



Temple Beth Abraham

25 Leroy Avenue
Tarrytown, NY 10591
Phone 914-631-1770
Fax 914-631-7872

David K. Holtz, *Rabbi*
Margot E.B. Goldberg, *Cantor*
Stuart P. Skolnick, *Director of Temple Operations*
Rabbi Allison Berlinger, *Director of Education*
Dr. Paul R. Siegel, *Rabbi Emeritus*

TEMPLE BETH ABRAHAM BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Minutes

Tuesday, April 7, 2015

Next Meeting – Tuesday May 5, 2015 @ 7:30 PM

Attendees: Herb Baer, Alan Berkson, Karen Filler, Allison Fine, Cantor Margot Goldberg, Steve Gosset, Jen Greenspan, Julie Gur, Rabbi David Holtz, Liza Karsten, Kimberly Marcus, Rick Misrok, Mark Polisar, Jen Povman, Loren Ratner, Mel Savitch, Meredith Siegel, Stuart Skolnick, Jen Schwartz, Risa Swersey, Jamie Wilson, Marla Peers

Guests: Sandy Mintzes, Peter Gisolfi, Bob Evans

Meeting came to order at 7:36PM.

- I. Invocation: Rabbi wished everyone chag sameach. The Hebrew word for Egypt is Mitzrayim, the narrow places, an interesting way of understanding how our ancestors lived in a constricted, unfree, way, but we are supposed to regard ourselves as having been among those coming out of Egypt. As we finish Passover, Rabbi suggests we look at the narrow places in our lives and what we are looking to move past.
- II. Approval of Minutes: accepted.
- III. New Business
 - A. Gisolfi Associates' Presentation of Proposed Improvements to Physical Plant: Peter Gisolfi and Sandy Mintzes
Herb sent last week a less detailed analysis than we are shown tonight. Includes a significant redoing of the social hall, low-key refurbishment of the classroom area, a new lobby, terrace, and surrounding area. Existing Conservative chapel would become a multi-purpose room; an additional office with yet an additional office or classroom. On the first floor, there

is an entrance that would be the main entrance. Handicap-accessible. The presentation highlighted several areas, including the grand entrance.

The group was very excited and had lots of questions. In response to concerns, it was made clear that we would not be losing any space, including classroom space (which will not be refurbished).

It was made clear that this is just conceptual, something that can be used when approaching donors. Gisolfi handed out an estimated budget for the proposed renovations and expansion.

In response to a suggestion by Mark Polisar, Gisolfi will look into creating some sort of vestibule to keep lobby sound from interfering with services.

B. Bridges Status Report: Bob Evans

One of the reasons they pressed to have a meeting tonight is that they are preparing the materials to “sell” the campaign. They’ve begun securing pledges starting with campaign and board leadership; expect a call soon. This coming Sunday at 7PM there will be a full campaign meeting that will include training orientation; there is no obligation to join the campaign. One of the important components of the campaign is the Planned Giving component. Karen spoke briefly about this, mentioning that they’ve planned a wine and cheese gathering, targeted for mid-June. At this gathering, they will explain all of the different opportunities. This will be the first of several events.

Bob discussed donor recognition. Herb had sent out the donor categories with our board meeting materials. At the May meeting, they will have a presentation regarding legacy giving.

C. Comedy Night and California Pizza Kitchen night: Jen Schwartz

We made \$354.95. Risa said that the restaurant was not expecting the turnout and that we were among their more successful fundraising efforts. We might consider trying Ben’s next time. These fundraisers cost us nothing.

Next month, we are doing a mid-week comedy show. They hired a comic, Jon Fisch, for Thursday, May 14, at 7:30; he was a huge success at another synagogue where he performed.

D. Monthly Bulletin: Kimberly

Kimberly wasn't sure how well the electronic bulletin is working out; is it being read? Allison said that she'd heard from many members who miss the printed copy. Rabbi said that the staff just initiated a discussion about the point of the bulletin. The point of going to electronic posting was to reduce costs. Stuart noted that he could get the click rate for the bulletin. By industry standards, at least 40% of the people who get the weekly blast click through. The cost to mail would cost \$1.19 each. Printing would cost 35-40 cents a copy because we are now printing it in-house. It will cost us about \$10,000 a year to send out printed copies. Now that we have a weekly e-blast, might we want to consider a less frequent bulletin? Perhaps we should be talking about a one-page printed version of the e-blast. Herb proposed a small task force to look at this before finance submits the budget for approval. Stuart added that there is at least one firm we can outsource to; they do the advertising sales and we could actually earn some revenue from ads – something else to consider.

