

BUILDING OUR FUTURE: Beyond Ourselves



May 3rd Forum
Viola Property Decision

Opening Words from Jan Richardson



...Open the doors as far as they will go
Draw on the strength of the stones beneath you
Ground yourself in a firm sense of who you are
Stand as a beacon welcoming the next seeker
And shine far beyond the lintel and sill
Open all that you are
Heighten and deepen your connections to the world around you
Broaden your definition of neighbor
Grow into the largest target for grace that you can muster
And pray to become a gateway for even greater love and compassion...

April 12th Forum



At the April 12th Property forum, the Building Our Future Team shared that they were in 100% agreement about the 3 properties that they felt should be on our shortlist.

- ❖ Donor Property
- ❖ Viola Road Property
- ❖ Eastwood Property (a distant third)

As part of that forum, we gathered in groups and spent time sharing our thoughts and questions.

Common themes from the April 12 Forum Group Discussions



Visibility and access of both properties – Viola property received more favorable comments regarding visibility. There were several comments regarding lack of visibility on the donor property. There were also many comments about public transit access to Viola is better.

Connection to nature – Both sites were valued for their connection to nature. There were also specific comments about the trees and ravine at Viola as being attractive.

Accessibility concerns - There were concerns about access to the donor site, and that there is less level land there for building (as compared to some level spots on the Viola property).

Concerns were also shared regarding the busy roads near the Viola property, the cost of liability insurance for a larger property, and annexation costs

Common questions from the April 12 Forum Group Discussions



- How does the Decorah Edge concern impact our ability to build and grow at either property?
- Which property allows us the best opportunity to grow in 10, 20, 50 years or more?
- Does one property offer more opportunities for community involvement/use?
- What solar/wind energy opportunities are available on each site?
- How does each site impact construction costs? (Including a comment that the architect's input is the most important voice in this decision.)

Moving Forward with the Viola Property



Based on congregational input during discussions and forums, it was clear that the Viola property is highly valued by many members and that it deserved our serious consideration.

Right after the April 12th forum we discovered that there was another offer on the Viola property. Based on what we were hearing from the congregation, the Building Our Future Team and the Board felt that we needed to do whatever we could to preserve the Viola property as an option for our next church home.

Making an offer



Several days of negotiations began with much back and forth, and we were eventually successful in obtaining an accepted offer.

- ❖ May 10 closing date
- ❖ Decorah Edge contingency
- ❖ Loan with building as collateral through F&M Bank

Warp Speed & A Team Effort



Everyone pulled together to gather the information needed to help us make a good decision:

- ❖ Locus Architecture provided us with an analysis of both properties
- ❖ WSE Massey Engineering & Surveying completed a Decorah Edge delineation
- ❖ Colby Verdegan completed soil borings to determine the soil bearing capacity of areas that had signs of construction fill
- ❖ Loan approval from F&M bank
- ❖ Schedule a May 4th City Pre-Development Meeting

Architect Report Notes

Donor Property



- ❖ Parking area - small (somewhat) level area, with a predominant slope of 12%-15%, requiring a great deal of earth moving to create a large enough parking area "Flattish" area represents a fraction of the area needed for 150 cars
- ❖ Earth moving will impact existing plantings on the site, which include fewer mature trees than the Viola site
- ❖ Site access is through a residential neighborhood with a small spur road.
- ❖ Future additions or expansions would be more difficult on this site than the other, dependent on the presence of the Decorah Edge (on either site)
- ❖ Of the two sites, this site would be quieter and not very visible to the public.

