1. Process & Representation

Q: Why was Homes by Avi chosen without broader consultation or parish representation at the outset?

A: Homes by Avi had prior successful collaborations with the Diocese on similar projects and was initially engaged for preliminary exploration. The parish now acknowledges that including parish representatives earlier could have fostered greater trust. Over 15 other developers were approached, all declining to pursue a smaller-scale project.

Q: Why weren’t parishioners, including the Parish Council, involved earlier, and what caused the urgency around December 6?

A: Early discussions were exploratory and focused on gathering feasibility information. Parishioners and the Council were brought in once a tangible proposal emerged. The December 6 date was tied to logistical constraints and development timelines, but the parish has extended discussions to ensure thorough consultation and parishioner input.

Q: Have all viable alternatives or competitive bids been explored?

A: Yes. According to the information provided, the parish and Diocese consulted over 15 developers. Those who reviewed smaller-scale projects (e.g., only renovating the hall or parking area) deemed them financially unfeasible and declined. Homes by Avi agreed to proceed with an integrated plan that includes new church facilities, a hall, and residential units.

2. Church Demolition & Design

Q: Why must the entire church be demolished instead of renovating only the hall and parking area?

A: While the church has historical and architectural significance, it also has aging infrastructure that poses ongoing financial and functional challenges. The proposal to rebuild is driven by the need for a modern, more versatile space to support parish growth and ministry. Smaller-scale renovations would neither address long-term sustainability nor generate sufficient funding to build or maintain a new hall.

Q: Could the church’s unique features (e.g., stained glass, hexagonal sanctuary) be preserved?

A: The plan specifically includes preserving key architectural elements such as stained glass and other distinctive features. These will be thoughtfully integrated into the new design to honor the church’s spiritual and historical legacy.

Q: What will the new church look like from the outside—will it have a distinct appearance or blend in with the residential building?

A: While detailed architectural plans are currently being drafted, the Diocese and developer intend to create a clearly identifiable worship space within a mixed-use development. The design phase will consider the parish’s desire for a distinct, sacred appearance rather than simply blending in as part of an apartment complex.

3. Alternative Proposals

Q: Have other developers been approached for smaller-scale solutions that preserve more of the existing church?

A: Yes. However, over 15 developers either declined or found a smaller-scale project financially infeasible. The parish’s need for a new hall and ongoing maintenance costs made a simple renovation or partial redevelopment untenable from the developers’ standpoint.

Q: Why integrate the church into a condo project—could the land be developed differently?

A: Integrating the church into a mixed-use development was the most financially viable way to fund a new church and hall. This approach also allows the Diocese to retain title ownership of the land, ensuring parish oversight and a consistent revenue or value stream to sustain parish operations.

4. Financial & Maintenance Concerns

Q: What financial due diligence was conducted, and what happens if project costs exceed $7.5 million?

A: The Diocese and Parish Finance Committee have been conducting monthly financial reviews. The base budget of $7.5 million is intended to cover 10,000 sq. ft. of worship, hall, and office space plus covered parking. Any additional features or overruns would require extra fundraising or cost-management strategies. The parish’s history of limited fundraising capacity is a key reason this integrated project is being proposed.

Q: Why can’t the parish simply fundraise for a standalone hall?

A: Previous fundraising efforts (including during recent church renovations) did not reach the required targets—even when the parish community was larger. The Diocese concluded that the parish is unlikely to raise enough for a standalone facility and associated maintenance without additional revenue streams.

Q: How will ongoing maintenance be managed if the church is on the ground floor of a residential building?

A: Modern construction standards and robust infrastructure planning are expected to address plumbing, noise, and general maintenance concerns. The Diocese and Homes by Avi intend to structure maintenance responsibilities clearly.

Q: Will a wood-framed structure depreciate more quickly than concrete?

A: Parishioners have voiced concerns about depreciation and maintenance costs. While no specific building method is confirmed in the content provided, the developer and Diocese indicate that modern, high-quality construction standards are planned. They will balance cost-effectiveness with durability to protect the parish’s long-term interests.

