



Our Mission: To be a compassionate, welcoming community that nurtures spiritual growth and practices justice

Q & A: Congregational questions, suggestions & comments with responses from the Building Our Future Team

The following questions, comments and suggestions have been shared by members and friends of the congregation via the online form, at informational meetings, and during property tours of the potential NE land gift. The congregational remarks are listed in chronological order with the most recent just below. When responses are necessitated by questions, the responses from the Building Our Future Team follow the individual questions.

29 Comment submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 2023-04

Yesterday (4/26) on my daily walk, since I don't live far from either the Viola Rd or the donor sites, I took a look at both. I'll preface this by saying that I don't have a particular preference for one site over the other, and have attempted to give an objective analysis for each site, both pros and cons.

DONOR SITE:

PROS:

- It's a beautiful site with beautiful views overlooking a part of Rochester
- Although you can hear road noise from E. Circle Drive when standing on this site, the road noise is low level and mainly background white noise in the distance, which makes this site pretty quiet and peaceful, especially for outdoor activities and for sitting in the memorial garden or any garden that would be created as part of our church if this site were chosen.
- Trees and other vegetation surrounding the lot and wildlife (I saw deer on the lot), meaning that there is the opportunity to have both the flora and the fauna.
- Being away from a main thoroughfare (ie, E. Circle Drive), it's more private, in the same way that our current church location is, which could be an advantage for those wanting to sit in the memorial garden or other gardens without feeling like passersby are looking at them. And, the advantage of being away from a main thoroughfare is that there aren't challenges of dealing with high traffic volumes into and out of either the site, itself, or the StoneHedge development.
- Once you enter into the StoneHedge development, the site is pretty much a straight shot once you turn off the main entrance road (Stone Hedge Drive) and go down any of the side streets off of that main entrance road. And, maybe signs could be put up directing people.

CONS:

- Abuts very closely on a residential area whose street/streets aren't heavily traveled. This means that there would be an uptick in traffic and traffic noise for residents on those streets closest to the church, something they may have an issue with. In our current location, even though the church abuts on a private residential

street, there's more traffic that flows up and down Walden Lane than does on Stone Pointe and Stone Crest Lanes. I had walked to this site several times over the past 3 years before the donor had made us an offer and before I was aware that there was discussion of moving out of our current church building, so am fairly familiar with traffic flow where the donor site is.

— Entrance to/exit from the site may be limited to just one, depending how the lot is developed. And, even if there are two entrances/exits, there could be some traffic flow challenges in and out when many people are leaving or entering the site at the same time. And, this also has potential negative impact for occupants of those homes closest to the site and those entrances.

— A church built on this site would not be visible from the road in the same way our current church isn't visible from the road. So, without the visibility, people who aren't familiar with our church wouldn't even know it exists. And, for people new to our church, having the building in a not very visible spot could be off-putting if they feel like they can't find the site easily.

— Noise from church activities held outdoors (eg Maypole Sunday, Chalice camp, RE activities). may be disturbing to the neighbors given the close proximity of either the church building, parking lot, or landscaped areas to the homes that abut the donor site. I'm not sure that this is any bigger an issue than what currently exists at our current location since there are houses near the current church building and parking lot, and I've never heard that neighbors have complained (but, then again, I likely wouldn't be privy to this information). But, it's certainly something to consider.

VIOLA RD SITE:

PROS:

— While there are homes on the fringes of this site, it doesn't run through the neighborhood, meaning that access to the site isn't directly through a residential neighborhood, so would have little-to-no impact on the nearby residential areas.

— A bit of flexibility and possibilities as to location of entrances/exits into and out of the site since they would only be accessed from main thoroughfares and not residential streets.

— This site has high visibility because it is close to frequently traveled roads (ie, E. Circle Dr. and Viola Rd), which not only makes it easy to find, but also increases awareness in the community of our existence.

— With scheduled construction of a roundabout near this site in the near future, current exit problems and safety issues at an exit from the site on to Viola Rd that currently allow left turns and crossing over multiple lanes onto Viola Rd in order to head toward E. Circle Drive would be resolved since those exiting the site at Viola Rd could only make a right turn and then go through the roundabout to safely head toward E. Circle Dr.

— Church activities (eg Maypole Sunday, Chalice camps, RE activities) held outdoors wouldn't disturb those in the nearby neighborhood(s) because there are main thoroughfares that would effectively absorb the noise from our activities. Plus, there is more possibility, because of the physical properties and layout of the site, to conduct these activities away from the nearby residential areas surrounding this site.

CONS:

— Road noise, particularly from E. Circle Drive at certain times. While traffic on Sunday mornings along E. Circle Dr is lighter than during the week and there isn't as much noise as there is during the week, it is still fairly noisy because of the site's proximity to two well-traveled roads. But, I also assume that this would be addressed both by landscaping on and around the site and also by building codes (ie, insulation and window types and R-values) that require energy efficiency and conservation.

QUESTION: Can noise level measurements be taken at the site to determine what the actual road noise levels at this site are? I believe that there may still be someone in the city who can do these noise measurements.

— NOTE: This is mainly just a heads up since it shouldn't be an issue on a regular basis and probably also not to those inside the church during a weekday: There is a tornado siren on a pole on the edge of the Century HS property at the corner of E. Circle Dr. and Viola Rd. The siren, which sounds not only when there's a tornado, but also on those Wednesday mornings when the city tests the sirens, is exceedingly and painfully loud for anyone who happens to be outside at the time the sirens go off (I'm specifically thinking of Chalice camp outdoor activities and noise exposure for kids and adults involved in the camp). I suspect that it wouldn't be an issue for those inside the church at those times. From what I could tell, the siren mechanism seems to rotate in various directions as it sounds, including toward the potential church site.

— Not much privacy on the site when outdoor activities are taking place (ie, high visibility from the road). But, I assume that this will be addressed via landscaping. Plus, maybe this is also a pro in that it raises awareness of some of our traditions that are held outdoors.

— Potential for water issues both on the landscaping and inside the building just because of the physical properties of the site?

— Not much of a view of the city from this site unless you stand on the corner of Viola Rd and E. Circle Drive and look to your right down the hill toward 37th Street. Unfortunately, the area across E. Circle Drive from the site along the southbound lanes going toward RCTC have been developed (ie, a Kwik Trip, Caribou Coffee hut, and an apartment building where there used to be only trees and prairie grass).

in summary, I think it comes down to what we deem as most important for our mission as a church and what the deal breakers are for either of these sites that would lead us to vote for one site over the other.

