

December 19, 2007

TO: Bush Hill Church Building Committee and Friends

FROM: Neil Sampson, Chair

CC: Paul Erickson, National Capital Presbytery
Tom DeMik, Burke & Herbert Bank
Fred Kuntz, Kuntz & Associates

RE: Progress

I want to begin this by wishing all of you a very Merry Christmas. May this season of rejoicing in the memory of our Savior's birth renew both your spirit and hope in the future of Bush Hill. We are certainly of great new hope in regard to our building renovation and renewal project.

For the first time in two years, we can report that we have received positive verbal responses to all of the issues in regard to our site plan review from Fairfax County. Don't get this wrong – we don't have the signed approvals yet. But we've satisfied the Water Authority, the Fire Marshall, and, it appears, the VDOT folks. Final papers will be provided to the county this week and, once the holiday season has taken its toll on the worker bees, it seems promising that we could actually see the final approval. We'll let you know when (if) the final shoe falls, but right now, we have reason for optimism.

If that approval is received, much remains to be done, but much can also move forward. As a first step, it would be great if we could come to the Session meeting and the Annual Meeting in late January with a report, budget, and request for final approval. Whether we'll get the county approval in time for that is not certain, but it would be great if it could happen. We should be ready, in case. We'll be back with a meeting schedule in early January when we know more.

On the design front, we will move into the building permit process, and indications so far from the county permit people are positive. We will also move into construction drawings and readiness for bidding procedures. Fred is poised to do that.

We also need to move right after the December 31 accounts are closed to get an external audit of the church's books. We've been thinking about doing this for the past year, but as the county kept us waiting, we held off on doing it. Now, it appears, we can do it on the year-end accounts, which is a good time for an audit. I will work with the Treasurer and the Finance Committee to see that we get it done.

Then, we will need to go to Presbytery with our final financing plan. They were aware of our preliminary plans a few months back, but those will need to be re-worked to make sure we are current on everything. That will take another look at any re-designs that have

been imposed by the county site plan review, and any construction cost changes that may have occurred in the interim. I'm not aware of anything major, but we gotta check.

As a final note, I hope you have been keeping track of the status of the fundraising project. I had hoped that we would end 2007 with \$750,000 cash in the bank. I'm afraid we won't make that, unless there's a big year-end surge that I haven't seen, but we should end up with over \$720,000. Our follow-up committee is working on designing the next phase of this effort, so I hope you will give them all kinds of support as you see their efforts unfold.

With this unabashed outpouring of good news, I hope you find, as I have, a continued sense that this project has been designed prayerfully with careful listening to the Spirit's guidance. It has not been fast or easy, and that could be cause for faltering. But it could also be cause for strengthening. Have the delays we've suffered led us into a time when contractor costs may be a little more favorable? Maybe. We'll know one day. However that works out, I believe that if we continue to ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance, and listen faithfully for the sound, we will hear it. Tonight, I'm hearing a joyful, Christmas sound. I hope you are, too.

In His Service... Neil Sampson