

## **AD HOC READING ROOM LEASE RENEWAL/RELOCATION COMMITTEE REPORT January 26, 2016**

Good evening fellow members—

Your Ad Hoc Reading Room Lease Renewal/Relocation Committee is back at work. As you may recall, our current lease—a one-year lease—expires at the end of April. You also may recall that at the time of the lease renewal last year, the building was changing ownership. The new owner is Peel Properties, a very nice local company that also has several other companies who will be occupying space at 4520 East-West Highway.

Before signing our current lease, we requested a notice of intention at the sixth-month point so we would know what the new owner's plans were, if any, for our space. In turn, we would provide the same information if we had specific plans in mind. What we first learned was that we would be given another one-year lease with no amenities such as paint or carpet. More recently, we have learned that Peel Properties would like a portion—about one quarter—of our space back for their own purposes and have offered to redesign our space and our rent would be adjusted accordingly.

We have had several casual conversations with Transwestern, the leasing agent. They have been very friendly discussions, and a sincere desire has been expressed that Peel Properties would like to work with us in a way that meets our needs and at the same time reportion the space to meet their needs. Just yesterday, Transwestern presented two options that they feel Mr. Peel would likely agree to. They are:

- 1) We could stay in our current space with a one-year lease extension—AS IS—meaning that no upgrades such as paint or carpeting would be offered
- 2) We could stay in our current space with a new five-year lease in which Peel Properties would pay for the redesign, paint, carpeting, and possibly other amenities

The Committee has not yet had the opportunity to discuss this at length or talk it through with the Board. We will be doing so shortly. It may be possible that we could counter their five-year offer to a shorter term, but we don't know at this time. We will consider raising that question as we continue to move forward.

The agent from Streetsense who we had previously mentioned and thought would work out well, did not, so we are now engaged with Guy D'Amecourt, a member of Sixth Church and a long-time commercial realtor in DC. Guy has represented a number of area churches and Reading Rooms and enjoys supporting the Cause in this way. He has been very responsive and informative, and we are grateful for his knowledge, efforts, and harmonious teamwork.

We are in regular contact with Guy, and he has been providing us with listings of potential spaces in Bethesda. Consequently, we have been out in the community

looking at spaces, mostly from the outside, though we have had one formal appointment to see an interior which was not suitable. We are also providing Guy with addresses of places we could envision our Reading Room located. Guy is happily looking into them as well, should there be an opportunity to assume a space or takeover a partial space if a tenant is looking to downsize. If you see a location or street that you feel may be fitting for our Reading Room, please let us know.

In an effort to look out for our best interests and not lose any opportunity, Guy has asked the church to be prepared by obtaining a financial report of our church's financial wellbeing from an independent Certified Public Accountant and a written recommendation from Lincoln Properties for the purpose of having documented proof of our longstanding sound credit. In addition, he has asked that we establish a system to put a non-binding hold on any potential Reading Room location with a specific clause that any transaction is subject to the approval of the membership. The Board has authorized taking these practical steps.

It is really too soon to make a recommendation to the Board, but as you can see, your committee is carefully considering all of the options. We would very much appreciate your ideas and especially your prayerful support. The right answer will be clear to our church as we collectively put all outlining aside and turn to Truth for the answer.

In doing so, we are finding Mrs. Eddy's familiar passage from the bottom of page 323 of *Science and Health* to be very helpful. "Willingness to become as a little child and to leave the old for the new, renders thought receptive of the advanced idea. Gladness to leave the false landmarks and joy to see them disappear, — this disposition helps to precipitate the ultimate harmony." The *old* we are purposefully leaving is any aggressive suggestion that would try to get us to use mortal reasoning, whether it be in regard to human history, economy, place, purpose, value, and or the like. Instead we are moving forward in our efforts with a fresh sense of the Scientific facts that are already in operation—inspired ideas about the grandeur of God and His Reading Room "affording proof of its utility" (*Science and Health*, page 583).

We thank you for your support.

Lovingly submitted,

Ellen Wolf, Chair