28 Comment submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 2023-03

We have looked at all the sites, and I'd like to make a few comments. The comments are my own and reflect my singular point of view, and I don't expect they should be representative of the congregation in general.

Siting: Our church must be welcoming to all people who want to be a part of it, but that does not mean that all people will actually want to be a part of it. The physical location of the church is only one of many factors that determine whether someone wants to be a part of it. I do not believe we should make the major decision of siting the church in a specific location based on attracting new members who would otherwise not be interested in belonging to the church.

Gift Property: Very nice property with a fantastic view! The residential neighbors would probably, rightfully be upset with the significant increase of car traffic.

Viola Road Property: Very nice property but with significant traffic noise when you are outdoors. The flat, building site looks like "fill". Is this an issue? I love the woods! Insurance issues because of the pond? Excellent access.

Eastwood Golf Course Property: Very nice property with, depending on the location on the property, a nice view. No traffic noise. Excellent access.

Country Club Manor Road Property: Nice property but basically divided into two by the steep area in the middle of it. This might make it difficult to use the property to its fullest. The flat part nearest Country Club Manor Road provides drainage for a very large area of land to its west, and this might make that part of the property be too wet to use for some of the year.

The other two farmsteads in the northwest: Nice, but pretty far out. I worry about the expense and waste of removing current, useable buildings. Also, if we had to improve the current water and septic facilities on the properties, those improvements would need to be remediated if we eventually hooked up to city water and sewer, plus we would have to pay for the hookup to city facilities. These are nice properties, but I think they are more suitable to being used for something other than a church location.

I thank the committee for all the excellent work you have done.

Response:

Thank you for your site-by-site comments. They have been forwarded to the Building Our Future Team as property investigations continue.

27 Questions submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 11/30/2021

What exactly is meant by this response in last week's ENews/Building the Future section? "An architect has visited the site to assess the feasibility of building on the property. We recently received the boring report for the property, and will share this information with the architect." Seems like a strange way to respondwhy not just share a summary of the "boring report" with all of us?

Response: The Building Our Future Team has received numerous questions about the geological suitability of the NE property as it relates to the potential donor gift. Efforts will be made to acquire sufficient geological information so as to not repeat the unexpected surprises experienced during construction on Walden Lane.

26 Comments submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 11/17/2021

Hello. I took a tour of the potential gift property a little over a month ago and just wanted to take a minute to share my thoughts about it. I think that the property itself is quite lovely, although it would need a bunch of work to clear invasive and aggressive plants like buckthorn and red cedars. Still, having done a lot of that type of work myself, it's not at all insurmountable nor even overwhelming to think about doing it over time. (I would be happy to help with this.) I think it would be beneficial to minimize the footprint of the building and parking spaces to allow as much of the land as possible to remain undeveloped. I like the idea of building a new church here as long as it is done with consideration for the environmental impact of the project (maybe it could be LEED certified and the parking lot pervious or planted similarly to the one at Cascade Meadows?) and how it could be a gathering /learning, etc. place for the larger community. It would be great to have outdoor learning and reflection spaces, too, especially for the kids, and it seems as if this site could easily incorporate something like that. This location would also increase the number of activities and options that Chalice Camp has to offer. I think the location is just fine; it's no farther away for me than the current church, so that's not an issue for me. Finally, I think that this gift presents an opportunity to think about the farther off future of the church and what

sort of facility that we could build to serve people decades from now. Our current church is fine and the people are welcoming 1 which is what makes the building feel more welcoming than I think it otherwise is. The building itself has always felt a bit like a bunker to me. It can be very cozy in the wintertime with how dark it is (especially during candlelight services), but it was also rather imposing when we came into the sanctuary the first time. I know it has architectural merit and it's just a matter of personal design taste, but I have always preferred sanctuaries that are filled with space and light (and good acoustics!). I appreciate the time spent to take me on a tour, and I wish the team all the best in making its decision. I'm sure it must be challenging to weigh all the different considerations, so thank you.

Response: Thank you for your detailed observations regarding the potential gift of NE property and your thoughts about our Walden Lane location. Your message has been shared with the Building Our Future Team. We hope you will continue to be involved in the discernment process as we consider our mission and how best the building and location can serve in meeting our goals.

25 Comments collected following a NE property tour and submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 10/25/2021

1. People will get lost or not come due to the circuitous route to the property.
2. Could we buy a portion of the adjacent land (to the north?)? That seems to have a flatter space (for parking) and additional (future) road access.
3. If the 16th Ave NE road were to be improved in the future, would the church be held financially liable for portions of the street improvement?
4. Great! I live NE so this would be better for me.
5. Beautiful! Nice view!
6. The current church was built with inadequate information/planning. Will we have more information about soil, rocks, etc. and the overall building site potential?

Responses:

1. Any new site chosen by the congregation will involve a trade-off of priorities regarding the location: visibility to the community, access to transportation, traffic issues, a natural setting with some seclusion, etc. This property has strengths and weaknesses which each voting congregant will factor in as they see fit for our future. An unknown, which should become clearer in 2022, is the question of what entrance to the property would be possible and what a visitor or neighbor would see from a nearby vantage point.
2. The purchase of additional property would be dependent on: a. a congregational vote to move instead of stay b. a congregational vote to purchase a different property instead of accepting the 10 acre site c. a successful Capital Campaign d. the availability of this property after the above is completed
3. See response #1 above
4. At this time, the property has not been evaluated by engineers / architects in order to understand if the site topology can support a new building, roads, drainage, infrastructure, etc. A previously conducted soil boring report for the property was shared with the architect. Gaining from past experiences, efforts will be made to acquire sufficient geological information so as to not repeat the unexpected surprises experienced during construction on Walden Lane.

24 Question via the Building Our Future webform, 10/24/2021

Questions: Should the church be spending any funds set aside for future building renovation, new building, property assessment by an architect, etc. before there is a congregational discussion about future direction & decision on the building options?

All reserved funds have a process for approval. Who is designated for approving use of these funds?

Response:

o date, all services provided by the various architectural firms have been offered pro bono. No church funds have been expended. The Building Our Future Team approached the architects in order to provide technically accurate responses to inquiries raised by members who toured the potential NE property. The church has detailed policies pertaining to the expenditure of funds. Should an expenditure be needed in the future to further the Building Our Future discernment process, the policies will be followed.

