

Visioning Committee Answer Sessions – 15 & 17 March 2015
Notes on Questions and Answers
Prepared by: Scott Witt

Visioning Committee Members:

Sue Padilla – Co-chair; member of St. Albert’s Finance Council
Karen Perez – Co-Chair
Phil Muñoz – Newman Foundation
Sal Melendrez – Campus Ministry
Deacon Bob Brotherton - Architect
Scott Witt – St. Albert’s Pastoral Council
Deacon Dave McNeill
Greg Carrasco
Jose Rodriguez
Dorothy Rivera
Bob Ogas

The meeting on 15 March was held in De Colores Hall after the 1100 Mass. Aside from the committee members, 11 parishioners attended. The meeting on 17 March was held at The Bridge at 6:15 pm, the committee and 14 parishioners attending, some of whom had attended the earlier session.

The questions we answered were received during two listening sessions held 10 and 12 February in De Colores Hall. Questions and answers follow here, with Answerers identified by topic.

Financial Questions (Sue Padilla):

1. How do the PIP funds work: what are the restrictions on use, administrative process, and how is the fund structured?

A: A new PIP policy was put in place by the Diocese in November. Father Ray received a response to his letter asking for the St. Albert’s PIP balance and availability (the response letter was read to the audience at the meeting). The Diocese uses two well-known and respected companies to invest PIP funds. The funds are not invested in equities or money markets. Rate of return is approximately 2.5% for 2014.

2. What is the immediate availability of any funds and what are the restrictions on withdrawal of those funds? Who is the approval authority for each account?

A: Funds are requested through the Diocese with a justification. The Diocese reviews the requests and makes a decision (PIP reviews/recommends and Bishop decides). Be aware that availability may not be immediate, depending on the amount and other requests against the PIP.

3. How would new funds be handled? Does it depend on the source? Who would provide oversight?

A: New funds raised for building would go into the PIP, which is managed by the Diocese. The PIP Committee provides oversight.

4. Has the PIP process been revised recently? Was it changed to be more transparent on the Newman financials? Is it appropriate/correct to have our money go into the PIP and then we need to justify a need?

A: The PIP and its policies were approved by the Diocese in November 2014. The new policies are much more transparent to the parishes and balances are available upon request. Requesting monies contributed by St. Albert's parishioners results in a necessary review and oversight process that is essential to good stewardship of the funds. All parishes participate in this process.

5. Are there "protections" in place to prevent what happened in the past from happening again to our funding?

A: The primary protections are the PIP Committee and professional financial staff at the Diocese.

6. Is the PIP insured?

A: No. Invested monies are not insured for either institutional or private investments. The law is different than the FDIC coverage for personal accounts.

7. What is the weekly offering used for? Is that included in the funds that are at the Diocese?

A: The weekly offerings fund daily parish operations and maintenance. The money does not go to the Diocese. Monies returned to St. Albert's as a 'rebate' from contributions in excess of the goal for UIM are deposited in the PIP account. A key part of the feasibility study will be to determine if weekly collections will be sufficient to pay for operation and maintenance of any new structures.

Financial Questions (Phil Muñoz):

1. How much money was raised that was specific to this project? How much was raised in the Capital Campaign? Savings? Other funds?

A: \$1.2 million was pledged for the project, \$667,174.00 was collected. There is \$104,000 in the general account, \$37,000 in the Columbarium account and about \$3,000 in savings. Total St. Albert monies: a little more than \$810,000.00 as of the end of 2014. This money is net of any fees charged by the Diocese.

2. How much of that money is “left”? Where is it? What expenditures have been made from those funds?

A: \$810K remains available. No expenditures were made from ‘project’ monies. The architectural designs of a few years ago were paid out of savings (approximately \$70,000. The plans are definitely re-usable).

3. What is the balance in the Newman Foundation Fund? What are the restrictions on that fund?

A: The Newman Foundation funding is slightly more than \$300,000. This Foundation money is held separate and apart from the Diocese. In general terms, the funds can be used to further the ‘mission’ of the Parish, which supports the Newman Center. For example, Newman Foundation funds have been used in the past to buy property and the Rectory.

4. Are there other funds available?

A: Newman Foundation funds could be used for construction, especially for a multi-use Hall for the Campus Ministry. Such a building might include office and classroom spaces as well.

5. Has a construction loan been considered? What are the terms on a construction loan (interest/loan period)?

A: No construction loan is being considered at this time. It is premature at this point as we have no firm plan that describes the options for the way ahead. That is the purpose of these sessions with parishioners: to hear what parishioners think about what we should do.

6. Are any efforts being made to acquire property on the west side of Solano?

A: Not currently.

7. Are the Newman Foundation monies also at the Diocese?

A: No, they are held separate and apart from the Diocese in its own bank account. The Newman Foundation is managed by board of seven members.

8. Is there a percentage of capital campaign funds (\$~~666667~~,154) that is restricted in terms of use?

A: All Capital Campaign funds must be used for capital improvements.

9. How much of the money (in the various funds) can be used for building?

A: ~~Potentially, all \$810K~~667, 154 could be used for new construction.

10. How can someone contribute to the Newman Foundation?

A: Contributions to the Newman Foundation can be made directly by specifically designating the contribution to the Newman Foundation.

11. Can we purchase The Bridge?

A: It has been explored in the past, but is not on the table currently.

12. What money was used to purchase the surrounding properties?

A: Newman Foundation money was used to purchase the various properties, including the Rectory. All properties were turned over to the church.

