

Guidelines
for
Construction and Renovation
of
Parish Facilities



Building Commission
Diocese of Des Moines
2022

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Diocesan Building Commission

These guidelines are intended to assist parishes and diocesan institutions in the construction and/or renovation of cost-effective facilities that support the pastoral ministry of the parish or institution. Because the approval of the Bishop is required for any project beyond the ordinary administration of the parish, the Bishop has appointed the Diocesan Building Commission to advise him and parishes/institutions regarding new construction or renovation plans.

The Building Commission and diocesan staff strive to create a collaborative, team-oriented approach with the parish leadership and encourage the parish to do the same with its own building committee. Assembling the right team early in the project's planning is critical. Making sound decisions early in the process will save significant time, money and effort as the project continues.

The review of a parish project by the Bishop and the Diocesan Building Commission is required to assure that it contributes to the spiritual welfare of the faithful, and that the parish/institution has the necessary means to both construct and maintain the building.

One of the main foundations for any church construction or renovation project in the diocese will be the document from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture and Worship." It is recommended that this document be studied in detail by the parish committee which will provide leadership for any project related to worship space construction or renovation.

"One of the most significant and formative experiences in the life of a parish community is the process of building or renovating a church. As part of that process, parish members are called upon to study the Church's teaching and liturgical theology and to reflect upon their personal pieties, their individual tastes, and the parish history. By bringing together these personal and ecclesial elements in faith and in charity, parishioners help to build a new structure and to renew their parish community. The decision-making process and the parish education component that are part of the building experience can assist the parish and its individual members to deepen their sense of Catholic identity. This identity is shaped by the history of the particular parish, by its relationship to other parishes in the local Church known as the diocese, and by its relationship within the communion of local Churches known as the Roman Catholic Church. ...

Decisions about church art and architecture should always be based upon the theology of the Eucharistic assembly and its liturgical action and the understanding of the Church as the house of God on earth."

"Built of Living Stones: Art, Architecture, and Worship"
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishop

Project Steps

These are the general steps involved in a facilities improvement project. The Building Commission will work with the parish/institution to provide guidance and support throughout the process. Every effort will be made to plan meeting times and locations mutually beneficial to all involved.

Approval from Bishop to Study a Project

When a parish/institution identifies the need for a potential project, the first step to be taken is by the pastor of the parish or institutional leader who will write the Bishop and ask his permission to prepare a needs assessment relating to the project. The Bishop's approval will be communicated to the pastor/institutional leader.

Pastoral Planning/Needs Assessment

The Pastoral Council (or similar institutional consultative body) is responsible for ongoing pastoral planning for the parish. This involves discussions regarding future needs of the parish/institution looking forward as much as 20 years. Items to consider are future growth, age and condition of current physical plant, educational needs, new programs etc. To accomplish this, time must be regularly set aside at meetings for this purpose. As a part of the pastoral planning process, projects may be identified as necessary for the parish/institution. These potential projects may include building renovations, new construction or updating of major equipment.

The initial step in the process is for the parish/institution to form a Needs Assessment Committee with qualified members who will gather pertinent information and consider various approaches to addressing identified needs. Having done so, it will then be possible to develop the rationale for one or more possibilities which might address those needs. If necessary, the parish/institution should search outside its membership to obtain the necessary expertise to assist in this phase.

Any project which includes new church construction or changes to the arrangement of existing worship space must be coordinated through the Diocesan Office for Worship. Participation in the Diocesan Building Commission process will proceed based on the results of that consultation.

Any other project with a projected cost greater than \$50,000 also must be submitted through the Diocesan Building Commission process.

PROCESS FOR PROJECTS WITH COST OF \$250,000 OR MORE

Presentation to College of Consultors and Diocesan Finance Council

A special level of consultation is required for any projects estimated at a cost in excess of \$250,000. Having completed a needs assessment and arriving at a proposed project, the pastor/institutional leader will send a letter to the Bishop sharing a brief case statement for and summary scope of the project. The report will include minutes of meetings of the parish pastoral and finance councils where the project was discussed and approved (with voting results recorded). The proposal will include current parish financials, data related to parish growth, tithing trends, and the ability of the parish to meet current obligations. A preliminary timeline of the project as well as a Sources and Uses planning report will also be required. Depending on the project, documents detailing the proposal will be provided fifteen days prior to the consultation meetings.

Having provided this proposal to the Bishop, the Pastor and parish representatives will then meet with the College of Consultors and the Diocesan Finance Council. Following this consultation, consent is provided to the Bishop. When that consent is granted, a proxy will be prepared providing the pastor/institutional leader the authority to take necessary steps to implement the project. The project will proceed with the parish/institutional work and follow the remaining steps involving the Diocesan Building Commission.

PROCESS FOR ALL PROJECTS OF \$50,000 - \$250,000 OR MORE

Parish/Institutional Work/First meeting with Diocesan Building Commission

The diocesan Director of Stewardship schedules an orientation meeting at the parish/institution to explain and discuss feasibility studies and the overall fundraising process. This can include guidance for hiring consultants, potential costs and timeframes and alternate options. The parish/institution then proceeds with the feasibility study, with the understanding that the consultant for that process may or may not be involved in the actual fundraising portion of the project.

