



Greater KC Regional Center &lt;office@kcdisciples.org&gt;

**Regional Board Meeting June 27 2022**

6 messages

**Mark Willis** <markswillis@gmail.com>

Mon, Jun 27, 2022 at 9:33 PM

To: Greater Kansas City Christian Church <office@kcdisciples.org>, Bill Rose-Heim <blirh@kcdisciples.org>, Mary Kegler <mkeg51@aol.com>, John Steinmetz <johnsteinmetz@yahoo.com>, James Vertreese <james.vertreese@gmail.com>, Neil Engle <neil@hccck.org>

Present: Bill Rose-Heim, Mark Willis, Dr. Bill Drake, James Vertrees, Sheryl Tucker, Lois Kelley, Jan Brooks, Neil Engle, John Steinmetz, Laura Phillips, Lisa Engleken, Mary Lou Kegler, Peggy Chandler, Jenna Engleken, Jeff Hon, Dr. Delessyn Kennebrew, Dave Roebuck, Courtney Setty, David Roeder, Ann Morton, Rhonda and Karl Hetzel, Audrey Culver, Adam Kelly, Anna Godsey, Dale and Debra Herrick, Keith Asaell, Rilee Morrow, Linda Harris, Abbey Widick

**Opening Devotion** - Video presented by John Steinmetz

**Consent Agenda** - Reports listed on <https://www.kcdisciples.org/regionalboard.html>  
Excluding:

- Treasurer's Report - James Vertrees
- James gave overview of financial report -
- Regional Operating Committee - DMF is ahead on giving by about \$1000, however congregational giving is less than projected - but overall in a good position overall in first five months of 2022
- Ministry Innovation Finances - income is a little down, but expenses are lower than anticipated
- Tall Oaks - Operating costs in red \$63K so far in 2022
- Projection for 2022 from UCCR through June 2022 is a deficit of \$5300

Also mention loss on investments for Region through March 31 2022 of \$175K

Question for which funds we are invested in - James referred us to Kirby Gould for that breakdown

Question about subsidy to Tall Oaks as reported on board report - James explained that we have given \$60,000 but UCCR projections show they won't need entire amount - decisions to be made on what we do with surplus

Question about UCCR projection vs reality - projections based on bookings, question about bookings and if they are assured - James mentioned he can only go on what they report - but if they don't need entire subsidy from region, we would get that money back

**Old Business**

John did a recap of last couple years of Tall Oaks - looking for open discussion over next few months to determine future for Tall Oaks - tonight we will hear more on the options and time for questions to make sure we understand each option - THEN we will host five listening sessions across the region over next three months to share this information and include more regional participation - THEN in September Board will make a decision on which option to pursue.

**THE GOAL TONIGHT IS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE OPTIONS**

We are NOT making any decision tonight - ask questions tonight for UNDERSTANDING

This is not decisive - we must work together, understand each other, and make the best decision in the future we can together  
Listen to each other and listen for voice of God

Make sure ALL possibilities are fully heard, understood, and considered  
In all things as we pursue this goal: we are bound to God and to one another

Laura Phillips gave a brief recap of our relationship with UCCR

**Five Optional Futures for Tall Oaks Conference Center (Not listed in any order)**

*The key questions for each option:*

- What is God calling us to do?
- Will Greater Kansas City Disciples commit to fully supporting God's preferred option with our time, talent, and sufficient funding?
- The best option will result in clarity around the first question and a resounding YES! to the second question.

**OPTIONS****1. Sell Tall Oaks to a camp/conference center operator (John Steinmetz)**

find an existing camp operator to sell TO - for DOC camps going forward we would rent time for our camps, eliminate need for permanent staff  
Could work with Christian Camp and Conference Association to seek interest in TO, as well as other camp association members or other local camp operators

- determine sale amount
- find interested buyers
- We won't know interest until we attempt to find camp operator
- Potential Finance Impacts
- out of pocket could be minimal/higher if we fix up camp for sale
- Sale could bring possible \$50K + in interest from invested sale monies
- With proceeds of sale - could set up continuing ministry and mission focused on camp opportunities
- Other Regional Funds that have been going to camp could go to other ministries

#### Challenges

- May take substantial time to find interested buyer
- Not clear what price
- Another operator may not have ministry focus
- The loss of TO to region

#### Questions:

- May still have cost for nurse for camps - won't know til we are further along - Camp Nurse Association might have more info
- Could use money from sale for scholarships to help people attend camp
- Possibility of increase in rates as we receive discount now at TO
- Possibility of limited options for times for camps
- Possible for stipulations on sale? Option if we owned land and just sold camp

## 2. **Make Tall Oaks a separate entity from the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Greater Kansas City with its own governing board and full fiduciary responsibility (Bill Drake)**

- TO managed and run by independent non-profit (Acorn Foundation) - but region still owns land
- Region continues control in major decisions for land/camp, could collect rent.
- Bill discussed what non-profit organization might look like
- Challenge for non-profit is maximizing profits in non-camping months
- Shared 3-5 year revenue estimate - included possibility of raising camp fees to generate more income from camps
- Who Does What?
- Acorn does management and improvement

Shared Challenges - loss of control, burden of still owning land

#### Questions:

- Region would own but not be responsible for costs? Yes, more tenant/owner relationship
- How different than current set up - Acorn would be responsible for making it work - would need active Board members with connections and expertise
- Is there an example of this? Yes, UCCR has several examples of this type of set up
- Current UCCR set up includes their profit margin and expenses, this option would be more a traditional renter/landlord situation
- Is Acorn org already established? Not yet - there would be work to do to get it up and running
- Would region still be required to carry insurance? Would have to be worked out for liability

