

**Minutes of a Special Congregational Meeting
Sunday, December 6, 2009, 12:30 P.M.**

“Pending Approval at the January 2010 Board Meeting.”

Welcome – Rev. Kate Walker, Minister, MVUC welcomed the congregants. Reid Adler, Board Chair, confirmed that a quorum was present and reported that the meeting had been duly convened with appropriate notice per the MVUC Bylaws. The meeting began at 12:30 pm as scheduled.

I. Report from Board of Trustees – Reid discussed the primary purpose of the meeting being to discuss and vote on the cell phone tower initiative. Other informational matters discussed included the following:

1. Building Project and Capital Campaign Discussion: Reid provided an update on where the church is in the process of considering next steps for the building project. The building task force is obtaining new quotes and a financial analysis is ongoing, but no decisions should be made until the results of the upcoming stewardship campaign and membership growth initiatives this spring have been considered. The Building Task Force and Finance Committees need to consider realistic funding options. In addition, a capital campaign feasibility study may be desirable before any decision point. Thus, no recommendations will be made by the Board for the Congregation to consider until later in the church year, with an update to be provided at least by the annual general meeting.
2. Who we are as a Church; Revision of MVUC Mission Statement: Reid discussed the benefits for our community of revising and updating the Church mission statement. And there has been some general sentiment that our current mission statement is out of date and is not an optimal guide to decision making. Karen Tyson is leading the effort to consider evolution of the mission statement. In late January, this process will kick off at a Friday dinner meeting of interested congregants and Saturday visioning workshops. Karen will canvas members via email beforehand. Karen is looking for a working group of five to six members. If you are interested, please contact Karen directly.
3. Career Group Transition Meeting: Reid mentioned that the first meeting of this group took place yesterday and that the participants would like to have another networking meeting in January. The focus of this group is to assist MVUC members who are facing career changes resulting from the economic recession or otherwise. Interested church members may contact Reid, Vince Patton, Carolyn Slenska or Kate Walker if they would like to participate or facilitate.
4. Report on Status of Church Finances: Al Robbert, Finance Committee Chair, discussed the status of church finances. With respect to the building construction project, implementing both phases of the complete plan would cost about \$2.5 million and MVUC would likely need to borrow about \$1 million, requiring about \$80,000 annually for debt service. Alternatives for servicing this debt include developing new revenue streams (see discussion

below regarding the cell tower initiative). However, as Reid noted, no recommendations are being offered at this time for consideration by the Congregation.

5. Stewardship Update: Jim Potter discussed the plans for the upcoming Stewardship Campaign. The last two campaigns have been very successful, and we expect a successful campaign again this year. Over 60 church members have agreed to serve as stewards this year. The Stewardship Campaign will kick off in early February for this Church year.

II. Consideration of the Cell Phone Tower Resolution: Reid described the background and scope of MVUC's evaluation of this proposed project and the process that the Board had considered and utilized to reach this point. He extended his thanks to Joan Darrah, chair of the Cell Tower Committee and those involved in this complex process. The Board of Trustees supports the placement of a cell phone tower on MVUC grounds, and believes that a decision to proceed should be made by the Congregation.

Joan Darrah, Cell Phone Tower Committee Chair, presented a Powerpoint presentation outlining the process and pragmatics of this initiative, including input from the communications industry (AT&T specifically), Fairfax County, MVUC's neighbors, the FCC and other agencies. In December 2008, AT&T approached the church regarding constructing the tower and this proposal has evolved to one that could include up to four cell phone providers using the same tower. As Joan explained, the tower would substantially improve cell phone coverage on MVUC's buildings and grounds, more broadly so in this portion of Fairfax County including improved police networking. The tower also would generate about \$40,000 income per year (with inflation adjustments of 3 percent per year). Also, our local County Supervisor favors this cell tower and Joan has been in regular contact with his staff. Several years ago, a similar proposal had been approved by the Congregation. It provoked concern on the part of residents in the area and the cell phone company dropped the project during the County approval process. An MVUC congregational forum was held in October 2009 to provide information and address concerns related to the current proposal under discussion. MVUC's website also contains important information regarding the cell tower and associated issues and concerns.