The parish/institution forms a building committee which initiates a process for design and construction of the project. The traditional design and construction project delivery approach is the "Design-Bid-Build" process. For this approach, the committee hires architect/design consultants to prepare construction design documents relating to the project. If the project involves liturgical or educational aspects, the Diocesan Director of Worship or Diocesan Superintendent of Schools and other appropriate consultants in those fields must be involved in the entire planning process. The project will then be bid to at least three qualified general contractors in a competitive bid process led by the architect. A list of contractors which have been involved with successful projects throughout the diocese will be available from the Director of Property Management.

With the approval of the Diocesan Building Commission, the building committee may consider an alternative project delivery method. An alternative project delivery approach involves engaging a contractor utilizing a competitive Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) process. These approaches

include Design Build, Construction Management (Agent and At-Risk), and negotiated General Construction. In each case, the committee interviews at least three contractors who are qualified to manage a contract of the size anticipated by the parish/institution. Once selected, the contractor prepares estimates at each document development phase with the goal to manage project costs. Each of these approaches ultimately requires the contracting entity to prepare a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) prior to the start of construction.

If the project involves construction or renovation of worship space, the pastor/institutional leader must meet with the Diocesan Director of Worship. A list of recommended liturgical consultants will be provided in order that expertise in that area is available to facilitate the planning. Only after the plan for the worship space has been developed and approved by the Bishop will permission be given to move forward with the remainder of the Church renovation or construction project.

When developing any new building project, or significantly renovating an existing building, parishes and institutions should plan for energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources of energy. While these methods may initially entail more expense, well-planned systems if properly designed can more than pay for themselves over time, and reflect our commitment to be good stewards of God's creation.

Square footage needs must be addressed before any drawings are made. The architect (for design, bid build process) or the contractor (for a qualification-based selection) will provide cost estimates based on the plan. The diocesan Director of Property Management can assist with a review of the plan and cost estimates.

Throughout the process, ample opportunity must be provided for information to be presented to parishioners or those served by the institution for the purpose of seeking their input and feedback. It is important that the pastoral plan, needs assessment, feasibility study and conceptual drawings be included in the presentation to the parish/institution community.

After significant input, discussion and revision, the parish, represented by the finance and pastoral councils, recommends approval of the project to the pastor. Following similar input, discussion and revision, the board of the institution will recommend approval of the project to the institution leadership.

Second Meeting with the Building Commission

Representatives of the parish/institution, including the pastor/institutional leader, present the feasibility study and conceptual plans to the Building Commission. (It would be helpful for written information to be submitted 15 days in advance of the meeting.) The Commission will be interested in the financial condition of the parish, the results of the feasibility study, and the details of the conceptual plans which include access, parking, seating, liturgical and educational elements and others. The Commission will ask questions to ascertain if the project, as presented, will be affordable to the parish/institution and will meet the needs of the parish/institution.

Following this presentation, the Building Commission determines whether it should recommend to the Bishop approval of the feasibility study and conceptual plans. If that recommendation is accepted the Bishop will give permission to proceed to the fundraising and design phase. This decision will be communicated in a letter from the Bishop to the pastor/institutional leader.

Parish/Institution Work on Final Design and Fundraising

Fundraising

In general terms, fundraising for the specific project should be planned over a three year period. 100% of the necessary funds for a project must be pledged and 50% must be collected before construction can proceed.

Unless approved by the Building Commission and Bishop for large projects, no long term debt is to be incurred. Short term construction loans are to be negotiated with local lending institutions. The Diocese is not in a position to guarantee parish construction loans.

Final Design

Final design and construction documents are developed with associated cost estimates. These estimates must be in line with fundraising progress.

Third Meeting with the Building Commission

The pastor/institutional leader and parish/institution representatives present the final fundraising information and project design to the Diocesan Building Commission.

The Building Commission recommends to the Bishop approval of all or part of the project based on fundraising and estimated costs. The Bishop will communicate his decision to the pastor/institutional leader by letter.

Selection of Contractor in Design, Bid, Build Process

The parish/institution interviews potential bidders and seeks bids from at least three qualified contractors.

The parish/institution analyzes the bids and chooses the best qualified bid. The Building Commission reviews the bid tabulation and approves the bid. (This generally does not involve a meeting of the Commission.)

Contracts and Insurance Coverage

The contracts must be sent to the Diocesan Directory of Property Management for review. Catholic Mutual Group (CMG) automatically provides up to \$10 million coverage of builders' risk insurance. The contract must be approved and evidence of necessary insurance, bonds, lien waivers and 5% retainage provided. The Director of Property Management will notify CMG that the project is starting and work with CMG to assure that necessary information is added to the property appraisal listing for the parish/institution.

The Directors of Administrative Services and Property Management contact the Bishop requesting appropriate proxies for the pastor/institutional leader to hold a corporation meeting and sign contracts. Construction of the project proceeds. Progress reports to the Building Commission are made by the Director of Property Management.

Concluding Activities

The parish/institution schedules dedication of the project through the Bishop's office.

A final report is made by the director of Property Management to the Building Commission. The parish or institution provides one electronic copy (pdf files) for diocesan archives. The architect or general contractor must complete necessary forms for the new construction or major building renovation to be included in property insurance coverage provided through Catholic Mutual Group.

Process for Projects with Cost of Less than \$50,000

For projects costing less than \$50,000, the pastor/institutional leader contacts the Director of Property Management who will recommend seeking multiple bids for the project. Contracts for work to be accomplished must be reviewed by the Director of Property Management. If the cost of the project is \$25,000 or more, the Directors of Administrative Services and Property Management will contact the Bishop requesting appropriate proxies for the pastor/institutional leader to hold a corporation meeting and sign contracts.

Diocese of Des Moines

Facilities Renovation/Construction Process

