

November 2019 Rejoice

## **Fowler Update: Two Possible Developers and Using Our Current Space Wisely**

*By Chris McMurray, Fowler House Committee*

We have made a lot of progress in the last several weeks. Two developers are ready and eager to negotiate a ground lease with us. One wants to build a senior-care facility providing assisted living and memory care. The other wants to build a boutique hotel.

Negotiations with both are almost at an end, and we believe we should be in a position to make a recommendation to the Vestry to enter into a Letter of Intent (LOI) with the one who makes the best final offer.

We have tentatively scheduled a forum for Sunday, November 10, after the 10:00 a.m. service to inform the parish about the terms of the recommended proposal. If all goes well, the parish will vote on a resolution on Sunday, November 24 to approve the negotiation and execution of a ground lease that follows the terms set out in the resolution.

Why are we moving so quickly? We must, because the current lease with Ross terminates on January 31, 2021—only 15 months away. In addition to the time it takes to negotiate a ground lease, the chosen developer will need about 18 months to receive the necessary approvals from the City of Alexandria. So, we are already facing the possibility of enduring some months after the Ross lease ends without receiving the rent that is a significant part of our budget. Time is of the essence.

The terms we are negotiating with the developers are in most cases quite similar to the ones the parish already approved last January in connection with the Streetscape ground lease.

One exception is that the current developers are willing to give us approximately 5,000 square feet in the new building, which is less than the 10,000 square feet that Streetscape initially agreed upon.

Fortunately, at the behest of our Campus Planning Committee, a study conducted by Alexandria architect John Cole of Cole & Denny, Inc.—the architect who designed Fowler House—has concluded that there is a substantial amount of unused and underused space in the Parish House and the Memorial Parish House that can be renovated to accommodate many of the functions currently in Fowler House.

The Campus Planning Committee has spent months going over the needs of every function in Fowler House – from Sunday School and choirs to Bible Study and meetings. “We discovered that to meet 100 percent of current requirements, we need about 4,000 to 5,000 square feet beyond what the parish houses offer right now,” explained John Grey, chairman of the Campus Planning Committee. “And beyond giving us more usable space, renovating the parish houses can make our campus more welcoming and accessible, more efficient, and more in line with current building codes.”

John Cole is working now on a range of design options.

Please make a point of attending the Fowler House Information Sessions on November 10 after the 10:00 a.m. service. If a proposal quickly moves forward, there would be an all-parish vote on November 24.

As always, keep the future of Fowler House in your prayers.