

St. Anthony School Building Roundtable Summary

Roundtable participants were asked to consider what they would like to see happen in the vacant St. Anthony School building, to not worry about being practical but to allow their imaginations to dream about what uses/uses would be good for the parish, neighbors, the surrounding community. Roundtable participants were specifically asked not to hold back because of concerns about money, building condition, etc. There would be time to deal with those concerns at a later date.

PROPOSALS: There were 184 ideas proposed. The proposed ideas dealt with facilities for the arts (9), education (48), health (10), community use (49), parish use (3), commercial/retail (37), and housing (22). Although only 5 proposals specifically called for mixed use, because of the size of the building, many of the uses specified were to be considered as part of a mixed use facility. Many of the proposals overlapped by category, such as arts/music/ education, community/gym/business, etc. Of the 48 educational ideas, 12 specifically mentioned charter schools.

Proposals which seemed to warrant use of the entire building were for a school for the arts, a satellite of one of the major universities, a full health facility run by one of the major hospitals, a regional library, a business incubator, a charter school, housing for seniors, a hospice facility, and a facility such as the Ronald McDonald House.

Most other ideas would have been for a mixed use facility which would include art/music/dance/ theatre programs and studios, craft businesses, small craft shops selling locally-made and ethnic crafts, classes in languages, union apprenticeship programs, daycare, afterschool programs and GED programs.

Also included on the wish list were community services which have been serving the community and may want to expand such as AA, Meals on Wheels, St. Vincent DePaul. Other groups mentioned who may want space include CASA to run a temporary work program, Beans and Bread, Harbel, St. Ambrose Housing Aid, Head Start, and the Charcoal Club. Suggested community services were youth and recreation programs, social service programs, a police sub-station, police cadet training program, an international multicultural center, immigrant services, housing for the homeless and legal services.

Other ideas presented dealing with education were: a business school, career training such as cooking, fashion design, vocational education programs, yoga and other exercise programs, and parenting classes.

Many small businesses were suggested for such a facility, including a book store, a coffee shop, an ice cream parlor, a rental hall, bowling alley, art gallery, and, one that generated applause, a rooftop garden café.

Ideas for use of the property surrounding the building included a farmer's market, flea market, a "victory" garden, and more green space.

Many of the above ideas would require dividing the space and finding or developing a management entity. There seemed to be acceptance to ideas which provided for a mixture of residential, small business, and community uses.

OPPORTUNITIES: There were six comments regarding the opportunities that this facility could provide: that it could accommodate the growing needs of seniors in the community; it could provide alternatives to street life for young people; and, it could answer the growing need for a community gathering place.

CONCERNS: Obviously, there were some concerns expressed. It was cautioned that vocational training that is not accredited should be avoided; the plumbing needs to be upgraded; the building is not handicap accessible; asbestos removal is costly; the building needs a lot of renovation; and, grant funding as well as other funding is difficult at this time.

TO: Attendees of St. Anthony/Mother Mary Lange School Roundtable Discussions

The former school building sits on the St. Anthony of Padua Parish grounds. Maintenance of the building, even though empty, creates financial stress for the parish. Any such large, empty structure represents potential opportunities to serve community needs. The existence of any large empty structure is not in the community's interest. The desirability of finding a constructive use for the building is clearly self-apparent.

In recognition that any action regarding the building would affect the overall community and not just our parish, I authorized the Parish Housing Committee to organize and conduct two roundtable meetings to solicit input from you, parishioners, neighbors, community and political leaders. Both sessions were well attended with a wide range of constructive observations offered.

The observations consisted of specific proposals (184), general opportunities (6) and concerns to be considered during decision-making (6). A summary of the statements, grouped by type of use, is attached.

The Baltimore International Academy expressed interest in acquiring the building. The Academy operates a charter school at a location, which they will have to vacate by this fall. The attachment shows that education, their intended use, is one preferred by the roundtables attendees. The Academy has the economic resources to make the building improvements required for the use. The goals of their charter school are such that it does not represent competition to nearby parish schools.

The archdiocese formed a committee to administer the sale/lease of church property. They are actively negotiating with the Academy for a long-term lease. An early resolution is expected since the Academy must start immediate planning for the forthcoming school year.

Your participation in the roundtables represents a valuable community service. We will keep you informed as additional information becomes available.

Appreciatively,

Rev. Ty S. Hullinger

SUMMARIES BY CATEGORY AND TOPIC

CONCERN

topic = Education (3 detail records)

topic = Maintenance (2 detail records)

topic = Unclear (1 detail record)

Summary for 'Category' = CONCERN (6 detail records)

OPPORTUNITY

topic = Community (3 detail records)

topic = Education (1 detail record)

topic = Maintenance (2 detail records)

Summary for 'Category' = OPPORTUNITY (6 detail records)

PROPOSAL

topic = Arts (9 detail records)

topic = Commercial (31 detail records)

topic = Community (49 detail records)

topic = Education (48 detail records)

topic = Health (10 detail records)

topic = Housing (22 detail records)

topic = Mixed-use (5 detail records)

topic = Parrish (3 detail records)

topic = Retail (6 detail records)

topic = Unclear (1 detail record)

Summary for 'Category' = PROPOSAL (184 detail records)