Concerns focus on purported adverse health effects of electromagnetic, non-ionizing radiation, the effect on community house prices, spiritual considerations, and aesthetics. The overwhelming preponderance of scientific evidence has failed to demonstrate a link between cell phone tower microwave radiation and human illness. The Federal Communications Commission, American Cancer Society and World Health Organization have all stated that the electromagnetic, non-ionizing radiation associated with cell phone towers has not been demonstrated to cause human health problems.

Alan Bunner, MVUC congregant and physicist, discussed health/radiation concerns and provided substantial explanation regarding safety issues. He explained the differences between microwave electromagnetic radiation (non-ionizing) from a cell phone tower, which does not cause human cell damage and ionizing radiation such as x-rays, which can cause such damage. The overwhelming body of scientific evidence supports the conclusion that radiation from the cell phone tower will not pose health risks to the community.

As one of the highest elevations in Fairfax County, the MVUC church grounds are an ideal location for a cell tower in this part of the county. The proposed tower may accommodate up to four separate cell phone companies. The proposed tower would be about 30-40 feet above the cluster of trees in the meadow and would be designed to look like a tree. The construction will comply with all Fairfax County and FCC requirements and will include aesthetic considerations to blend the tower and additional ground fixtures into the surrounding environment. An access road will need to be built across the meadow for servicing the tower and ground fixtures.

The President of the Mason Hill Citizens Association sent MVUC a letter saying that the Association is strongly opposed to the placement of the tower. About a dozen neighbors picketed on the street near our driveway before services this morning, including a number of children carrying signs, one of which said "PLEASE DON'T KILL KIDS."

The main purpose of today's meeting was to permit members to express their feelings and ask questions regarding this initiative, and for the congregation to vote by written ballot on the following proposal:

"The Board of Trustees is authorized to contract for construction of a communications tower on church property."

Points that were expressed in favor of the cell phone include the generation of assured, index-linked income that the church needs; enhancements of cell phone coverage on the Hill, which may lead to improvements in safety and communications for church members and staff; and general improvement in cell phone coverage in this area of Fairfax County, thus benefiting all cell phone users. Meagan Henry, DRE discussed safety enhancements that might be realized by building the tower as a means of reaching emergency responders via cell phones or communicating to and from parents whose children are in RE classes. In particular, weekend sleep over activities will benefit from cell phone access.

There was considerable discussion among church members, with a number of members contributing comments either in support of or opposed to the construction of the tower. MVUC members provided perspectives on historical aspects of previous initiative at MVUC, science, health and safety issues, theological and religious perspectives, concerns regarding support for commercial vendors and possible conflict with the church mission, positive and/or negative impact on community relations, ecological issues, matters of conscience, aesthetics, damage to the meadow, risks of possible litigation, irreversibility once built, etc; other members spoke very favorably regarding the initiative specifically focusing on financial considerations, improvements in phone reception in support of emergency considerations on the hill and general benefits for the larger community. Members commenting included Larry Jackley, Jack Hinman, Marty Hayden, Peter Mosley, Helen Joy Kitrosser, Kathi McNeil, Emily Francomano, Glenn Sheffield, Keith Krogh, Lynn Alsmeyer-Johnson, Al Robbert, Alvin Macomber, Linda Jemison, Adriana Krogh, Bill Means, Sallie Joy Remington, Marge Witting, and Dan Cohen. There were widely divergent sentiments expressed by various members.

Keith and Adriana Krogh and one or two other members made a motion to postpone the vote for a month or so until there was further opportunity to discuss the resolution. Keith, who has an

extensive background in telecommunications, offered to serve on the committee. However, Reid explained that he would not recognize the motion because there was no longer a quorum present to vote on this motion, as the meeting had continued past the allotted time, and many members had already either voted by proxy or had voted and left the meeting. As a result, the vote continued as planned.

Voting was conducted by written ballot and included absentee ballots, proxy ballots and onsite balloting before, during and at the conclusion of the meeting. A considerable number of votes were cast in the commons during coffee hour before the actual discussions took place at the meeting. The Board had permitted flexible balloting in order to maximize the number of who could vote. The results of the balloting confirmed that approximately 75percent of voting members supported the cell phone tower construction and 25 percent opposed the construction. Final tally was 121 in favor, 38 opposed.

The Board of Trustees was thus authorized to proceed with a contract with AT&T for construction of the cell phone tower.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:15pm.

DLC and RGA
December 8, 2009