23 Comment collected following a NE property tour and submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 10/29/2021

10 acres is a large area and I suggest a portion of the land be designated as a Green Cemetery. There is a growing interest in Green Cemeteries as this does not pollute the earth with embalming fluids, vaults, caskets, etc. Also, a natural burial site is a way to permanently protect the land.

Response:

Page 7 of the Building Program Statement includes green cemeteries as a consideration if the congregation votes to build new. "Possible green burial cemetery, in addition to the Memorial Garden, that would simply resemble prairie or other natural area without high-maintenance lawn, vegetation or monuments." Here's a link to the Building Program Statement: <https://uurochmn.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Building-Program-Statement-2021-09-22.pdf> 22

Comment collected following a NE property tour and submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 10/13/2021

Comment: Grateful for the very generous gift. Beautiful piece of property. Concerns: accessibility for members; visibility to potential members.

Response: Any new site chosen by the congregation will involve a trade-off of priorities regarding the location: visibility to the community, access to transportation, traffic issues, a natural setting with some seclusion, etc. This property has strengths 3 and weaknesses which each voting congregant will factor in as they see fit for our future. An unknown, which should become clearer in 2022, is the question of what entrance to the property would be possible and what a visitor or neighbor would see from a nearby vantage point.

21 Questions sent via email 10/13/2021

Question: Is there a cost for the architect site assessment & if so, who is paying the cost?

Response:

The upcoming site visit by the architects is free. After the site-visit, HGA will prepare an assessment based on walking the potential gift of property and write up a proposal which states what will be included should additional work be requested, as well as corresponding fees. When asked what fees typically run, the architects were hesitant to provide an estimate prior to visiting the site when they will have a better understanding of the potential property and how much time it will take to conduct any specific work. While the BOF Team has not seen an HGA proposal prepared for other clients, we are hopeful they may list options to choose from based on the scope of this initial feasibility analysis. Obviously, there may be some back and forth to fine tune the scope of the proposal based on what information the congregation needs to make informed decisions. The Building Our Future Team will review the proposal / price quote and make recommendations to the Board as to how best to proceed.

As the Board prepared and approved the 2021-2022 budget, funds were allocated to cover potential expenses incurred as the Team continues more in-depth fact-finding on behalf of the congregation.

20 Question and comments collected following a NE property tour and submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 9/26/2021

Question: Has anyone looked at a general development plan for the undeveloped parcels?

Comments:

1. Beautiful property, but we would be hiding ourselves again (as with our current location). Not easily accessible by public transportation. Socio-economic class of the neighborhood would be daunting for many.
2. Hope that we could site a building to maintain the native trees and prairie plants.
3. Dismay at amount of thriving buckthorn.

Response to question

The 2015 Wetland Delineation map shows proposed single family home land parcels and street routes on the potential donor property and the three large adjacent properties. However, the Wetland Delineation map is not the same as a formal development plan. The City of Rochester requires a pre-development plan be submitted for review by multiple departments as part of the approval process. At this time we do not know if the three large adjacent properties have submitted pre-development plans to the City. The potential donor property is zoned as residential which, based on the City of Rochester Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Manual, allows for an 'Area Accessory Development' (AAD) such as churches, public parks, and schools to be built on property zoned as residential. An (AAD) is defined as a "development which provides facilities to meet the area needs of a social or technical nature."

Responses to Comments

1. Any new site chosen by the congregation would involve a trade-off of priorities regarding the location: visibility to the community, access to transportation, traffic issues, a natural setting with some seclusion, etc. This property has strengths and weaknesses which each voting congregant will factor in as they see fit for our future. An unknown, which should become clearer in 2022, is the question of what entrance to the property would be possible and what a visitor or neighbor would see from a nearby vantage point.
2. An ecological assessment of the property to preserve valuable trees, original prairie, will be included in a site development plan.
3. Those who have worked to prepare trails are aware of the amount and location of buckthorn on the property. Also identified have been an old apple orchard and well established catalpa, chestnut, cherry,

oak and evergreen trees, as well as abundant wild flowers providing an environment of diverse vegetation.

19 Questions and comments collected following a NE property tour and submitted via email on 9/16/2021

Comments / ideas from today's tour:

1. Any chance we could buy some of the land north of the property that is already cleared and flat. We noticed water and probably sewer that way, which maybe we wouldn't need to pump out if there is enough slope.
2. Do we know what kind of rock we are on top of and if it will be a problem digging?
3. Why not build on current land by taking down the building and rebuilding closer to the Walden Ln. Could build a three floor structure with elevator. Keep two levels of parking. Has this been looked into?
4. If we do build there, we should require the builders leave all the big oaks and select an area that will preserve those oaks.
5. Comment- concerns about the accessibility and terrain of the property.
6. Will we need a rain garden at the lowest point to collect run-off?

Responses:

1. The purchase of additional property would be dependent on:
 - a. A congregational vote to move instead of stay
 - b. A congregational vote to purchase a different property instead of accepting the 10 acre site
 - c. A successful Capital Campaign
 - d. The availability of this property after the above is completed
2. The property has not been evaluated by engineers / architects in order to understand if the site topology can support a new building, roads, drainage, accessibility, infrastructure, etc. An architect will be visiting the site in October to assess the feasibility of building on the property. We will receive their Feasibility findings approximately 1 to 2 weeks after the site visit.
3. We are working with an architect to receive an updated and more detailed stay vs. go cost analysis as part of the feasibility analysis. Previous discussions with two architectural firms discouraged remaining on the current site as demolition and construction costs would be comparable or possibly greater than new construction and we would still be constricted by the limited usable acreage for the building, parking, and community activities.
4. An ecological assessment of the property to preserve valuable trees, original prairie, will be included in a site development plan. It will be helpful per your suggestion for volunteers to create this document to share with the congregation as part of the discernment process.
5. Reference answer to above question #2.
6. Rain garden(s) can be included based on the location of structures, roads, and the site topology. They would be a beautiful and functional landscape / habitat feature on the property.

18 Questions and comments collected by following a NE property tour and submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 9/13/2021

Commentary / ideas from today's tour:

1. People ASSUME that the site has been OK'd legally/zoning wise for its potential intended UU purpose. Is that right?
2. Given the site's topography, has it also been approved engineering-wise ? (such as drainage / erosion, two-story building walk-out locations, access

3. Some trees and grassy areas (prairie remnants) appear to be very valuable ecologically. Could they be inventoried thru a "student project" of some sort? This may need to be done soon, before other schedules/priorities take over.
4. A move to this site would take many years to complete. How might UU handle the new site while still owning the Walden site?
5. The question "why move at all?" came up and was addressed. (The question "how much is the site worth?" was answered "unknown (and is probably irrelevant)").

