

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Regarding the closure & sale of Hartman Center

1. **Q: What is the timeline for the closure and sale of the camp?**

**A:** The board has approved the following motions:

1. *“Effective January 1st, 2021, Hartman Center will be closed for camping and all other programs.”*
2. *“As soon as July 1st, 2020 Hartman Center will be put up for sale.”*

The first motion determines our closing date. The second determines the earliest date at which Hartman Center has been approved to be listed for sale. We acknowledge the jarring nature of the July 1st, 2020 date. This decision weighed many factors including real estate trends and the time it takes to go through all the steps to get a property listed. The UCCR contract for management of the property ends as of December 31, 2020.

2. **Q: Shouldn't the decision to sell require conference-wide approval or vote?**

**A:** *PCC Bylaws outline in Section VIII #2*

- *“The corporate powers of the Conference shall be vested in the Board of Directors who shall formulate policy, have and exercise the general control and management of its property, funds and affairs, subject to its Articles of Incorporation, the provisions of these Bylaws and the laws of the Commonwealth. The Board of Directors may, by a majority vote of the Board, assign, buy, sell, lease, convey or mortgage any real or personal property belonging to the Conference and borrow money.”*  
Generally, this is common responsibilities for boards of both for profit and for non-profit corporations so that business and operations can be conducted effectively.

3. **Q: What about the benchmarks that were set in 2019?**

**A:** The benchmarks were set as a way to encourage people conference-wide who were invested in Hartman to strive for financial, enrollment and usage goals that could move the needle toward sustainability. By March of 2020 we already knew that the retreats planned for the spring (with the exception of the men's retreat) had been cancelled due to low enrollment. That was pre-Covid. That did not bode well for the benchmarks in general. However, the reality of Covid was far more extensive than originally thought. Initially, we hoped that the pandemic could be contained and that benchmarks could be moved forward by a year.

Then several things happened that changed that perspective. First, we learned of Zack's reduction in hours by 50%. Second, we learned of his resignation from UCCR as of July. This was a surprise. Third, we had to make a decision (by June) whether to keep UCCR as our management company for another year. This was the critical decision. Two things informed that decision: First, we knew that we would owe UCCR close to \$100K for 2020 even without any programming or income. Second, and more importantly, we could not foresee how we would be able to use the facility in 2021 given the quixotic nature of the pandemic. We are already aware of UCC events for 2021 (e.g. General Synod) that would not be happening in person. We had to think about whether we would have the capacity (personnel and financial) to provide the kind of CDC-recommended cleaning and preparation for camp in 2021 that would lead to parents feeling comfortable enough to send their children to Hartman Center (as well as adults using the facility). While we hope for a vaccine in 2021, we could not bank on it.

The Conference cannot afford to keep the facility open for another year given that we could not guarantee usage. This decision was made quickly in mid-June and announced to the Conference immediately. **The bottom line:** *the Covid-19 pandemic dealt a blow that dwarfed all of our previous reasoning and planning around the future of Hartman Center.*

4. Q. **How much money would it take to run Hartman if we found a way to keep the facility?**

A. Hartman requires about \$185,000 a year to cover costs alone without any programming. This is because our occupancy and programming have declined in the past 15 years, leading to a decline in income. With a facility such as Hartman, an endowment to run the ministry would need to be at least \$3.5 million, since we would draw 5% a year from it (which is the basic rate of endowment draw.) However, this amount does not include the amount of money needed to update the facility or to overcome years of deferred maintenance.

5. Q. **Have we tried to work with the other UCC Conferences in eastern PA to encourage them to join our camping program?**

A. Hartman has had some loyal church connections from Penn Southeast and Penn Northeast over the years. These numbers have never been large. Neither conference has a camp of their own anymore. The responses shared with us regarding engagement of PSEC and PNE with Hartman Center consistently revolve around three issues: facility, distance and interest. There are camping facilities closer in these Conferences than Hartman Center, and parents have utilized them and preferred their facilities. The distance to Hartman is an obstacle to many. Further, there is a decline in interest in

church camping, which is being experienced in PCC as well. Children of churches are attending other types of camp and at other facilities. The decline of interest in church camps arises from a number of interrelated factors including declining church membership, dramatic reduction in numbers of children in churches, and societal changes resulting in youth engaged in different types of activities.