5. Community & Faith Impact

Q: How will worship and parish activities continue during the anticipated two-year construction period?

A: The parish is exploring options such as using St. Pius School or another nearby parish for worship and community gatherings. Lessons from COVID-related dispersion have reinforced the importance of proactive communication and maintaining a welcoming interim space.

Q: Could attendance and parish unity suffer if parishioners disperse?

A: The Diocese acknowledges this concern. To mitigate it, they plan to keep parishioners well-informed, maintain community ties through regular updates and gatherings, and ensure the temporary space supports as many normal parish activities as possible.

Q: How will residential tenants above the sanctuary affect the sacred atmosphere of worship?

A: The proposal includes design elements aimed at preserving reverence in the worship space. Noise insulation, layout considerations, and building codes can help minimize disruptions from residential units above the church.

6. Transparency & Accountability

Q: Who are the Diocese’s or parish’s independent advisors, and do they have vested interests in this project?

A: The Diocese has its own consulting team, having previously worked with Homes by Avi. The parish leadership is committed to transparency and has pledged to share more details on external advisors and any potential conflicts of interest if they arise.

Q: How much remains from past renovation or facilities expansion funds, and how will it be used?

A: As of September 30, 2024, the facilities expansion fund has approximately $739,900. Additionally, the parish’s general cash balance is about $635,600. These funds are distinct from each other and will be used for expansion or enhancements deemed necessary for the new facility.

Q: Will parishioners have meaningful input on design and final decisions?

A: Yes. The design phase will include opportunities for parishioners to provide feedback on layout, functionality, and spiritual aspects of the new space. The parish leadership intends to maintain open lines of communication and regular updates through meetings, email, and poster boards.

Q: How will progress, costs, and any overruns be reported?

A: The Parish Finance Committee and building committee are expected to provide regular updates. As indicated, monthly accounting and periodic parish-wide communications will inform parishioners of significant developments, financial progress, and any adjustments.

7. Logistics & Implementation

Q: What is the timeline for design, permitting, demolition, and construction?

A: Design and permitting are planned for 2025 and 2026, with demolition and construction commencing once all permits are secured. The actual duration for demolition and construction is estimated at around two years, though final schedules depend on city approvals and design complexities.

Q: How will temporary worship arrangements affect attendance and costs?

A: Specific details (e.g., renting another facility or using a nearby school) are to be addressed in the coming months. The parish aims to minimize disruptions, but there may be added costs for temporary space and logistics. Ensuring parish unity and attendance is a priority throughout this process.

Q: Will there be more city land appropriations (e.g., Crowchild interchange)?

A: The City has not indicated further interest in additional land appropriations at this time. The parish will remain engaged with city planners to monitor any potential infrastructure changes.

8. Long-Term Viability & Outcomes

Q: What if most parishioners oppose the redevelopment—will the project still proceed?

A: The Diocese and building committee emphasize that parishioner feedback is crucial. If widespread opposition emerges, they will reassess the proposal’s viability and consider whether an alternative path is feasible.

Q: How does this plan ensure it supports the parish’s spiritual mission and outreach?

A: Redevelopment aims to provide modern, functional facilities that encourage community engagement, attract new families, and maintain the parish’s vibrancy. Preserving key spiritual elements (e.g., sacred symbols, stained glass) is a priority to sustain continuity of worship and parish identity.

Q: If the parish cannot fundraise beyond the $7.5 million base plan, will the project still meet future needs?

A: The $7.5 million budget covers a basic level of facilities (worship space, hall, offices, and covered parking). Any desired upgrades or enhancements would require additional parish-led fundraising. Still, the base plan intends to address the most critical needs and offer a foundation for growth.

The parish leadership has pledged regular communication and encourages parishioners to submit questions through poster boards at the church, handouts, or email. Further meetings are planned for January, February and March to discuss feedback, refine the design, and ensure the final plan aligns with the parish’s mission, heritage, and future growth.