Architect Report Notes

Viola Property



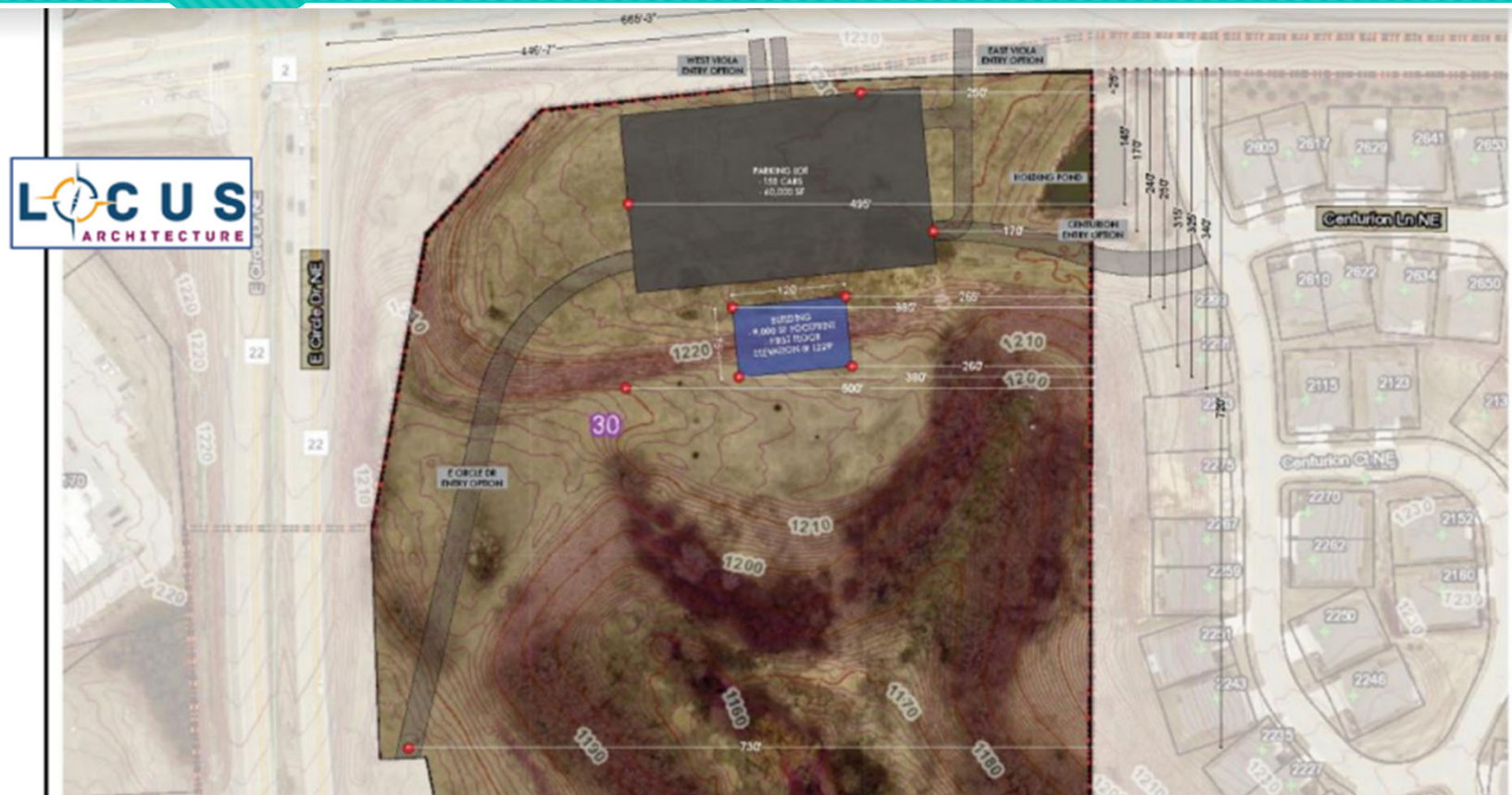
- ❖ A large flat parking pad at the north edge of the property, across from Century High School on Viola Road, with a “walk-out” suitable building pad directly south of the parking area, overlooking a deep ravine with unbeatable solar or passive solar potential
- ❖ This upper building pad is likely of a suitable size for future additions and/or expansions in years to come
- ❖ The north parking pad could be accessed from driveways off both Circle (Northbound traffic) & Centurion Court, the road that accesses the housing development on the east side of the property.
- ❖ Road noise is definitely noticeable and consistent, as was birdsong on the day we visited
- ❖ The intersection affords the site a “branding” or “broadcasting” presence the other site does not – while still giving the congregation access to a kind of urban wilderness

