

## SECRETS OF A DOME NOME

There is a freedom of faith and connection between myself and the Freestone Retreat property. It reflects the words of Ansel Adams and thoughts of Walt Whitman. Ansel, speaking of the need to have faith in our national parks, said "...not the petty platitudes and protestations, not the cynical depreciations and escapisms, but the deep-searching beliefs, transcending pride and self-interest that will create and perpetuate the concepts of an advanced society..."

My long-standing support of the Freestone enterprise expresses my respect for the land, for those who occupied the land before colonization, resistance to rampant efforts to degrade the environment and hasten disastrous climate change.

The Retreat has allowed me, and will allow others, to gather in a quiet space "and enjoy what peace there is in silence..."

I hope the efforts to raise the funds necessary for Dome repairs will ultimately produce a structure and space open to continued community building within the UUCB congregation but also for sharing not only with other nearby UU congregations but also as a respite for those in need of temporary shelter, and a place for First Americans to maintain their connection to land once theirs.

Please join me in continuing the 100 year old retreat legacy for future UUCB generations.

Sincerely,

Bob Moore

Retreat dome house construction volunteer and  
long time Freestone Committee member

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **-WHAT ARE WE VOTING ON?**

*A positive vote will provide for more time to complete the original milestones in the resolution of March 16, 2023, passed by majority congregational vote. The original milestone 1 date of December 1, 2024 was extended by the Board, last December, to April 1, 2025. The durations of milestones 2 through 5 remain the same as the original resolution. The new milestone dates would be as follows.*

<i>Milestone 1 – Raise \$250,000</i>	<i>Sept. 30, 2025</i>
<i>Milestone 2 – Procure County building permit for Phase 1 work</i>	<i>Apr. 1, 2026</i>
<i>Milestone 3 – Complete Phase 1 work</i>	<i>Apr. 1, 2027</i>
<i>Milestone 4 – Procure County building permit for Phase 2 work</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2027</i>
<i>Milestone 5 – Complete Phase 2 work</i>	<i>Oct. 1, 2028</i>

*This vote would not change or extend the terms of the church's temporary financial help, \$10K per year, for this and next year. This financial help will be reimbursed by Freestone funding when available.*

**WHY WAS THE FIRST MILESTONE MISSED?** *The Freestone Committee ran into unforeseen challenges in pursuit of the \$250,000 in funding. Their initial attempt at raising the funds was the pursuit of a conservation easement on lots 1 & 2 and partially on the retreat partial. At the time of the original resolution vote, an easement looked extremely likely as Biden's IRA bill had \$20B earmarked for land conservation easements. Agencies told us that us getting an easement looked very favorable, however that did not pan out as anticipated. It took a lot more time than anticipated to locate potential easements and an agency that would sponsor us. Also while pursuing an easement, we could not list for sale lots 1 & 2, or agencies would not consider our applications. Ultimately we did submit an easement application and it was denied. We then proceeded with sale of lots 1 & 2 and soon had a buyer under contract. However they backed out after months of performing due diligence, not wanting to take on the risk of having to find water themselves after purchase of the lots. The Committee then took on the task drilling a well. It first hired a hydro geologist to perform subterranean testing to locate good*

*potential well locations. A well was then drilled but came up dry. The Committee then pursued drilling a second well after further hydro geologist subterranean testing and location of a very favorable site to drill (80-90% of striking adequate flow of water). Winter rains then caught us a few days before our scheduled drilling. A very wet winter (twice normal) have kept us from pursuing drilling due to wet ground conditions that have prevented drilling site access. Now that the weather has finally warmed up and the ground is dry enough, we plan to drill before the end of next week, April 25th. If the well finds water our realtor advises that we should easily sell the two lots together for around \$325,000. Listing and sale of the lots is estimated to take 3 to 4 months.*

***WHAT HAPPENS IF THE VOTE FAILS?*** *If the vote fails then per the original resolution the Board is directed to sell the complete Freestone enterprise consisting of lots 1 & 2 (approx. 7 acres together) and the retreat house on its lot 4 (approx. 13 acres). The church would then not have a retreat for use by the congregation for the first time in over 100 years. Proceeds from the sale are estimated to be around \$1.2 million. How those would be used would be subject to a congregational vote.*

***HAS THE CHURCH CONTRIBUTED TO THE COST OF DRILLING OF THE WELLS?*** *No, the drilling of the two wells has been funded by supporters of Freestone.*

***IS THE FREESTONE RETREAT FUNDED BY UUCB?*** *The Freestone retreat has always operated as a financially independent operation and does not receive funding from UUCB. The retreat has operated from rents received from use, fund raising events and supporter donations. However after the retreat was closed to use a few years ago, and could not collect rents, the church has been paying for insurance, property taxes and utilities. These will be paid back after sale of the two lots, or the whole enterprise (lots, and retreat house and parcel) are sold.*