Responses:

1. The City of Rochester Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Manual (link below) defines land usage and zoning codes. For example, there are different zoning codes for land developed for use as residential, commercial, industrial, education / public service, agriculture, etc. Churches are defined as an 'Area Accessory Development' (AAD) per section 62.149. An AAD is defined as a 'development which provides facilities to meet the area needs of a social or technical nature'. Public parks and schools (nursery, elementary, secondary) are other examples of an AAD. The potential gift property is located in an area zoned as residential. The manual states an AAD can be built / developed in areas zoned as residential, subject to regulations and restrictions as defined in the tables. A good example to look at is the Section 62.221 (page 156) table for property zoned R-1. Please note the above is our understanding after reading the applicable sections of the manual, but is subject to change based on misinterpretation of the manual, or zoning regulations we are not aware of.
2. The property has not been evaluated by engineers / architects in order to understand if the site topology can support a new building, roads, drainage, accessibility, infrastructure, etc. An architect will be visiting the site in early October to assess the feasibility of building on the property. We will receive their Feasibility findings approximately 1 to 2 weeks after the site visit.
3. An ecological assessment of the property to preserve valuable trees, original prairie, will be included in a site development plan. It will be helpful per your suggestion for volunteers to create this document to share with the congregation as part of the discernment process.
4. The Board and the Building Our Future Team understand that a process to move our church from Walden Lane to a potential new building will take a great deal of planning over a number of years. They are committed to gathering input from the congregation and sharing information throughout the process. The first steps which will need to occur are:
 - a. A congregational vote to move instead of stay
 - b. A congregational vote to purchase a different property instead of accepting the 10 acre site
 - c. A successful Capital Campaign
5. Earlier this year, our church arranged for Rachel Maxwell, a UU consultant with Stewardship for Us to meet virtually with congregants to deepen our conversations and assess our overall organizational health and our readiness to support a Capital Campaign. Her May 16 presentation and final report stated our church is healthy and well poised to expand our impact and mission. She also stated that while our congregation is welcoming, our current facility does not reflect or support our mission, principles and values - and our current location does not support our future needs.

17 Question submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 9/10/2021

Hello! I was involved in another project where land was being given. After an assessment was done we got a surprise in that the land (also NE Rochester) was sitting on a ton of limestone and it was going to cost significantly more to build. Have we had such an assessment done yet?

Response: The property has not been evaluated by engineers / architects in order to understand if the site topology can support a new building, roads, drainage, infrastructure, etc. An architect will be visiting the site sometime in late September through mid October to assess the feasibility of building on the property. We recently received the boring report for the property, and will share this information with the architect. We hope to receive this feasibility assessment in the late October / November timeframe.

16 Question submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 8/17/2021

Do we have a Gift Acceptance Policy and what is it? Background: In reading stewardship material about Planned Giving, and the importance of launching or rejuvenating a planned (legacy) giving program, several recommendations are made, including to ensure key documents are in shape, such as Gift Acceptance Policy.

Response: The Church has a Gift Policy, created in 2000 and revised in 2018 which gives the Board the responsibility “of determining whether acceptance of directed donations or unsolicited gifts supports our vision and is in the best interest of the church community”. In January 2021, the Board acknowledged but did not accept the potential gift of property recognizing there are many steps in the ongoing discernment process, including ascertaining the suitability of the land and securing congregational approval to move forward.

15 Comment submitted with the Building Our Future webform, 5/22/2021

I have known Merle and Dan Groteboer for over 25 years. You could not have chosen more qualified, ethical, honest and knowledgeable Realtors! Good job 1st UUs!!

Response: Thank you for sharing your thoughts about Merle and Dan Groteboer via the Building Our Future online form. With your many years of experience, your knowledge of the real estate world and Realtors is appreciated.

14 Questions received 3/31/2021

1. How far (how much farther) will the average church member be driving? I'm concerned about the environmental impact of potential increased transit time & distance.
2. What about the existing Memorial Garden? What will happen to it?

Responses:

1. As the Building Our Future Team has explored various properties, 19 to date, we have carefully tracked the distance to each using the intersection of N. Broadway and Second Street SW as a constant point of reference. Our current building is 2.4 miles from that point. The Building Our Future webpage on the church website includes a map denoting the mailing address locations for current members. You will note that we have members in all quadrants of the city.
2. For over 30 years the Memorial Garden has been a tranquil location on our property with deep sacred meaning for the entire congregation and especially for those who have loved ones interred in this holy ground. As the Building Our Future Team has considered possible locations, we have reviewed each site knowing any future property must include appropriate space for a new Memorial Garden. Our current operating policy clearly outlines what would need to happen should a move occur. Our Minister, the Memorial Garden Team, and members of the congregation will ensure that this process is carried out with deep respect.

“The First Unitarian Universalist Church of Rochester, Minnesota will maintain the Memorial Garden, the In Loving Memory memorial plaque in the church lobby, and the Garden Panel of

Names as long as the church exists in its present location. If the church should move, a representative sample from the Memorial Garden will be also be moved to the new location, a new Memorial Garden will be established, and both memorial plaques will be installed in appropriate places in the new church.”

13 Comment submitted via email 3/31/2021

Good morning to the Board,

This is just a thought in case there is a need for ideas. I see the church in White Bear Lake is mentioned as a sample.

I was "confirmed" (blindfolded dipping fingers in cooked spaghetti for part of the initiation) in the Westport Unitarian Church, Westport, Connecticut, so this is a loooooonng time ago. It is nicknamed the New Ship. It's design is strikingly unique and I remember lots and lots of natural light in the sanctuary. Looking at their website, I note many changes since my days, all with what seem green, nature, outdoor spaces, natural light and other items I see in the wishlist if we build a new church. One new item was their new lift.

Again, perhaps this can stir up some interesting ideas.

Response: I appreciate your email directing our attention to the Westport Unitarian Church website. The Building Our Future Team made pre-pandemic site visits to several Minnesota UU churches and we continue to seek examples of other locations that incorporate those aspects of building and space most desirable to members of our congregation. Thank you.

12 Question submitted 3/30/2021

Has any thought been given to a multi-use project? Since the building project is named Beyond Ourselves, I wonder if affordable housing AND a church collaboration could be considered. See this article: <https://salud-america.org/can-churches-help-with-the-affordable-housing-crisis/>

Response:

Our Building the Future – Beyond Ourselves Program Statement offers an ever growing list of potential ideas that might be incorporated into a new building at a different location so that nothing is forgotten. I have added a bullet to the list which reads: “Possible multi-use projects in partnership with community partners such as but not limited to affordable housing” so that we do not lose your suggestion.

