

## **St. Patrick Parish Apartment FAQ's – Top 12:**

Following up on our Town Hall meeting last month, our parish council and staff have put together this “top 12 list” of Frequently Asked Questions (many of them from the Town Hall meeting) to allow everyone to understand the discussion that has taken place in regard to the properties that the parish owns. There are other questions as well – and the full list is available on the parish website.

### **Q: What buildings does St. Patrick's own?**

A: The buildings at 46-48 West Princess Street and the block of buildings from 203 to 213 South Beaver Street.

### **Q: Why does the Parish own these properties?**

A: The parish purchased these properties in the early 1980's to drive out problem landlords and businesses. Thus, by these efforts the parish was able to “control” the block and rid it of the problems.

### **Q: Are the apartments profitable?**

A: While the apartments were never intended to be a source of significant income for the parish, it was always intended that they would not be a financial burden to the parish. In recent years they have become a serious financial burden on our parish finances. This fiscal year alone (from July 1, 2020 until March 31, 2021) the buildings have placed the parish in a deficit situation of \$40,000. So, the short answer to the question is, no.

### **Q: Are the properties currently used for subsidized housing, Section 8, or other low-income focused individuals or families?**

A: No.

### **Q: Is renovation of the buildings a possibility, and what kind of work needs to be done on the properties?**

A: While it is a possibility to renovate the buildings, it would come at a significant cost to the parish. The needed work is not simply cosmetic (updating a kitchen or painting or flooring) but structural (complete replacement of windows, roofs, repair to foundations & rapidly deteriorating utility connections like sewer, electrical rewiring) and other things to ensure we are code compliant (like water that consistently leaks into the basement near a water heater)

### **Q: Will the Diocese let the parish sell the properties?**

A: Yes. The diocese has a procedure to ensure the proper measures are taken.

### **Q: Does a sale mean eviction of the current tenants?**

A: No, but it is a possibility.

### **Q: I'm concerned that a sale of the apartments would take us back to the problems of old.**

A: The City of York, and this portion of the City in general, is much better off than it was decades ago. Gone are the derelict properties and slum lords in this area. Recently the South Beaver St. corridor from the heart of Downtown to Princess St. has been revitalized.

**Q: How would a sale of the properties impact the playground?**

A: It is not the intent of the parish to sell the Princess St. building, but because the property is truly beyond repair due to many years of neglect, the intent is to demolish it. This would actually give us the ability to expand the area of the playground. Sale of the Beaver St. buildings would not impact the playground as their property lines do not encroach into the play area. Additionally, fencing could be installed to create a clear boundary between the school lot and private property.

**Q: Why can't we get a group of parishioners together and do the renovations?**

A: While we do have many professionals in the parish, the extent of work would require a major commitment of time from many individuals and significant financial investments on the part of the parish. This would not only be a project that would be very long in duration, but also bring about additional financial losses to the parish to purchase the materials needed for the renovations – financial resources the parish does not have at this time.

**Q: Why are we now having this conversation?**

A: This is not a new situation nor a new discussion. For a number of years, the parish has been expending a significant amount of our income (your collections) on just basic upkeep on the properties. In fact, the extent of needed repairs was fully noted several years ago by the former Buildings and Grounds committee of the parish council which evolved into the Capital Improvement Committee. We are considering every possible option (and gathering all the pertinent financial impacts/costs) to deal with the consistent financial loss: sale of the properties, demolishing the properties, and renovation of the properties. However, every month that we keep the properties “as-is” means additional financial loss to the parish. This significant loss takes money away from repairs and ongoing upkeep in the Church proper, from other operating costs, and from other possible ministerial programs, projects, and outreach. For this reason, the advice from all of our parish consultative bodies (Parish Council & Parish Finance Council) is to eliminate the properties as a cost center in the next fiscal year budget, which begins July 1. Thus, we are proceeding so as to make that recommendation a reality.

**Additional Questions:**

Q: How many apartments are there?

A: There are 2 units in the Princess St. building, 5 standard apartments and 2 efficiency apartments on South Beaver St.

Q: Are the buildings historic?

A: While the buildings are not listed on a local, state or federal historic register they do fall in the City of York's zoning overlay for the Historical & Architectural Review Board (HARB). The HARB group would review and, recommend to City Council any approval or denial associated with permits to modify or demolish the apartments.

Q: How many of the apartments are currently vacant?

A: Including the Princess St. building, 3 of the 9 apartments are currently vacant.

Q: How does the current rent compare to other apartments nearby?

A: Based on our research, the rental rate for these apartments is lower than “market rate” for this area of the City. However, there are areas where the rent is lower, but other areas see a significantly higher monthly rent.

Q: Are the apartments safe?

A: Yes, they are safe for habitation.

Q: Are the apartments up to code?

A: The apartments are grandfathered into older versions of Code laws. Renovations to the apartments would require the deficiencies to be brought up to current Code compliance.

Q: How old are these buildings?

A: While the exact date of construction is unknown, they are over 100 years old.

Q: What has the parish done with these buildings over the years?

A: The buildings have been rental apartments.

Q: Who manages the apartments?

A: While over the years management companies have been used, the majority of years have seen Parish staff manage and maintain the properties.

Q: Are the properties part of the parish’s taxable property?

A: Yes, the parish pays taxes on the properties each year.

Q: Is demolition of the buildings a possibility?

A: While it is possible, they could be demolished and turned into a parking lot, green space or new buildings, the cost for demolition is expected to cost over \$180,000 which is an amount the Parish does not desire to spend.

Q: Are all the buildings in need of repair?

A: No, some of the units are in decent shape. Thankfully, some tenants over the years have used their own funds to maintain their unit.

Q: Is a sale of the apartments a possibility?

A: Yes, the parish selling the apartments to another party is a possibility.

Q: “I’m concerned that unfavorable businesses will move in.”

A: The City of York’s zoning ordinance and permitting process limits and restricts certain types of uses in certain zoning districts such as the one within which these properties are located. Furthermore, the size of the buildings does not lend themselves to a variety of commercial uses based on current Code standards.

Q: If sold, could the Parish have any say what happens there going forward?

A: Without ownership the parish would not control anything that goes on with the properties. That said, the parish could request in the sale a deed restriction that could prohibit certain uses as applicable within the law.

Q: How much are the properties worth?

A: An appraisal is expected to be completed in the near future. The current market for properties in the area is strong and the buildings are expected to appraise well.

Q: Could the parish do the renovations and pass the cost on to the tenants to help offset?

A: While technically yes, the monthly rent increase to do so would exceed even the highest current rental rates in the City.

Q: Do we need to keep the properties as a buffer?

A: Our parish is in an area very void of a residential neighborhood that we can reach out to and therefore, overall, we lack a direct connection to our "neighborhood." As a Catholic community we should welcome all new businesses and property owners and connect with them as possible to promote our mission/ministry.

Q: Has anyone approached the parish about purchasing the properties?

A: Yes, one interested developer has reached out expressing interest. As part of the Diocese's protocols, 3 offers would have to be entertained as part of a sale.

Q: Could the buildings remain apartments?

A: Yes, whomever purchases the property could keep everything as is. Other options could include renovation and re-sale for market rate apartments or single-family home ownership.