## 3. **Pilot – Region completes deferred maintenance and hires new leadership (onto Regional staff) for a 3-yr pilot to see if Tall Oaks could be a sustainable ministry with reserve funds for maintenance/upkeep/capital improvements (Jeff Hon)**

- 3-5 year pilot program to own/operate property - develop plan to maximize profit/minimize expenses
- fewer staff/higher pay
- expectations for staff
- Chain of accountability
- Standard business practices
- Accounting functions through outside agency
- Marketing and Grant funding
- Hire staff
- Update housing for staff
- Hire temp staff as needed
- Restructure TO Board to bring in business professional for expertise

Discussed projected expenses and income based on break-even of 35% usage annually

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Who covers cost of pilot - \$80K up front from region, PLUS \$200-\$250K in needed upgrades and repairs - due to current UCCR situation, TO would start as a zero-sum business, with no money in reserves  
Would free up regional staff to not have to manage camp issues - but could establish new regional position for land/property management to be liaison between camp and region

#### Challenges

Future of camp attendees in era of Covid  
Staffing issues

#### Questions:

If we just booked camp on weekends all year long would come close to breaking even  
If run well, allow for better marketing to increase business  
At end of five year pilot - camp in better position if we want to consider other option then (ie: sale)

#### 4. Vision – Greater Kansas City Disciples fully invest in Tall Oaks, continue it as a ministry of our Region and a service to the community, expand its capabilities and facilities (Lisa and Jenna Engleken)

Focus on ministry/mission of Tall Oaks - utilising nature for spiritual opportunities  
Went over existing camps/booked usage  
Discussed staffing needs  
Additional revenue streams suggested  
Shared list of regional leaders who have come through TO camp program  
Shared testimonials from recent campers  
Handout available with more information - includes much of #3 option above with focus on spirituality and ministry of tall oaks

#### Question:

Could #3 and 4 be combined in some way? Also list of those who came through camp was not all-complete  
Main Point - tall oaks is asset/resource of region - get away from hospitality business - focus on ministry/spirituality  
3/4 would differ as #3 focuses on hospitality business end more  
Nature setting important to younger generations  
More modern ways to bring in unique revenue streams

#### 5. Sell the remainder of the campus (237 acres plus all facilities) (John Steinmetz)

Sell to buyer - may not be as camp  
List and sell to highest bidder, OR sell to previous buyer of other parcels of land  
For camps we would rent space from other camps/spaces  
Early estimate of \$3.5 million but more assessment and evaluation would be needed to determine sale price  
Don par - previous buyer would purchase of \$1 million - discuss options, including restrictions or even buying land and allowing us to continue to operate as a camp

#### Financial Impacts - cost of selling

IF sold for \$3million could generate investment income for region of \$100K per year  
Could use some of sale proceeds to fund ministries in region  
IF sold to Mr Parr, could use sale funds to complete upgrades and repairs to continue operating camp

#### Challenges

Could take time to find buyer  
Love of TO in region  
New Buyer could develop land

#### Questions

If we started to sell, bookings could be impacted negatively  
Native American connections/ties to use of land  
Mr. Parr owning/Region running is mirror opposite of #2 above

#### NEXT STEPS

Preparation for the Tall Oaks Listening/Discerning Sessions  
-Please visit <https://www.kcdisciples.org/todr.html> and read these documents prior to the meetings  
• What to Expect From Listening and Discernment Sessions  
• Draft Document to Receive Input from Participants

Use Rank Choice to give people options on decision and what they are willing to support - make sure it is clear which choice is which to make it as clear as possible

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**We ask that Board members help to promote and participate in at least one of the Listening/Discernment Sessions**

Question about how to get information out to region so people are aware of situation and can participate from an informed place  
Need to assess "What is commitment of region for TO?"  
Communication of listening sessions has not gone out yet until Board could approve  
Communicate number of people/groups who are already regular contributors to TO  
Listening sessions - is two weeks too soon, only one meeting north of river  
Put together video from region explaining how we got here for use by churches to spread news of sessions  
Add more listening sessions or add a Zoom call to include those not in KC area  
Should we get testimonials from outside camps that use TO? - Have to be careful not to create fear of closure

**Listening sessions: 2 – 3:30 pm**

-Sunday, July 10 Northland KC: Smithville FCC  
201 North Bridge Street, Smithville, MO 816.532.0773  
-Sunday, July 17 KC Central: Central CC  
3801 Linwood Blvd, Kansas City, MO (816) 921-3614  
-Sunday, July 31 KS North: Merriam CC  
9401 Johnson Dr, Merriam, KS (913) 432-2390  
-Sunday, August 7 KS South: Hillcrest CC  
11411 S Quivira Rd, Overland Park, KS (913) 663-2822  
-Sunday, August 14 Metro Southeast: Lee's Summit CC  
800 NE Tudor Rd, Lee's Summit, MO (816) 524-3616

**Next Regional Board meeting** on September 26, 2022 to be held in-person (with Zoom option) at the Merriam Christian Church starting with dinner at 5:30 pm. This meeting agenda will include:

- Approval of the state of officers and lay members for the Regional Board
- A decision on the future of Tall Oaks
- Review of a proposal for a season of discernment regarding the future of the Greater Kansas City Region
- Invitation to engage in conversations regarding proposed changes to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

**Closing Prayer - Mary Lou Kegler**

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