When the subtitle – Beyond Ourselves – was added to our team charge, it was in response to information shared by an Autumn Ridge representative, who reminded us to work for today and the future. That we should want a building that even when all of us have departed, 50 or more years from now, congregants will ask “Who were these people who built a building that meets our needs today?” We were thinking about future generations of UUs but, you are correct, the phrase, “beyond ourselves” can also speak to our mission within the broader community.

As we continue this initial discernment process, the Building Our Future Team (BOT) will continue to focus on a variety of immediate questions and suggestions. The congregation will need to determine whether our current building or a new 9 location is better suited to fulfilling our mission. Our Team would like to stay focused on this question while still keeping in mind the wonderful possibilities which the right location and necessary space could enable.

11 Follow up question received 3/31/2021

Sorry I wasn't clearer. What's the market value of the proposed property?

Response:

While the Board has acknowledged the possibility of this very generous gift, neither the Board nor the Building Our Future Team knows the specific value of the potential 10 acres of land in NE Rochester. Our Team remains focused on the broader question facing the congregation – whether our current building or a new location is better suited to fulfilling our mission – especially since the anonymous donors have indicated a willingness to consider other parcels should the congregation vote to move. At this time the Team has investigated 19 potential available properties, with boots-on-the-ground at 10 sites. These 19 range in price from \$15 per acre to \$652 per acre.

10 Question received 3/29/2021

If this has been asked before, I apologize, but what is the market value of the property?

Response:

Representatives of the Building Our Future Team met with Realtors Merl and Dan Groteboer in January 2020. Based on a walk-through of the building and a review of documents, they estimated our building and property with a market value of \$3-4 million. In their opinion, our building and grounds were "very salable to potential buyers". As time has lapsed since this initial assessment, the Building Our Future Team plans to secure updated information once small groups can once again visit the building.

We are contesting being designated as a landmark status by the City of Rochester / Heritage Preservation Commission. The valuation of our property and the pool of potential buyers would likely be significantly reduced if we become landmark status.

9 Question received 3/29/2021

I am curious why the location of the proposed site is not made available to the congregation.

Response:

We know there is considerable interest in receiving more information about the parcel of land being considered as a potential gift. As reported at the two recent building forums, the Building Our Future Team will be planning virtual site visits and possibly on site walks as well. Once details have been arranged with the owners, more information will be shared with the congregation. The Building Our Future Team continues to explore potential locations and other parcels of land. While we were extremely grateful to learn of the generous offer of land in NE Rochester, we continue to focus on a variety of questions and issues raised during this discernment process. The congregation will need to determine whether our current building or a new 10 location is better suited to fulfilling our mission. Our Team does not want the focus to shift to a specific parcel of land especially since the anonymous donors have indicated a willingness to consider other parcels should the congregation vote to move.

8 Suggestion submitted the Building Our Future webform, 3/21/2021

When / (If ever) it is time to talk construction materials with the architects/builders, push them about pros/cons of Cross Laminated Wood as opposed to conventional brick and concrete!

That choice may have a greater environmental impact than anything else. If you don't get a satisfactory answer, ask someone else.

Response:

Thank you for your suggestion regarding construction materials that you submitted via the Building Our Future online form. I have forwarded this helpful idea to the Building Team and have added this information to our ongoing list of things to consider should we need to provide a program statement to an architect.

7 Questions received 3/17/2021

Is the site walkable? Bikable? On a bus line? What is its walk score?

Responses:

1. Is the site walkable? The site is within a residential neighborhood which has sidewalk infrastructure in place.
2. What is its walk score? Walkscore.com rates the walk score as 1, which is 'car-dependent, all errands require a car'. Our current church walkscore is 26, which is 'most errands require a car'.
3. Bikeable? Walkscore.com rates the bike score as 41, which is 'somewhat bikeable with minimal bike infrastructure'. We interpret the minimal bike infrastructure to mean there is a lack of dedicated bike pathways. Walkscore.com does not list a bike score for our current church, but our assessment is that it would have a similar rating to the 41 based on 'somewhat bikeable with minimal bike infrastructure'.
4. On a bus line? The nearest bus line (runs both weekday and weekend) is approximately 2 miles from the property. The nearest bus line to our current church is approximately 1 mile (either St. Mary's hospital or T.J. Maxx)

Correction: It was noted that there's a bus route that goes down the west frontage road, which puts the current site within 1/4 mile of a bus stop.

6 Comments submitted via the Building Our Future webform, 3/14/2021

I have been trying to find time to carefully think about my response. To me , and I quote Rev. Luke here from Sept 20, 2020, "We, not the building, have always been the church". It is the people and what we do to make the world a better more just and peaceful place that it what matters. I appreciate this church community for support it provides for me as I try to do this 11 work. I miss seeing people in person and easier way that is to exchange thoughts & ideas as well as get personal updates but I am not enthusiastic about spending more time and energy on moving and building especially as we have been away/apart. We need time together to see who we have gained & who lost. I want our money to go for programing not building. I have been through a number of capital campaigns and have not especially enjoyed them. I felt it was not good to announce this anonymous land gift before we have voted to move; it feels like a person or persons have more power to guide the decision. What happened to the democratic process? And are we demonstrating social justice to leave a new owner with a building that is so energy inefficient? I do appreciate all the time and effort the team has put in to looking at this issues & I did feel the presentation was well done but this is a decision I don't feel is right to address while we are apart. Thanks.

Response shared 3/16/2021

Thank you for sharing your thoughts via the new link on the church website. Your comments have been shared with the Building Our Future Team.

I agree that in this difficult time, what I miss most is seeing people. The Re-Gathering Team, the Board and the staff are actively discussing how and when we might safely come back together again. We do so understanding that there are those who are very excited to come together and those that will be very anxious about gathering in large group, even after vaccinations are the norm. The challenge will be to balance health, hospitality and peace of mind.

I must admit that my experience with capital campaigns differs from yours in that I found fundraising for a new community library to be invigorating for the board, the library users and even local elected officials. While we have been members at 1 st UU for 20+ years, that time has not included a major capital campaign and I am sorry to hear that your experience was not enjoyable. The decision as to whether or not we will undertake such a task is far from known.

