



Cowichan Station Area Association

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Community Conversation About the Church

Summary

Approximately 40 people attended a meeting hosted by the CSAA to discuss the future of the church and listen to the Anglican Diocese's plans. The meetings began with a brief overview of the history of the church provided by Rodger Hunter. A summary is attached.

The audience broke into small groups to discuss two questions:

- a. What does the community value about the site?
- b. What would be welcome uses of the site in the future?

The discussion results are summarized below and include additional input received from people who provided email comments.

Peter Daniel, Asset Manager for the Anglican Diocese, then presented the Diocese's preferred plan for the site which would be for the community to take on a long term lease and become responsible for managing the site to best meet the community's needs. Their proposal is also attached.

Community Conversation:

The church and Church Site Values:

- Anchor/heart of Cowichan Station – a landmark
- Creation of the community (land donated, volunteers etc.)
- Community memories – weddings, funerals, grave sites
- Historically important:
 - WWI artifacts
 - Stained glass windows
 - cemetery

- Beauty/picturesque structure
- Architecturally representative of rural character
- Ambience, energy; public/openness
- Active Cemetery - graves, family – active – plots spoken for
- Connections with broader community
- Spiritual place
- Tourism values (along with Bright Angela dn Kinsol etc. – need bus service)

Welcome Uses:

- Retain historical/picturesque values - Restore the building
- Retain for community/public use
- Do not conflict with HUB uses
- Retain spiritual use, e.g.:
 - All inclusive/nondenominational/interfaith
 - Church – weddings and funerals
 - Spiritual/Meditation/Yoga centre
 - Retreat
- Others:
 - Local crafts, art gallery (CVAC?), spinning mill
 - Museum, memorial wall, Remembrance Day service
 - Music school/recitals
 - Monastic use of bells
 - Pub, restaurant, tea house, hostel
 - Day care or home school use
 - Extension of Jack Fleetwood Park - Picnic spot - Tennis court at the back
 - Community: library/book club, kitchen, elections, storage, Farmer's market space, swap meet
 - Caretakers residence
 - clinic

A Brief History of St Andrew Church, Cowichan Station

At the Turn of the Century:

- McPherson's was a bustling village – hotels, butcher shops, shoemaker, boarding houses, sports halls
- The Bridge was built in 1876
- The Railway opened 1886
- The village was a hub for farmers, loggers, and miners
- McPherson's was renamed Cowichan Station when the post office arrived to avoid confusion with the McPherson in the Maritimes.

Church was a Community Effort:

- Church was built by the broader community:
- Land was donated - Arthur Parry and Ada Cook received \$1 each for their portion of the 6/10 acre
- Construction happened through community fund raising (a dance and concert) and volunteer labour
- Rock for the font was donated from the local Koksilah Quarry Co.
- The Bell was donated by the E&N crewmen

Through the Years:

- 1912 church enlarged for a growing community - fund raising for a parsonage began
- 1914 Cowichan Station school opened
- 1921 Burials in the churchyard began
- 13 district men who lost their lives in WWI were commemorated in a church window and a bell tower was built to house a new thanksgiving peace bell.
- 2 stained glass rosettes and parts of a lectern were rescued from church ruins in Europe and incorporated into the church
- 1931 electric lighting in the church
- 1956 church hall was built and in 1963 it was extended to include a kitchen
- 1979 Cowichan Station lost its post office
- 2007 the village lost its school and in 2010 lost its church

The Church was Always Self-Supporting and Inspiring:

- Church has waxed and waned over the years as has the village.
- Throughout it was always self-supporting – this was not a missionary parish.
- The community gave generously to its church – e.g., Clarence and May Ross provided the toilets for the expansion of the hall in the early 60s - and to the Diocese – e.g., A rectory was purchased in 1992 for \$120,000 in Eagle Heights. In 2005 it sold netting \$140,000 for the diocese.

The Diocese Chose to Close the Church in 2010:

- Anglican diocese conducted a broad study resulting in the decision to close many small churches in favour of regional churches.
- St Andrew was closed in 2010.
- A building inspector, at that time, assessed -
The buildings have a few deficiencies - some of which are significant.
e.g., Roofing, electrical, septic, structural/drainage issues among others were identified.
- Community members also identified that general use and marketability of the property may be negatively affected by the:
 - Institutional Zoning
 - Lease from Island Corridor Foundation of the parking area & SE corner

- Existing easements – well is on an adjacent property
- Cemetery

Anglican Diocese Proposal

Letter of Intent to Lease items for consideration

- **Term.** Rental term should be of sufficient length for the tenant to recover costs of retrofit. The Diocese is proposing a rental term of 25 years with renewals.
- **Rent.** Initial term rent would be nominal (\$1 per year). Rent would apply on renewals and would be negotiated between the Diocese and the tenant.
- **State of property.** The Diocese will lease the property as is where is after removal of important chattels (property and records that are important to the church). Stained Glass windows will stay in place and most of the chattels and equipment in the Hall will stay in place. On agreement, a comprehensive list of items will be catalogued.
- **Use of property.** The Church may be used for weddings and funerals and religious service as approved by the Diocese. The Church may be used for Community events in keeping with the history of the property (music offerings; lectures; etc.) The Hall may be used as allowed in zoning and the Diocese would not object to rezoning for retail and commercial uses consistent with the history and character of the property (galleries; retail shop; studios; public use space; restaurant; display; artisan workshop; etc.)
- **Financing on title.** The Diocese will not permit the property to be mortgaged or pledged as security for financing. They will permit the lease to be mortgaged and used as security for financing (mortgage of lease)
- **Securing grants for restoration.** The Diocese as underlying land owners will execute heritage and other grants that may be available for restoration of the property. Such execution of documents may be required to be approved by Finance and Diocesan Council of the Diocese. The Diocese will not allow the property to be designated Heritage.
- **Building condition reports.** The Diocese has some information on the state of the property and what may be required to restore the property. This information will be available to the tenant on execution of a Letter of Intent in order that the tenant may complete due diligence
- **Insurance.** The Diocese has insurance coverage on the property and may continue to insure the property on agreement with the tenant for payment of annual insurance premiums.
- **Cemetery.** The property is surrounded by cemetery. The Diocese will want the tenant to care for the cemetery and keep it properly landscaped. The Diocese would pay for landscaping and maintenance in an annual amount to be negotiated. In the case where additional niches and burial plots may be sold, the Diocese will make appropriate arrangements with the tenant for oversight, recapture of any tenant costs, etc.
- **Permission for Improvements.** The Diocese will approve plans for building improvements, site improvements, servicing changes, etc. providing that changes are approved by local governing authorities and approved in zoning. The Diocese will

- require approval all major and structural changes as reasonably requested by the tenant. Diocesan approvals will not be unreasonably withheld.
- **Subject Conditions.** The Diocese will require that the lease be approved by both the Diocese Finance Committee and the Diocesan Council. The Diocese will expect that the tenant will require sufficient time to undertake full due diligence on this potential transaction including securing building condition reports; acceptable use plans; indications of Grant funding, etc. Estimate a due diligence period of 4 months from execution of a Letter of Intent.
 - **Documents.** The Diocese will draw lease documents as required in order to facilitate this arrangement and on the advice of the tenant that they wish to proceed to a formal lease agreement after due diligence.
 - **Timing.** The Diocese has some interest from a potential purchaser of the property and would expect to have a Letter of Intent to Lease subject to due diligence and Finance and Diocesan Council approvals by end of November 2013.