

**Ohavi Zedek Synagogue
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2015**

Present: Miriam Sturgis, Basha Brody, Jeff Potash, Peggy Munro, Sharon Panitch, Vivien Rabin Brown, Michael Schaal, Joey Bergstein, Mitch Cypes, Joanna May, Abby Rosenthal, Peter Pelaia, Rabbi Jan, Rabbi Joshua

Phone: Liz Kleinberg, David Borsykowsky

Absent: Gary Visco

Guests: Naomi Barell, Leah Rosenthal, Mark Green

1. D'var Torah

Mitch Cypes gave the D'var Torah.

2. Approval of Minutes

Basha Brody moved to accept February minutes, Michael Schaal seconded. Approved unanimously.

3. Rabbinic Search Update

The search committee is waiting for results of the congregational survey following Rabbi Jonah Geffen's Shabbaton visit. The committee is also scheduled to interview two additional candidates by videoconference. The preliminary survey results show very positive results concerning Rabbi Jonah.

4. Long-term Visioning

Jeff indicated that he is willing to stay on as president for a total of two years. His goal is to draw people together and bring out the best in each other so that we can become a better community. He discussed several areas of focus during his term:

- **Preschool**—A substantial amount of money was donated by Jeff's father, Milt Potash, to Ohavi Zedek Synagogue to establish the Potash Endowment Fund. Jeff and his siblings contributed again after his father's death. The fund has grown over the years. Jeff plans to use these resources to build a preschool at OZ beginning in September 2016.
- **Elders**—There will be a new focus on elders issues in our community in some significant way, including looking at the potential of Jewish elder housing.
- **Site planning**—There have been a lot of ideas discussed and we need to move forward and think about what we have and what we want to do with it.

- Environment—Our desire is to make the world a better place and one way to do that is through environmental work. Thanks to Sharon Panitch for leading the Green Team at OZ. “The sky’s the limit!”
- Cemetery—We have a large number of interfaith couples. Our plan is to refurbish our cemetery on North Avenue so that interfaith families can be buried there. Leon Urbaitel is now co-chairing the Cemetery Committee with Shimmy Cohen.

5. Connections with Israel

Miriam proposed that Ohavi Zedek have an Israel Committee. It would be non-political and non-partisan. They would work with the Events Committee on Israel-related events. Other activities could include a Hebrew speakers group and promotion/development of trips to Israel. There was some discussion about whether or not the Israel Committee should be political.

Miriam also reported that she was approached by her cousin who lives on Kibbutz Kissufim, outside of Gaza. They are interested in twinning with OZ to become a “sister city.” They are interested in emotional support, and possible financial support. Their needs include better facilities for their children.

As a first step towards developing this relationship, Miriam will craft an agreement to share with the Kibbutz that will be detailed in a letter of intent, before this relationship is finalized. We need to do due diligence to understand the mission of the kibbutz and other details. The specifics of the proposed relationship need to be detailed before final approval is given. Miriam will present these details at the May board meeting.

The following motion was made by Michael and seconded by Abby.

- In principle, the Ohavi Zedek Board supports a relationship with Kibbutz Kissufim, subject to due diligence and an agreeable letter of intent. At this point we are not making any financial commitment.

The motion was approved.

6. New Business

Abby reported that there have been several successful YJ events, including a screening of the film “Under the Helmet,” about young Israel soldiers.

Peggy reported that the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism (USCJ) held a vote as to whether they should sell the building they own in New York City. The USCJ membership overwhelmingly voted to support the building sale.

Peter reported that there will be a new member/board dinner or brunch scheduled. Additionally, he noted that the tentative date for the congregational meeting will be June 7, 2015.

Basha noted that she is working on sending cards and e-cards to the congregation on behalf of the Board for Pesach.

Basha noted that the Scholar in Residence committee has begun working on programming for 11/6-8 focused on Judaism and the Arts as the theme.

Michael noted that at the June Lunch & Learn the Interfaith & Social Action Committee would be kicking off this year's focus on aging in the community.

Michael also reminded the Board of the three additional upcoming events to honor Rabbi Joshua including the interfaith seder on 4/27, Hebrew School event on 5/3 and the Shabbat Dinner in honor of Kathy Chasan on 6/5.

7. Fern Hill Appraisal

Peter reported that the OZ/FH working committee received the appraisal report for the Fern Hill building/property in January. It is available in the Fern Hill Dropbox folder. The way zoning laws stand today, the "highest and best use" for the Fern Hill building is clearly as senior low income housing. Although it is possible to try to change the zoning for our neighborhood.

There are several scenarios presented in the report for moving forward with the property and meeting the dual goals established by the Board of maintaining the mission of the building and bringing a financial benefit to OZ. These are dependent on whether we sign a new agreement with HUD or not and on whether we choose to continue to operate the property or not. Peter briefly reviewed the pertinent sections of the appraisal and encouraged Board members to review the full report, with the caveat that there are still many issues to explore and the information is projected for 2020 but may change before then.

8. Financial Update

Peter reported that revenue is down in some categories. This was partially due to the fact that there was a lot of fundraising competition (within OZ) last year.

9. Preliminary Budget Presentation

Peter noted that we will be presenting our budget at the June 7 congregational meeting. We are currently projecting a small \$12,000 - \$13,000 shortfall for the 2014/15 year and a \$39,167 deficit for next year 2015/16. Our goal though, is to present a balanced budget for the year. We are proposing to increase our endowment drawdown from 4% to 5%, in line with common practice. Our endowment has done well in a strong stock market.

This transition year is a unique one for us, with substantially higher expenses than other years.

Peggy, Peter, Vivien and Jeff will continue to work on the budget and bring an updated presentation to the April board meeting.

Board went into executive session at 8:34 PM and came out at 9:37 PM.

Meeting ended at 9:38 PM.