At this time the Board has contracted with Stewardship for Us to conduct an initial stewardship assessment. This will enable us to hear from an outside individual familiar with UU principles and congregational dynamics as to the health of our congregation. While availing ourselves of this consulting service is required should we opt to undertake a more in-depth and in-person feasibility study, a capital campaign is not a foregone conclusion. Rather, this study will give the Board and the Financial Stewardship Team an unbiased assessment of our organizational and financial health, especially in these unprecedented times. The Board and church leadership will use this experience and the consultant's report to guide next steps, which may include more forums and conversations among the congregation. Depending upon congregational responses, the consultant's report may include a timeline for possible future congregational votes, while allowing sufficient time for further discussion.

Each person gathers information differently. There are those who have shared their appreciation to learn of the potential gift of land as it simply becomes another factor to be considered. While the Board has acknowledged this possible gift it has not accepted the donation as there are contingencies that must first be met --- most importantly a congregational vote as to whether to "stay or go."

The Board, Building Team and members are being asked to reflect on our mission and evaluate how our facility and property enhance or limit meeting congregational goals. Can this best be done in our current space, regardless of the environmental challenges, or addressed with different space? If it is the later and the congregation decides a move will enhance our mission and vision, then we will proceed with a sale of the property that does not hide the reality of a 1960s building.

Again, thank you for sharing your thoughts as we continue the Building Our Future discernment process.

5 Letter - dated 3/11 and received 3/13/2021 via email regarding current stewardship campaign but also including statements pertaining to the Building Our Future work.

March 11, 2021

Dear Rev. Luke, Ann, and Barb,

I have debated writing this letter for a long time, I set it aside with a why bother but it keeps coming up. I could increase my pledge but I am not happy with what appears to be happening at the church,

The ramp: I think that something could have been done less intrusive. No one would listen, we went out for bids (3) one was returned, the decision was to go with it and not seek other bids (who make that decision}. I was told by the contractor that he planned on adding some sap wood with light stain panels suggested by a staff member who stated to me that the reason was the front was too plain and boring. I met with Rev. Luke and it was changed to all mahogany panels, I have not been able to see the finished job because of church closure.

I inquired by e-mail about the parking lot status (Bill Thompson and I had volunteered to meet with contractors, we felt we were qualified having worked with the parking lot the past 20 years}, we had heard nothing, I received a very strong e-mail telling me that Rev. Luke, Erica, and Erick were meeting with the contractors and they would be making the decisions. ALL IN-CAPITAL LETTERS. I did not file the e-mail and when I went back to review it, it was gone, to my knowledge no one else received this e-mail. I talked to Rev. Luke about it and he was on vacation when all this happened.

Suddenly there is a letter in the mail telling me that there are three families that have found property that they think is suitable for the church. Who is going to make that decision? I understand that the board is working with an architectural firm now looking at the present building, are we stuck with this firm if we go into a building program. The firm you are working with now, how were they selected, how many firms did the board interviewed before this firm was selected,

So, I ask why should I increase my pledge?

Responses pertaining to Building Our Future from Barb Foss, Rev. Luke and Ann Hutton

From Barb Foss, 3/13/2021

I have not been directly involved in Building Our Future, but am aware of the ongoing investigative work the team has done. The web site has a good reference: <https://uurochmn.org/buildingourfuture/>. My understanding is that all options remain on the table as we examine how to move forward and determine what will our space be like in the future, whether it is in our current building or something beyond. Ultimately it will be put to a congregational vote, to determine whether to stay or move. I'm aware of one letter recently that referred to a donation of land by an anonymous donor. Prior to that there has been an examination of property for sale in Rochester (suitable to build), recognizing that land options here are very few.

From Rev. Luke, 3/14/2021

I also want to clarify about the Building Our Future process - and Ann could likely weigh in more - that we have not selected a firm (we have dozens of firms the team reviewed, and decided to have preliminary conversations with two firms familiar with the area and with UU churches, but neither have been hired in any capacity yet). Also, it is one household anonymous donor who has offered to gift some land, but only if two things happen: first, the congregation would need to vote on whether to stay or go from our current site, and if the congregation voted to go, then they would vote on whether to accept this particular piece of property, after it was thoroughly reviewed by the building our future team, necessary consultants, etc.

So, in short, there are some good presentations from the team you can view at the website Barb provided:

www.uurochmn.org/buildingourfuture

From Ann Hutton, 3/15/2021

- As Rev. Luke invited, I will add a few details regarding the status of the *Building Our Future* activities: · The Board has not selected an architectural firm and no funds have been expended for the information gathered thus far. The Building Team's investigative discussions with HGA and Locus came about after visiting four UU churches and hearing recommendations from members of those congregations regarding successful working relations between their building committees and architects. The Building Team has performed a review of 22 Minnesota architectural firms, each with experience building churches, including credentials and individual project portfolios.
- There is only one generous couple who have made an offer of land and a future, potential gift. The Board has acknowledged this possible gift but has not accepted the donation as there are contingencies that must first be met --- most importantly a congregational vote as to whether to "stay or go."

4 Suggestion received 3/11/2021

Several years ago, church member Char Tarashanti introduced us to the concept of green burial. At the time there was some interest in the community in starting a green burial site near Winona (if I remember correctly), but it has never been developed. Char moved on to other pursuits (and then moved away altogether), but I have been thinking about such an alternative ever since. When I heard about the possibility of 10 acres for a new church site, I immediately thought about an expansion of our memorial garden: a green burial cemetery!

While many UUs have chosen cremation as a more environmentally-friendly burial option than being embalmed with strong chemicals and encased in steel and concrete, cremation still consumes a huge amount of energy in the process of reducing a body to ashes. Green burial involves simply placing a body in an unfinished pine box or wrapping it in a cotton or linen shroud before burial. No monuments are placed over the grave and no high-maintenance grass is planted. Green burial cemeteries often resemble prairies or other natural areas. As bodies decompose, they nourish the plant life above them.

I'm throwing this idea out there so that, when we are considering whether the 10-acre donation is right for us, the possibility of creating a green cemetery can be part of the equation. If anyone else is interested, I can do more research into Minnesota regulations and other practical considerations.

There is a UU church that has established a green burial ground, Heritage Universalist Unitarian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. Here is a link to a sermon their minister, the Rev. Bill Gupton, gave on the topic <https://huuc.net/worship/reflections-archive/> (scroll down to Oct. 25, 2015 "It's Only Natural"), as well as a link to his webinar <https://www.uua.org/midamerica/events/webinars/green-burial-101>

Other places where you can get more information are:

<https://www.heritageacresmemorial.org/>

www.greenburialcouncil.org

<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/grave-matters>

Is anyone else interested?

