

A Beth El Shalom History ~ 2015

Reverend Frederick H. Haag, new to Bethel Congregational in 1973, had a big dream and suggested the church sponsor a project for building a complex to house low-income senior citizens. In May 1974, a special meeting of the congregation was held to consider the feasibility of such a project.

Beth El Shalom Senior Citizens' Center was incorporated 19 February 1976 in response to extensive surveys of available senior housing that were conducted in the area - none were found!

The Incorporators were of Bethel Congregational Church, White Salmon WA:

Rev Frederick H. Haag, president and CEO

Walter G. Palmer, vice president

Ruth Manahan, secretary

Betty Lou Hunsaker, treasurer

Fellow board members through the years:

Leon Berry

Chuck Oliver

Gene Glader

John Pearce

Jim Hendryx

Fred Manahan

Dorothy Henkle

David Duncombe

Roberta Childs

Berneith Hall

Dick Balsiger

Wm Whidden

Bill Sheckels

Dotti DeVaney

Kathy Thomas

Bob Blades

Congregational members agreed to back the project and, after long planning, hard work, frustrations and red tape, a formal organizational meeting was held in April of 1976. In August of that year, land was purchased with a loan through Farmers Home Administration USDA Rural Rental Housing Program, (1949) in the amount of \$620,000. Although the Bethelites wanted to participate in site-prep and building, construction was eventually done by FmHA-designated workers.

In February of 1977 some of the buildings were ready for occupancy; then in October of the same year, with tenants all moved in, another \$300,000 was added to the FmHA loan and new buildings were added to the project, for a total commitment of nearly one million.

The original board was set at 7 members, with at least 4 to be from Bethel Congregational Church membership. There were generally 75 paid members of the corporation mainly from Bethel church, but also from the surrounding community.

Bethel Congregational Church members served as bookkeepers, rent-collectors, and visitors to the tenants.

Later, Landura Management was hired, and they brought in Tom and Dolly Bond as resident managers who retired in June 2005.

Neel Management was hired in 2006 with Kylee Barnes resident manager; The current manager is Kristi Olson and grounds manager is James.

In the late 1980's, Dick Crothers built a nice two-bedroom house on a lot west and adjacent to Beth-El Shalom and in Feb of 1990, he made a Quit Claim Deed to Bethel Congregational Church for the property with the understanding that he have use of it during his lifetime, and that ownership would be then transferred to Beth-El Shalom. Bethel Congregational church held the title until May 2001 when it was transferred to Beth-El Shalom.

In 1991, Beth El Shalom considered expansion with some extended care units next to the present complex. An adjacent property (Mrs Mulligan's) was therefore purchased. Since the plan to build the extended care units did not succeed, the church later transferred ownership of the Mulligan property to Klicktat county - This is now the Senior Center, providing social activities and meals for local seniors.

Beth El Shalom retains an independent auditor: Bernard Robinson & Co, CPA
Greensboro NC