

MISSION, VISION AND LONG RANGE PLANNING: Del Dickey, Greg Brumpton May 6,
2005

Lakehead Unitarian Fellowship members have written Mission and Vision statements several times in the past; rarely has there been a strategy to implement them. At the Annual Finance Meeting (October 2001) the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) presented revised Mission and Vision statements for members to consider. There were slight but not substantive, changes to the wording.

The LRPC set out to develop strategies to reach the Mission and Vision goals. Planners polled members on their priorities (February 2002 newsletter) and by October 2002 set out to:

- (1) look for a new building
- (2) determine the cost of making our present building barrier free.

The availability of Redwood Church is first mentioned in a January 2003 letter to the Board. By May 2003, approximately 50% of LUF members returned the UNDATED survey form "Planning for LUF, including a potential new building". Extensive information about Redwood was part of this form.

LUF monthly newsletters are the main source of information for the approximately 40% of our members who do not regularly attend the Sunday Services. Until June, 2003, there is no specific mention of the Redwood church in the newsletters. The June newsletter described the opportunity to tour Redwood.

During the summer of 2003, the LRPC explored other space possibilities but determined that Redwood offered the most cost effective choice.

In the Fall of 2003 a Newsletter article related Long Range Planning to the Vision and Mission statements, not specifically to a new building. Rev. Karen Gustafson (Duluth Unitarian Church) led 'Crossroads Workshops' during her two visits of November 30 and December 21. These workshops laid the foundation for step-by-step planning towards the goal of moving to a larger space.

Future planning meetings continued with Rev. Gustafson on the weekends of Jan 18 and Feb 22, 2004. The January 2004 newsletter stressed the importance of pledging and outlined staff changes because the Clerk of the Fellowship (with 12 years experience) was moving to Manitoba. The February newsletter invited members and friends to attend the Sunday Service on February 22 at the Redwood Church. Rev Gustafson expressed the idea that LUF members and friends should experience a Sunday Service in a different location, but this was generally interpreted as a chance to see if we were serious about buying the building.

2004, FEBRUARY 22 TO APRIL 18

Rev. Karen Gustafson led the Feb 22 Sunday Service at Redwood. Focus groups following the service gave those present a chance to discuss Redwood's possibilities. Approximately 50% of those at the service completed and turned in their focus survey forms that day. A few more came in later. Financial planning in the form of a business plan was to be available to members at this service (although I could not confirm that it was distributed). On March 7 members had the chance to attend an information meeting about the purchase of Redwood.

At the March 16 Special Board meeting, the Board created 4 committees to plan the purchase of Redwood. By March 23 one committee was preparing an offer to purchase. Other committees were planning the financial strategy to complete the purchase, including the question of a mortgage and the guarantees necessary to obtain one.

The April newsletter announced the vote on the purchase of Redwood for April 18th. Members received details of the purchase plans by surface mail, - 3 UNDATED pages of information about the purchase and an UNDATED official call to the April meeting. Between April 9 (the date on the canvassers' information sheet) and the vote on April 18, the members of the Building Finance Committee set out to visit, or discuss by phone with every member, the capital financing of the project.

The Building Finance Committee was not exploring the financing needed for an increased operating budget. The April 14 canvasser's handout encourages members to discuss the proposed business plan to operate the Redwood with the members of the Building Finance Committee since the discussion of the operating budget needs "to broaden and deepen". There were 4 days left before the vote.

On April 18, at an emotional meeting, members voted not to purchase Redwood.

AFTER THE VOTE

At the Annual General Meeting on June 6, 2004, members voted to have the committee "reconsider the purchase of Redwood". By August, the new Board had set up a Redwood Acquisition Committee, but in November changed the name to the Building Acquisition Committee (BAG) because Redwood was off the market.

The 2004-2005 Board's new approach to Long Range Planning started with an every member canvass (Campaign 05) and a series of Focus Groups, attended by about 50% of the members, in the winter of 2005. Members discussed the focus group results on April 17, 2005.

For more detail about the information in this binder, see the Minutes of the Building Acquisition Committee and the Building Finance Committee.