Allison noted that we should include members of the ConCon team on the task force. Anyone who is interested should contact Herb. The task force will be charged with bringing back a specific proposal back to the board.

E. Fran Friedman Fund for the Enrichment of Children: Herb noted that we need to officially recognize the fund. This will be tabled until a future meeting.

IV. Old Business

A. Voluntary Contributions Pledge update: Herb noted that pledge letters went out shortly after the last meeting. Pledges have started to come back. We are up to 94 pledges, totaling \$250,000. The aggregate amount of the pledges is an increase of about \$12,000 or 4% increase over last year's giving from

those same families last year. All of the pledges are from current members. Letters have gone out to resigned members, as well. Rabbi noted that about ¼ of the members have responded, a remarkable number. After April 10, the due date, calls will be made to those who have not responded.

Mel asked if any calls have been made to members who owe money from last year's dues. There is still roughly \$150,000 outstanding. We don't know how much is from "silent resignations" and how much is from people who have not yet paid. These families have not yet been called (21 families and eight or nine singles). Discussion ensued about this lapse in communication; there was general agreement that communication by phone, not letter, will have to occur. Allison volunteered to make the phone calls. Jamie felt that the calls should be coming from the office, not from a member. On the other hand, Rabbi said that coming from the office might feel like they'd been called by a bill collector. Jen added that call from a congregant would feel like her privacy was being invaded, resentful that a congregant would know that she had not paid. Many members felt that it would be too uncomfortable for members to have Allison call and that it should come from the office.

V. Financial Report: Mel

He spent considerable time trying to put together a budget. The biggest problem in making a projection, he took an unfinished statement to the end of March, he projected out to June, we are on target this year, so far. If his projections are reasonably correct, we will break even and perhaps do better than that. However, in trying to go beyond to create a budget for next year, he had no idea what the donations will be, so he used last year's number. He had to eliminate "fair share." Our Ways and Means have fallen off. Taking everyone's budget from each committee, we will have a budget deficit of over \$60,000. He will call his committee together next week to make suggestions about what

might be pared and will then go back to each committee to ask them to see what can be cut from their budgets.

- VI. Director Report: Application for the parking lot lighting goes into the town this week. One of the town's people will be reviewing the application to ensure that it's complete. Stuart had a meeting with Bob Zinman and they will likely resubmit an application for a grant from the Department of Homeland Security.

Until we decide to make a change to the monthly bulletin, he asks for submissions for the bulletin.

- VII. Comments/Announcements

Jamie has asked Danny Warshay, to present an entrepreneurial workshop. We can offer this to our congregants as well as local businesses and community and we might make money from this program. We would

Sharon Abner visited last week; she has started to drive. She uses a walker and the joint in her thumb is frozen and she hopes to have surgery on April 17th. For those of us who have attended Conservative services, Cantor announced that Alan Gerwitz, our ba'al tefillah is having some financial difficulties while he waits for surgery.

David Gordon, our HH ba'al t'fillah, lost his father this past Friday. They knew that he was "at an end," they had a funeral but couldn't have shiva because of the holiday, but they will be having guests this coming Sunday. Margot will send out a message to the community once she has all of the information.

Irene Metz's father was moved to hospice today.

April 26th is the annual TBA blood drive; the annual March of Dimes' March for Babies is that same day.

Sunday May 3, at 11:15 AM, at we will have our first pet blessing and pet food drive. They serve mostly seniors on fixed incomes, and most with cats. If you don't think your pet will travel well, you can bring a picture.

There will be a Havdalah service to close Pesach, sponsored by Zeety for the entire community, followed by a cupcake war. From 6:30-8:30.

May 3rd – Fifth-Grade car wash

May 8, Chai Plus Shabbat (Meredith); stand by for further information.

Tomorrow at our monthly Shekelvestors meeting, Yael Beckenstein will be speaking about the startup company for which she works. All are welcomed.

VIII. Good and Welfare

Loren thanked everyone for the support she received after her brother died, including the donation. She thanked everyone, including those who managed to come for shiva, despite the snowstorm.

Mel noted that two chavurot saw Eddie Arrons and that he and his group were fantastic. He added that Arrons performs regularly in the area and urged everyone to see him perform.

Herb added that the nominating committee is looking for nominations to the board. Anyone interested in assuming a position or in nominating someone else should get in touch with him or Alan Berkson.

Meeting adjourned at 10:09PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Marla A. Peers

IX. Adjournment