Response shared 3/14/2021

I will have to say that of all the suggestions I've heard for what we might consider for our existing or for a new space, you are the first to make this suggestion. I will add this concept to our ever growing list of what might be possible given the right space to hold such a sacred trust.

Comments submitted via email 2/27/2021

Considerations regarding announcement of donation of 10 acres of land & donor letter:

We, like others, were very surprised to read of the donation of 10 acres of land described as being north of East Circle Drive. Obviously, this is a very generous gift, but does raise some questions & considerations.

We had started drafting this after reading the announcement & donor letter, but decided to wait until the forums were held to gather more information.

We are wondering about the following: - Is this property already zoned for commercial building? How many of the sites listed currently have the required zoning? Doesn't a church require commercial zoning? –

What is the terrain of this land and what is the existing vegetation/trees? Does property hold troublesome varieties like elm or ash, buckthorn, other invasives? We are very familiar with taking care of our current acreage and challenges that involves.

Since it was shared at the recent forums that this is a pending purchase by the donors (to close in April), the donation could be interpreted as trying to influence a desired decision from the church community.

How many years are the donors willing to pay taxes on these 10 acres while the church deliberates the acceptance of this gift or tries to acquire enough funding in a capital fund campaign?

It is obvious that the donors have already made their personal decision about whether the church should build anew or remodel. The Building for the Future Team also has made its preferences clear. Obviously our building has environmental challenges and expansion challenges, but many of us are still evaluating the information that has been shared thus far and need to share conversations with other members on their thoughts.

We sat almost 2 years ago in small groups where we heard a variety of opinions on whether to consider staying in the current location or moving. There was no overwhelming consensus one way or the other at that session, which was primarily attended by those over 60 years of age.

In addition to the document with collected comments on desired qualities of a church building, it would be helpful to add the results/data from the congregational survey that was done in the spring of 2019 to the Building the Future page. Do we know the results in relation to age ranges of members or length of years of membership?

Since 2019, the Building Our Future group has worked on site visits, architectural firm and realty consults. We appreciate all their research and the chance to hear about site visits and initial evaluations from realtors and architects. Though questions from members have been a part of those sessions, the sessions were primarily presentations and we have not had a chance to talk together since the 2019 session or since all the consults and visits were completed.

Considering that we are still dealing with the pandemic and in a time of continuing uncertainty, asking the congregation to make such a major decision over Zoom when we are still unable to meet and talk together feels very pushy, and we'd maintain, unwise.

The consultant representing the UUA will be asking members what future plan they could support and what they are willing to commit to a capital fund campaign. Until the pandemic is under control and people are feeling that their employment & income sources are secure, as well as feeling that the state of the economy and

national /world status has recovered from the pandemic and events of the last several years....how many would be comfortable making that commitment in the next few months? How will you ensure that a balance of our membership makes appointments to meet with the consultant?

Let's remember that at the start of the pandemic, the pledged income for 2020-2021 went back to the 2018 level of pledging, due in large part to the uncertainty ahead. Our membership numbers are still around 360. Taking on a capital fund campaign is in addition to maintaining an ever increasing operating budget supported by pledges. Those of us who are age 65+ may likely not be the population who will be paying off the last half of a 30 year mortgage. Since our annual budget included payments for the last mortgage, we have added staff/staff hours, hired a new minister and seen the budget continually increase until this current fiscal year. Budgets tend to increase annually and the membership also needs to be able to support those increases.

Though obviously, this gift of 10 acres is a very generous offer, there are not many in our congregation who can just go out and purchase 10 acres of land to offer as a gift. Though the announcement is just "acknowledging" the gift and notes that acceptance is contingent on the congregational decision, the section listing the benefits of this gift makes it sound like the decision to accept the gift is favored. The statement that this gift "...encourages us all to consider what we may have to give with similar generosity," is totally unrealistic for many members. What is considered generous to one member may be totally different for another person. One can be generous with their time and service, as well as being generous financially. Generosity is relative to your time, income and circumstances. The reality is that this building decision must also be supported and evaluated by those younger than the numerous retired members of the church, since the church must be able to afford and sustain a significant 25-30 year mortgage on a new building, as well as ever increasing operating expenses.

The recent forums only expressed the positives associated with this unexpected gift of land. This makes us feel like the decision has been made by a chosen few and the consideration & recent announcement of this 'gift' could be interpreted as intending to influence our "discernment". References were made to multiple surveys at the recent Wed. forum. There was only one done 2 years ago. What are people thinking now? Most of the forums have been attended primarily by those of us who are retired,

Can we possibly see some data on our total operating budgets & membership over the last decade, number of pledging units/age range and range of pledges?

Every one of us has been through a thoroughly unprecedented year filled with worries and stresses. We feel it's important to give our members a chance to heal & recover after we can return to our building and are able to return to normal activity. We need to be able to converse with others face-to face to hear what they are thinking about the future of the building. We have been "talked to," but not had a chance to talk with one another since the Building the Future Team has done its exploration and research.

This is a huge financial commitment to take on, not only for the capital campaign, but also for 25-30 years ahead with whatever mortgage is needed and the increased operating expenses that come with a new structure and property. The Board and Building Team need to be careful about pushing their preferences forward before hearing from members.

We have supported this congregation in many ways for over 35 years and hope to be able to continue that support, though there have been several decisions and choices in the last few years which as you both know, have raised many concerns for us.

Response sent 3/2/2021

Thank you for sharing your reflections on the potential gift of property. Your email has been shared in its entirety with members of the Board and the Building Our Future Team.

As the Building Our Future: Beyond Ourselves discernment process continues, we will endeavor to share information in a variety of formats and solicit input from a wide spectrum of members and friends of the congregation including those younger members and youth. The Building Team will continue to explore and report their findings on an ever-growing list of fact finding tasks, including but not limited to, zoning ordinances, architectural assessments, appropriate land use, alternative property options, and historical preservation restrictions.

At this time the Board has contracted with **Stewardship for Us** to conduct an initial stewardship assessment. This will enable us to hear from an outside individual familiar with UU principles and congregational dynamics as to the health of our congregation. While availing ourselves of this consulting service is required should we opt to undertake a more in-depth and in-person feasibility study, a capital campaign is not a foregone conclusion. Rather, this study will give the Board and the Financial Stewardship Team an unbiased assessment of our organizational and financial health, especially in these unprecedented times. The Board and church leadership will use this experience and the consultant's report to guide next steps, which may include more forums and conversations among the congregation. Depending upon congregational responses, the consultant's report may include a timeline for possible future congregational votes, while allowing sufficient time for discussion.

