers. Informed opinion is that it is unlikely it could be done for under \$100,000.

A chair lift on the back stairs would continue to require that the handicapped users traverse the length of the sidewalk from the parking lot to the door.

A ramp at the Suffolk Street door would need to comply with City and engineering standards of length in relation to angle of rise. This subject has been investigated in the past, and it has been determined that the necessary length would be greater than the distance between the door and the street, thus requiring a multi-part ramp with one or more switchbacks....an expensive and difficult option.

Accessible parking spots located on the street, by the City, are public. That is, there could be no guarantee that they would be reserved for St. Andrew's users. There are other churches in the immediate vicinity. Their members or any other individuals with accessible parking stickers would have equal access to such spaces.

All of the suggestions from members of the congregation have been investigated. In each case it was determined for reasons of cost, building code, engineering obstacles, or some combination of those issues, that none of the other options was feasible. The current proposal is the only one that addresses the problems while at the same time minimizing both cost and engineering difficulties.

The issue of the location of removed snow, and the issue of the possible impediment to wheel chairs of the coat racks in the hall, will be addressed, and acceptable solutions will be identified.