Project Administration Questions (Sue Padilla):

1. What is the “quorum” to determine consensus on a project?

A: There is no single body where a quorum will determine the direction of the project. Based on input from parishioners, the Visioning Committee, the Pastoral Council and the Finance Council will explore all the possible options and make them known to the congregation. Parishioner input will then be key in determining what the consensus is.

It is very important that parishioners attend the various sessions hosted by the Visioning Committee as this process proceeds. The worst situation would be one where only a small fraction of parishioners are heard from in deciding the ultimate direction of the project. Information and the ability to give feedback and input to the Visioning Committee is also available on the website at <http://www.stalbertnewmancenter.org/apps/search?q=visioning> .

The timeline for decision-making will depend to some degree on how quickly we can come to a consensus on the way ahead. Once a decision is made, we expect to move expeditiously on the project. This will keep costs down substantially.

2. What happened to the previous project? Why was it not started or completed?

A: The plan for the previous project stagnated for a variety of reasons. When Fr. Ray arrived, he wanted to refresh the plan, so we are starting with the Visioning Committee gathering information, doing needs assessments and getting parishioner input.

3. Where are the 1999 and 2009 needs assessments and what do they tell us?

A: After some searching, we have found them and they will be posted on the Visioning page of the website.

4. Can the Bishop tell us we cannot do the project? What is the Diocesan process for a new project?

A: Yes, the Bishop ~~and can~~ tell us that we cannot do the project, but it is unlikely if we follow the process that the Diocese has outlined and we do our homework well. The listening sessions went into detail as to what that process is. See the presentation on the Visioning Committee webpage.

6. What is the minimum required budget to begin any project?

A: The minimum required budget will be derived from a completed feasibility study. Then the parish must demonstrate that it has a good, sound, executable financial plan for achieving its goals which must then be approved by the Bishop.

7. How much land do we have?

A: We currently hold 2.4 acres.

8. Are there other facilities that we might use instead of building new (IHM School, NMSU parking, Campus Faith Center, etc.)?

A: The short answer is “no.” The campus faith center is a heavily used, multi-faith center for NMSU students and faculty. IHM school rooms are already fully subscribed. Parking is an issue that will be examined in detail as the project proceeds.

9. What will happen to any of the existing structures that we own?

A: Unknown at this time; we are still very early in the planning process and examining options for cost and feasibility.

Demographic Questions (Sal Melendrez):

1. How many students are there at the Newman Center?

A: The number varies, as you might expect. However, Sal has generated some numbers in support of grant requests that the Campus Ministry makes:

Newman Center Student Use:

	2008/9	2010/11	2013/14
# of CM events	190	213	283
Participants	1,686	1,187	2,418
Ministry interactions	4,864	4,300	5,840

Campus ministry does have the resources to identify each student to each activity, and there are some students, obviously, that attend more than one event. In any case, the numbers represent participation that has to be resourced. Sal pointed out that a pretty good number of the individuals called to the priesthood at St. Albert’s came up through the Newman Center.

2. What is the level of student participation?

NMSU does not collect information any longer on the declared religion of the students. We do not know how many Catholics are on campus, but some estimates put it as high as 50%. Of course, Newman Center also reaches out to non-Catholics as part of its mission.

The amount of student participation has grown mostly unabated for the past 10 years. Growth can be negatively affected by the lack of space. The instantiation of Casa Amistad has helped relieve some, but not all of the pressure.

3. Is CCD being included in the plans for new space? What are the numbers for CCD participants and associated space needs?

A: Space use and requirements will be refreshed in our feasibility study as part of the normal data gathering. All current activities and new needs of the parish that are identified will be considered. We know for certain that we have been short of space for a very long time as the parish has grown consistently over the years.

Infrastructure Questions (Deacon Bob Brotherton):

1. Will the Diocese allow us to move? What land would be available? What are the restrictions on moving?

A: A fundamental requirement for the Newman Center is that it be close to NMSU so as to provide the best support to that mission. Current Diocesan policy is that new parishes require a minimum of 10 acres at their new site. If we were to move St. Albert's and keep it close to NMSU, we would need to find that size parcel in the vicinity of the university. This would likely make any future project unaffordable. We will work with the land available to us now, and other land contiguous to the current site that we may be able to afford to purchase, should it become available.

2. Have we tried to purchase the houses on Solano and Mesa?

A: We are always paying attention to lots coming available and have made overtures in the past, but to no avail.

3. Have we considered a parking garage or building on stilts to allow parking underneath? What are the parking requirements and limitations?

A: The cost to build a parking structure is approximately \$22,000 per stall, making such a structure cost prohibitive, even if we could identify the land where it would be built. We are investigating all possibilities available to address the parking issue.

4. Can we close either Mesa or Chaparral?

A: No. Per the city, Mesa and Chaparral must remain open to emergency vehicles and utility services.

5. How will the previous work be used?

A: We are leveraging past needs assessments to gain insight into the issues. We expect that we can use the previous architectural drawings if necessary, possibly with some modification.

6. What is the “price tag” on the original project (new church)?

A: The original price tag in 2011 was \$2.433 million, plus \$300,000 for furniture. The cost for the same project today (2014) is estimated to be at least \$3.1 million.

7. What is the feasibility and cost of expanding the current worship space?

A: A previous estimate put the cost of opening up the worship space by removing the divider between De Colores Hall and the sanctuary at approximately \$75,000.

8. Will new structures be multi-purpose?

A: We are definitely looking at multi-use structures to maximize the spaces meeting our needs. One possibility being examined is a multi-story unit that would be capable of housing both Campus Ministry activities as well as sufficient office and classroom space.