Architect Report Conclusions



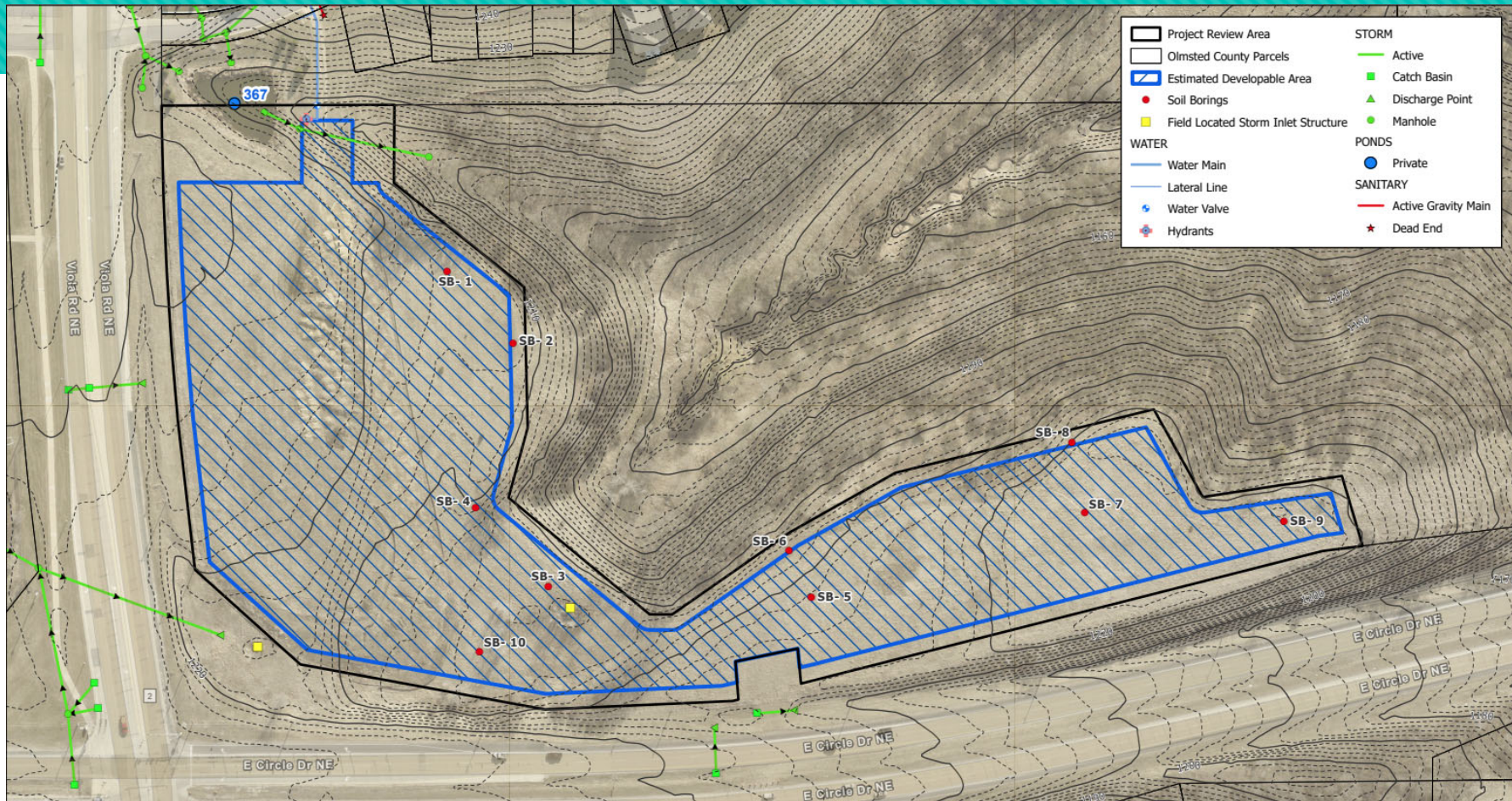
The report from Locus Architects states: "In our opinion, the Viola site is a better candidate for site development IF the soil bearing capacity proves to be possible and the Decorah Edge is not a severe restriction to using the northern 400' of the site."







