

Good morning. The Vestry has good news to report on the New Parish House and Community Center project.

Beginning last November, Bethesda submitted detailed plans to the City of Saratoga Springs for the approvals necessary to begin building the New Parish House and Community Center. Dozens and dozens of meetings, email exchanges and phone calls ensued from that time as we, our construction managers at Sano Rubin, our architects at John G. Waite Associates, and our site consultants at the LA Group answered every question and concern that came up. If I tried to convey all the details, we would be here until this evening. I will thus spare you the details.

The situation today is this. We received the City's approval last week for our site plans, and we will be able to begin soon, with the placement of a fence around the site, and installation of erosion control measures to protect our neighbor's property during construction.

At the next available opportunity, we will also appear before the Design Review Commission, or DRC, so they can re-approve what they approved in 2015 and 2017. Our DRC approval has lapsed, and we have re-applied to the DRC for a renewal.

Before the City's State of Emergency was declared on Friday, we were headed for the DRC meeting March 18, but that has now been cancelled. We expect the DRC will meet in April, with Bethesda on the agenda. We expect all will go well before the DRC because the essential design of the building has not changed since it was previously approved by the DRC. Once DRC approval is obtained, we will complete the process for a foundation permit and the building permit. Soon after the anticipated DRC approval, test pits will be drilled to identify the location of bedrock, so that any adjustments to the basement interior walls can be made.

In the coming weeks, you will see equipment and activity on our adjacent lot, and that will continue for the coming 14 months as the building is constructed. Although there are still some permitting steps for us to take, we are confident that all approvals will be obtained, now that the site plans are accepted. With God's help, we've made great strides over the last few months, and the pathway forward is coming together.

As we have placed the New Parish House and Community Center project in God's hands, so too should we trust in Him to guide us through the coronavirus pandemic. May the Lord's blessings be with you all.