As is always the case, whether when passing the weekly plate, the annual stewardship campaign for our operational budget or a unique once in a generation capital campaign, each individual will define the amount of "talent or treasure" within his or her financial ability. Specifically with regard to the potential gift of land – the positive responses that have been shared with members of the Board and the Building Team have been those of gratitude for both the generosity, as well as the interest in our church that this gift demonstrates. Just the potential of such a generous gift has added participation and depth to our discernment.

Since initiating this process in the Fall of 2018, the Building team has been adamant about offering multiple opportunities for two-way communication. This practice will continue. The Board and the Building Team are committed to transparency and a democratic process for those monumental decisions affecting the future direction of the congregation.

Note: The specific questions included in the email were addressed by members of the Building Our Future team. The questions and responses are included below, posted to the website and shared as part of regular eNews updates.

2 Questions received 2/27/2021

1 - Is this property already zoned for commercial building? How many of the sites listed currently have the required zoning? Doesn't a church require commercial zoning?

Responses:

The City of Rochester Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Manual (link below) defines land usage and zoning codes. For example, there are different zoning codes for land developed for use as residential, commercial, industrial, education / public service, agriculture, etc.

Churches are defined as an 'Area Accessory Development' (AAD) per section 62.149. An AAD is defined as a 'development which provides facilities to meet the area needs of a social or technical nature'. Public parks and schools (nursery, elementary, secondary) are other examples of an AAD.

The potential gift property is located in an area zoned as residential. The manual states an AAD can be built / developed in areas zoned as residential, subject to regulations and restrictions as defined in the tables. A good example to look at is the Section 62.221 (page 156) table for property zoned R-1.

Please note the above is our understanding after reading the applicable sections of the manual, but is subject to change based on misinterpretation of the manual, or zoning regulations we are not aware of.

The City of Rochester Zoning Ordinance and Land Development Manual
<https://www.rochestermn.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=18085>

The property is within a residential zoned area, which allows AAD properties per above.

The properties we have looked at have been located within residential or agricultural zoning types. AAD's are allowed in agricultural as well as residential zoned areas.

2. What is the terrain of this land and what is the existing vegetation/trees? Does property hold troublesome varieties like elm or ash, buckthorn, other invasives?

Response: Regarding the terrain, see responses detailed in question 1 below. Invasives have not been documented at this time. More info can come later.

3. How many years are the donors willing to pay taxes on these 10 acres while the church deliberates the acceptance of this gift or tries to acquire enough funding in a capital fund campaign?

Response: The property owners will be responsible for all taxes, assessments, insurance, etc. pending the outcome of the discernment process, congregational votes, and the selection of a building site, if the vote is to build new, and until such time as the Board accepts the gift of land.

4. Do we know the results in relation to age ranges of members or length of years of membership?

Response: The 2019 congregation survey did not capture demographic data from the 204 respondents

5. How many would be comfortable making that commitment in the next few months?

Response: More information will be available after Stewardship 4 Us conducts a congregational assessment in May 2021.

6. How will you ensure that a balance of our membership makes appointments to meet with the consultant?

Response: We are contracting with a reputable consulting firm, recommended by the UUA. Stewardship 4 Us will implement proven methodologies for selecting church leaders and congregants to interview. This initial assessment by an outside individual familiar with UU values will provide the Board and the Financial Stewardship Team with an unbiased assessment of our organizational and financial health, especially in these unprecedented times.

7. What are people thinking now?

Response: More information will be available after Stewardship 4 Us conducts a congregational assessment in May 2021.

8. Can we possibly see some data on our total operating budgets & membership over the last decade, number of pledging units/age range and range of pledges?

Response: More information will be available after Stewardship 4 Us conducts a congregational assessment in May 2021.

1 Questions received 2/17/2021

We have a few questions about the potentially donated land. We haven't seen a physical description of the land. Is it flat or hilly? Open or wooded? Is it all available for the building and for parking spaces, or is only a part of it available for those functions? Does it already have city water, sewer and power? Could a church building be situated so solar power would be an option?

Responses shared 2/22/2021:

1. *Is it flat or hilly?* A ballpark estimate based on aerial maps and walking the site is that approximately 2/3 to 3/4 of the property is flat or has a mild slope which could be developed. There is a drop off on the remaining 1/4 to 1/3 of the property which could be utilized for wooded walking paths, etc. This estimate is subject to future architectural and civil engineering assessments which would take place if the congregation votes to build new instead of stay. Zzz Our current church is located on a 3.11 acre parcel. The building, upper driveway, and parking lots total footprint is about half of the 3.11 acres when viewed on an aerial map. The other half is not usable due to the steep terrain. Therefore we are limited to the approximate 1.5 acre usable footprint on the current site, d we roughly estimate there likely would be 6 to 7 acres of usable footprint in the 10 acre property thanat could be developed for a building, parking, roads, etc. (Note- the adjacent parcel we sold to the Jehovah's Witness church is 1.88 acres).
2. *Open or wooded?* It has both open areas and woods. There's mature old-growth hardwoods, lower height cedars (similar to Eastern red cedar), and the omnipresent buckthorn. A significant quantity of the old-growth trees are on the property perimeter could likely be retained. Some trees on the property interior would have to be removed dependent on siting of the buildings, drive, and parking. The view lines from the property offer a sense of privacy and connection to the natural world.
3. *Is it all available for the building and for parking spaces, or is only a part of it available for those functions?* We ballpark 2/3 to 3/4 of the property could be developed for these functions per the above flat vs hilly response. There appears to be enough space to accommodate a private memorial garden, community gardens, RE / youth projects, and also develop the land to include plants and habitat which support biodiversity such as bees, butterflies, a variety of birds, etc.
4. *Does it already have city water, sewer and power?* Yes, the property is in the Rochester city limits, and we can connect to these services. No septic or well is needed, but it is likely a sewage lift pump would be required due to the elevation of where the sewage system would be connected. There are no overhead power lines in this general area which would detract from the feeling of connection to nature.
5. *Could a church building be situated so solar power would be an option?* Yes! The site has excellent southern exposure and it appears to be ideal for solar power / passive energy conservation. The property elevation decreases going south, so there is little chance if new structures were built on the south side they would block access to solar energy.