6. **Q. Couldn't we help to preserve Hartman through fund-raising?**

A. Fund-raising cannot solve Hartman's operational issue. While fund-raising can be part of the financial picture to keep an organization afloat, the primary income must come from usage. Hartman's usage rate has been declining for years. Despite the marketing help of UCCR, the facility has not been attractive to a wide-enough range of organizations to enhance usage to keep up with costs. Penn Central Conference congregations should be the organizations using the Hartman Center facility the most. That is not the case and PCC church support in usage and finances has remained low. This has been the case for years. This information has been shared repeatedly at annual meeting business sessions.

7. **Q. Don't we need special permission from the Hartman family to sell the property?**

A. All necessary permissions and releases were granted by the Hartman family via legal means in 2019 and early 2020.

8. **Q: What will happen with programming the rest of 2020?**

A: In accordance with a previous board decision regarding safety concerns in the midst of Covid-19, all Penn Central Conference-sponsored programming at Hartman Center remains suspended until September 1st. After that date, we are making tentative plans for our annual events: The Women's Retreat & The Youth Retreat. These events will depend on the state of the Covid-19 virus.

On **September 12, 2020**, we will hold a Service for the Decommissioning of Hartman Center. All of these events are being planned with public safety in mind and are subject to change accordingly.

9. **Q: Will we be able to visit or have events on the land after it sells?**

A: We do not know who the purchaser might be or the future use of the Hartman Center land and facilities. As a result, we cannot guarantee that the facility would be able to host outsiders for their intended purposes.

10. **Q: What if the camp sells before the December 31st closing date?**

**A:** If Hartman Center sells and settles before December 31, 2020, arrangements will be made to refund any deposits made for spaces booked. Arrangements for our Service of Decommissioning would be prioritized in negotiations.

**11. Q: What happens if we list the camp but it doesn't sell?**

**A:** Research on the best methods to sell and a strategy to sell will be completed by the Hartman Center Sale Committee before any commitment to a licensed real estate broker is made. An alternative to a traditional sale process with a broker is the use of a public sale since this form of real estate sale is effective in rural PA. This might be considered if necessary. The commitment is to list and sell the property using the most effective method in a reasonable time period.

**12. Q: Will the Stone House be preserved?**

**A:** Since the extensive damage to the Stone House, we have tried to obtain interest within the Penn Central Conference to work with the Mifflin County and State Historical Societies to develop a preservation plan. There were no volunteers found in the Penn Central Conference. The historical society did publish a story within the historical society about the history of the house and the opportunity to restore it if funding could be obtained. To date, they have not found interest in the community.

**13. Q: What will happen to items from around the camp?**

**A:** To the extent possible, we will find new homes for items of importance to the Hartman Center legacy within the Penn Central Conference. Some items will be directed to our archives at the E&R Historical Society in Lancaster. We are brainstorming ways in which we might incorporate these items into our September 12th Service of Decommissioning and ensure that the value they hold is shared among our churches.

**14. Q: Will the PCC continue to have an Outdoor Ministries program?**

**A:** Yes. Although we are losing Hartman Center, Outdoor Ministries has always been, and always will be, central to our identity in the PCC. As we look towards an unknown future, this ministry may look different. Our hope is to build a ministry shaped by responding to the needs around us and serving God's wonderful creation in its entirety. However, before anything new can begin, we must take time to say goodbye to what we are pained to leave behind. In acknowledgement of this truth, the focus of our time and efforts remain solidly

with Hartman Center and the beloved ministry which has taken place there at this time.