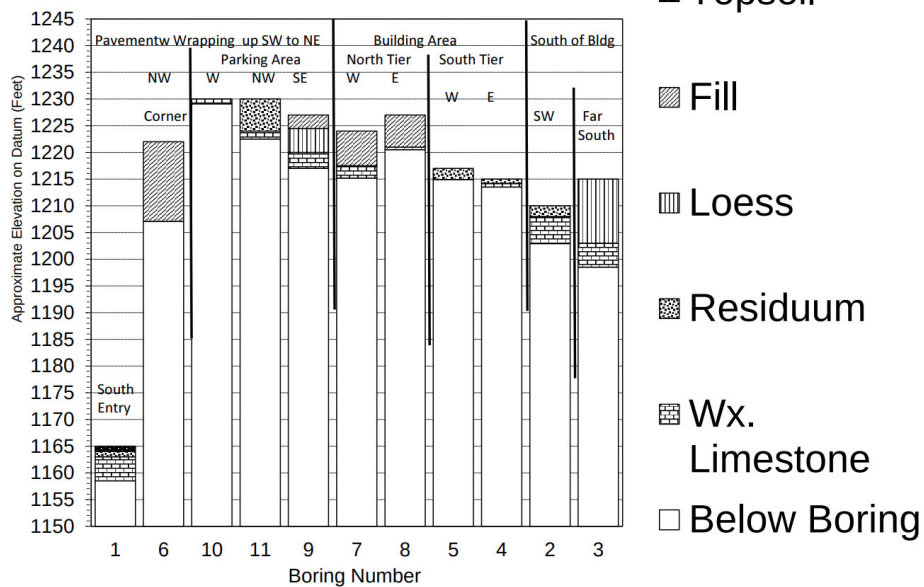
Estimated Developable Area



Soil & Rock Suitability for Building



Site investigations show that the site is buildable and meets our needs.



Financing the Viola Property



A loan from F&M Community Bank has been approved. The terms of the loan are:

- The current building serves as collateral for the loan.
- 5.95% fixed 5-year rate, 5-year balloon, 25-year amortization.
- Monthly payments estimated to be \$2885. Those payments have been included in the next year's budget recommendations.
- When we are ready to take out a construction loan, the balance can be "rolled over" into the construction loan.



May 4: Pre-Development Meeting with the City



“The purpose of the pre-development meeting is to advise and inform applicants of the procedural requirements for a new development project, identify project related issues and exchange information.” (City Pre-Development Application)

Meetings are attended by representatives from City Planning and Zoning, Public Works, RPU, Park & Rec, Fire, private utility companies (i.e. phone, cable, gas). Staff will provide feedback on the project and identify any compliance issues.

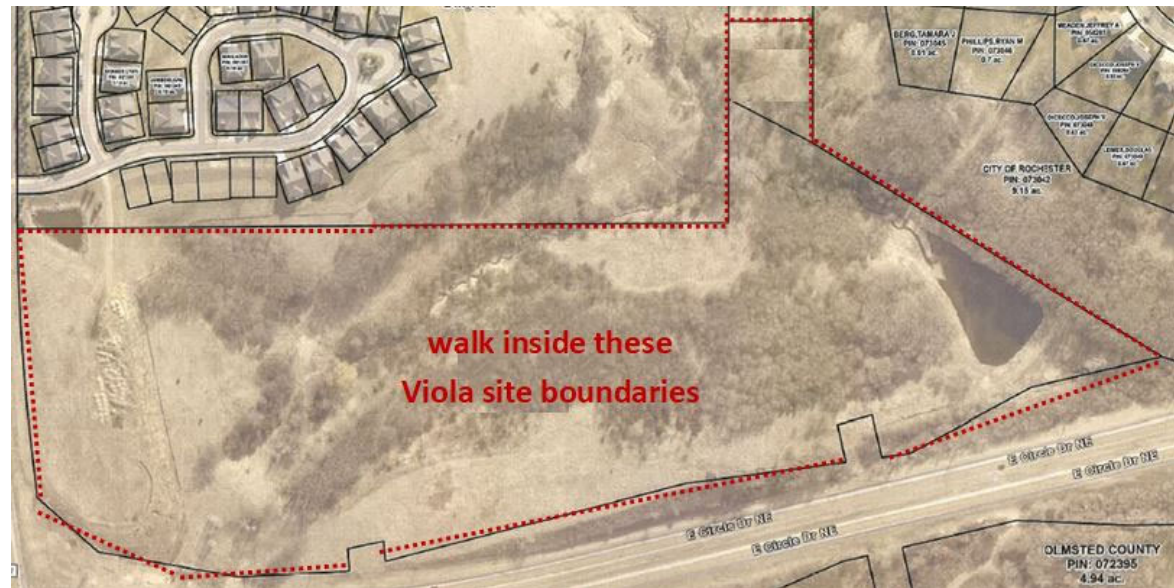
This meeting will be held prior to finalizing the purchase of the site and it is expected that this meeting will not reveal any serious concerns with the Viola site. If something were to come up in that meeting, the Board and the Building Our Future team will discuss how to proceed.

