

UUFPP Real Estate: History and Status  
(Jay Joseph)

What the UUFPP owns now

The UUFPP owns two parcels totaling approximately 2 acres, as follows:

- The Sanctuary & Classrooms or Main Building at 415 Youngs Mill Lane sits on a 1.1-acre site that was purchased for \$31,500 on January 25, 1980. The parking lot and approximately 3,700 square foot building were built in 1980. We do not have a record of the construction costs for this building. The property is zoned O1-Office; churches require a conditional use permit in this zone.
- The Office & Adult RE or Annex at 13136 Warwick Boulevard sits on 0.87-acre site with an 1,800 square foot building that was purchased on January 28, 2010, for \$325,000. The property is zoned C1-Commercial; churches are a by-right use in this zone.

Bob Saunders, a real estate agent at Harvey Lindsay Commercial Real Estate, has been advising us on how to sell the existing real estate once we locate a replacement property. Mr. Saunders has also been surveying the market to identify opportunities for relocation.

What the UUFPP could have built if we had not decided to relocate

In 2007, with an update in 2013, the Williamsburg architectural firm of Guernsey Tingle with architect Roger Guernsey (Unitarian Universalist of Williamsburg member and now retired from the practice of architecture) conducted a feasibility study and developed conceptual plans and costs to demolish the Annex and add on to the existing building. The plan can be summarized as follows:

- Demolish 1,800 sq. ft. Annex.
- Build addition of 5,340 sq. ft. resulting in 9,040 sq. ft. total building, which includes:
  - New 2,100 sq. ft., 286-seat sanctuary with old, 1000 sq. ft. sanctuary converted to fellowship hall
  - 9 classrooms, 3 offices, new foyer, new bathrooms, new kitchen o  
100-space parking lot, with a single curb cut on Youngs Mill Lane

Repeated estimates of the costs to accomplish this plan deemed it to be cost prohibitive. Furthermore, the constraints of the small, 2-acre size would have limited future expansion and programming opportunities.

What the UUFPP should expect now that we have decided to relocate

In 2008, the Space Committee looked at buying land and building an all-new building. Building all new would offer many advantages including: a design to our exact specifications; modern, energy efficient construction; and, potentially, a more central, more visible location. The estimated cost in 2008 to buy a

\$600,000 parcel of land and build a 10,000 sq. ft. building was over \$3.6 million. It would be significantly higher today. Building all new is the least affordable and therefore least feasible solution. We should therefore expect to buy a property with an existing building, as Coastal Virginia UU did. This new property may have already been a church, or it may have been another use that can be converted to a church. We have no way of knowing when we will locate an attractive, existing building. It took Norfolk five years to find a suitable site with an existing building to renovate.

### Recent Experience Searching Properties

In the last 2 ½ years, the Real Estate Task Force and the Planning Committee have had members suggest more than 20 properties. Most have been rejected on first consideration for reasons including: too small; wrong location; too large; in a flood zone; land only so too expensive to build; unwilling seller (e.g., City-owned); and already under contract to another buyer. Representatives of the UUFP have toured two properties: in early 2020, St. Mark's Episcopal Church at 2605 Cunningham Drive, Hampton and, in early 2021, Emmanuel Lutheran Church at 23 Semple Farm Road, Hampton. St. Mark's was rejected for its location, access, and poor floor plan. Emmanuel Lutheran was rejected over concerns for future flooding, size and design of the social gathering space, and the readiness of the UUFP to buy as this was prior to the successful capital campaign. Note that both of these properties subsequently sold at prices the UUFP could have afforded.

All members are encouraged to submit ideas for properties. Please keep in mind that we are seeking to grow. From our current 2-acre site, we would like to move to at least a 4-acre site. And from our current 5,500 square feet of buildings, we would like to move to a building of at least 8,000 to 10,000 square feet. Many other considerations will come into consideration including parking, green space, design, and location. The Real Estate Committee and the Planning Committee will screen all submissions and alert the Policy Board to any that deserve further consideration.