



June 25, 2019

Dear Members and Friends of the Hills Church,

A few weeks have gone by since we last communicated with you about the progress of the renovation project which is getting underway this summer, and you've probably noticed some of the changes already. After a couple of months of sorting, purging, packing, and storing, the Nursery School, the Church School, and the church staff and clergy have vacated the Parish House. A temporary home has been found for everything we wish to keep in various places around the complex, not to mention the storage pods in the parking lot. As of last week, the staff and clergy were settled in their temporary quarters and are fully operational with phones, computers, internet access, and teapots. For some of the details about how, when and where staff and clergy will be operating during construction, please refer to Matt's messages in the June 6 and June 13 church newsletters (which can be found on the church website <https://www.hillschurch.org/news/>), and the last several Sunday Orders of Worship.

In addition, yesterday the Town of Wellesley issued the building permit we needed to move forward with this summer's construction work in the Parish House. The demolition work involved is scheduled to begin tomorrow. It is important to note that the size of this summer's Parish House project triggered a legal requirement obligating us to install sprinklers and other fire safety improvements throughout the church complex. Because of this, the Town of Wellesley conditioned the issuance of our building permit on receipt of a commitment from us about when we would do that. Although Church Council in a June 16 letter to the Fire Department, requested three to five years to get this done – at an estimated cost of \$800,000 in current dollars – Town officials would not agree to anything beyond June 2021.

Upon learning this, Church Council met again on June 18. After much deliberation, Council determined that the estimated cost of delaying the current project was so significant that continuing to negotiate with the Town in an effort to try to get them to agree to give us more time – while at the same time attempting to organize a Special Meeting of the Congregation to review this matter with the congregation as a whole – would not be in the church's best interest.

Acting on behalf of the congregation and bearing in mind that sprinklers and fire safety upgrades throughout the complex were seen by the congregation as a high priority during the Master Planning process, Council moved to accept the June 2021 completion date being offered by the Town. Fortunately, our Owner's Project Manager (OPM) and contractor believe completing the additional fire safety work required by June 2021 is feasible. That said, Council recognizes that the success of our impending capital campaign will be a key factor when it comes to deciding on the approach we take to doing that. There will be discussion and a vote by the congregation on this point in the fall.

In related news, consistent with the votes taken at the March 3 and May 12 Special Meetings of the Congregation, the Stewards Support Board, led by Chair Jeff McGrew, negotiated and documented a line of credit arrangement with a local bank to provide the short-term financing needed in connection with this summer's construction work. This transaction was successfully completed last Thursday, June 20.

Looking ahead a bit, the Master Plan Steering Committee approved the final version of the Master Plan last Friday, June 21. This plan includes the Committee's suggestions about how to group and sequence the various proposed projects. The plan will be presented to Church Council at their next meeting (July 16), and we will be reaching out to the congregation in the coming weeks to communicate when and how it will be shared in the fall.

With respect to the Capital Campaign, work continues on the Fundraising Feasibility and Planning Study we commissioned Walsh & Associates, our campaign consultant, to conduct for us. Earlier this month, Walsh completed thirty-five in-person and telephone interviews of our parishioners, and is currently receiving responses to the online survey which will be open through the end of the day today, **Tuesday, June 25**. If you have not already completed an in-person or online survey, would you please take a minute to complete the online survey now by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/5052837/WellesleyHillsCongregationalChurch>

or, by filling out the paper version, copies of which are available in the relocated Church Office in the former Ushers' Room. We would like to have the benefit of input from as many members as possible. The Feasibility Report itself will be presented to Campaign Co-Chairs Bob Minetti and Steven Patrick in mid-July and will be instrumental in developing a successful capital campaign.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact any of the Moderators individually or by email: officeofthemoderator@hillschuch.org.

In service and faith,

Mary Hill Canavan, Gintas Vildzius, Christopher Stowell

Office of the Moderator