

St. Anthony Catholic Church

Columbus, Nebraska

Open House Follow-Up: Questions & Answers

Thursday, October 1, 2026, at 6:30 PM

Sunday, October 4, 2026, at 3:00 PM

Overview from the Facilities Task Force

The Task Force Committee, along with Fr. Harrison, recently held two open houses to explain the work the Task Force has been doing and to provide interested parties and parishioners with an opportunity to ask questions.

At this point, there are still more unknowns than answers. We do, however, have applications available for interested parties who would like to explore the possibility of leasing the former school building.

We want to emphasize that St. Anthony Parish comes first. Parish activities currently held in the former school building will continue, including PRE, funeral dinners, Knights of Columbus activities, the Fall Festival, and rentals for parishioners.

As we explore potential leasing opportunities, we are looking for lessees who align with our Catholic values and who would be a good fit for our parish and community.

The vacant building remains a concern because many expenses continue even when the building is not being fully utilized. Our tentative estimate is approximately \$100,000 per year in ongoing costs. This estimate is based on expenses from the previous year, and we hope the actual amount will be lower.

We appreciate everyone's questions, support, and patience as we continue working through this process. There are many factors to consider, and the Task Force will continue to keep the parish informed as more information becomes available.

Questions and Answers from the Open Houses

Q: How much are we asking for rent?

A: That depends on many variables; including how much space is requested, the use of space and how we recover utilities. Research has been done comparing rent in Omaha, Columbus and surrounding small communities. Rent will likely range in the \$9-13 per square foot per year.

Q: Would the Task Force check on the property while it is being rented:

A: Yes, it will be inspected and reviewed periodically, like a landlord.

Q: Who pays for utilities?

A: That would need to be calculated. We do not have separate meters for utilities. A percentage cost will be calculated in the rental cost per sq. foot.

Q: Would there be background checks?

A: Yes. We would perform a background check on the tenant. The tenant would be responsible for background checks on their employees.

Q: Do we have a layout of the facility available?

A: Not currently. It is something we will be working on.

Q: Is it possible to rent to the public schools as they are in need of space?

A: No, this is not a viable option under consideration at this time.

Q: Would the entry doors need to be changed for second floor rental?

A: Potentially. It would depend on the use and needs of the tenant.

Q: Is the playground / south field changing or being used differently?

A: Per Fr. Harrison there will be no change to the playground. It will remain a park and green space.

Q: How are we advertising for potential tenants?

A: Currently we have made use of the bulletins within our Columbus churches. If there is no interest or we do not find a good fit, we will broaden the advertising.

Q: Why didn't preschool/daycare/kindergarten stay here:

A: Preschool assisted in attracting students into St. Anthony School. With the merger and St. Anthony School no longer on site, it was not cost effective to continue.

Q: Have we determined what space St. Anthony parish needs for use and potential storage?

A: This is currently being evaluated. We will not rent the entire space. We will retain space for PRE and full use of the social hall/kitchen. (With a potential option for a tenant to use shared space.)

Q: Does commercial space impact our non-profit status?

A: Yes, potentially. The space we lease becomes commercial space. That space could then be subject to property tax. (Non-profit status remains for any space not leased, the church, office, and campus.)

Q: Is the church willing to spend money on renovations to get a tenant?

A: Possibly. It would depend on the extent of the renovations. It may be possible to share some of the cost with a tenant. We also have the issue of change of use. We currently are in compliance with all codes and inspections for the city and state. If we change the use, we may need to comply with new updated codes. The extent would not be determined until we know the tenant's intended use. (ex: fire sprinklers may be required)

Q: Who currently has access to the building:

A: As we progress, we will be limiting access to the building.

Questions? Contact Us

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