

“Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, an architect well known for her involvement with the neo-traditionalist planning movement, has described some criteria for measuring good design. She writes that good design is an intentional act that provides an elegant solution to a given problem, without generating any new problems of its own. Good design understands the broader parameters of a problem, beyond those given in a program or those superficially evident. Further, good design has a healthy respect for history, understanding that some experience transcends time and can be beneficially applicable under new circumstances. “

The Three E Principles of Fair Process

There are three mutually reinforcing elements that define fair process: engagement, explanation, and clarity of expectation.

Having raised a child with a strong ADHD proclivity, I have become particularly attuned to the need for a fair process if one wants to succeed in any discussion. My motivations here are not from the standpoint of my personal opinions about the project, but from the standpoint of creating the environment for a fair process for all involved.

I think we have tried hard to create opportunities for engagement. I think the standards of explanation and clarity of expectation are still lacking. I believe the overriding reason for this has to do with the simple fact that we can't explain when we, as a group, do not have clarity of expectation.

This project is very complicated, and the answers to questions that would allow us to successfully frame the scope of the project have been slow to materialize. Again, because it is complicated. Each new revelation has raised more questions and new complications regarding how all the pieces will fit together. I hope that we are getting near to the point where these puzzle pieces can be assembled into a coherent and unified vision of what this project truly means. We are not there yet. A few of the complications remaining to be resolved are: the project budget, and the impacts of each part of the project individually - organ removal, choir loft lowering, chancel reconstruction, tax credits, etc. -which are coming closer to clarity as they stand alone, but must work together to create a complete picture. We need time to reach that last step and then we need time to meaningfully explain both the parts and the whole to our congregation.

You have seen some budgetary estimates related to the costs of slowing our implementation, which show that taking the time we need to come to the point where fair process can be the determinant of how or if we proceed should not significantly impact the cost. Given this, I believe there is a greater cost to the Church community of rushing to get started than there is to waiting for a more complete understanding and a fair process. For that reason I would urge the Council to consider a motion to postpone the start of implementation, and give us the time to build a more complete picture of the project.

Proposed Motion - to defer setting any start date for Project Enter-In until a general design concept for all portions of the project has been approved by council and, as necessary, by the congregation; the project as designed and approved appears to fit within our funding sources; the scheduling of the major components has been evaluated to minimize disruption and maximize the efficiency of the construction project.