Seeing the Viola Property



We encourage you to drive by the Viola Road property to see it, if you haven't already done so. If you choose to explore the property, please keep in mind that we do not yet own the property, and we require that you complete a liability release available on the Church Building Our Future site.

In addition, there is drone video footage property on the Building Our Future site.





BOF/Board Recommendation



Whereas

- ❖ the Viola property aligns with our values of inclusion and justice because of its easy access and visibility;
- ❖ the Viola property aligns with our value of a connection to nature as this property offers the potential of preserved wilderness;
- ❖ the Viola property is the preferred property choice for the Building Our Future Team;
- ❖ the Viola property is preferred property choice by Locus Architects;

the Board of Directors unanimously recommends the Viola property as the best property choice for our next church.

Voting



Today's forum will kick off a church property vote that will run from today, Wednesday May 3 through 1:00 PM on Sunday May 7. In order to move forward, a quorum of at least 30% of the church members must vote, and of those voting 51% or more must be *in favor* of the Viola Road location.

*Per our bylaws, those who have been members for at least 60 days are eligible to vote. If you became a member on or before **March 9, 2023**, you are eligible to vote. Please contact the office if you have questions or need verification of your membership.*

If the congregation votes to approve the Viola Road property as our next church home, we will finalize the purchase of the property on May 10.

Ballot



2023 Building Our Future: Beyond Ourselves May Property Vote

The Building Our Future Team and the Board of Directors recommends the Viola Road property as the best choice for our future church location.

I, a member of First Unitarian Universalist Church, vote on the recommendation:

☐

YES, *we should purchase the Viola Road property for our future church location.*

☐

NO, *we should **not** purchase the Viola Road property for our future church location.*

Member's Full Name: _____

Names will be used to confirm that votes have been cast by eligible voting members of the Congregation

Next Steps



- ❖ Complete the Congregational Property Vote (Wednesday, May 4th – Sunday, May 7th, 1:00 PM)
- ❖ Close on the Viola Property on May 10th (assuming a Congregational Vote of approval and a City Pre-Development meeting that reveals no serious concerns with the property).
- ❖ Begin the design process with Locus Architecture. Locus will guide us in the process of gathering congregational input and they recommend that this be completed this summer (June, July and August). We encourage you to stay engaged so that you are informed about the building design process this summer
- ❖ Sale of the current property. The realtor has estimated it could take up to a year to sell the current property. The proceeds of the sale are important in guiding the capital campaign and what we can afford to build. We have not yet determined the timeline for this, but the current building could be put on the market soon if the Viola purchase is completed.

Questions?



Closing Words



We have given ourselves a job to do, the likes of which few of us have ever experienced before, and one which holds such great promise for the future of Unitarian Universalism in Rochester.

The present and the future have demanded this project of us. We have been the heirs and beneficiaries of plans laid by others. Now it is our turn.

Vernon Curry, UU Minister
1966 "As We Plan to Build" Message to Congregation