

TJC Board of Directors Meeting
August 14, 2014

Attendance: Fred Appel, Jen Black, Dan Brent, Randy Brett, Denise Cheskis, Harry Cummins, Hazzan Dulkan, Rabbi Feldman, Judi Fleitman, Martha Friedman, Barbara Gantwerk, Bob Garber, Gil Gordon, Melissa Hager, Joe Herrmann, Susan Kanter, Nancy Lewis, Moshe Margolin, Jerry Neumann, Naomi Perlman, Ginger Gold Schnitzer, Nicole Soffen, Polly Strauss, Jeanette Timmons, Amy Zacks, Josh Zinder

Vice Chairs: Michael Bloom, Evy Grossman, Helaine Isaacs, Mindy Langer, and Rebecca Sarett

Guests: Arielle Altchek, Fran Amir, Meta and Craig Arnold, Rachelle Berkman, Carrie Bernstein, Stacey Bialow, Sally Steinberg Brent, Debbie Brett, Rachael Cooper, Eileen Garber, Lisa and Bret Jacknow, Adam Kaufman, Sarah and Jason Korn, Suzanne Lehrer, Gila Levin, Joan Levin, Nikki and Ari Maizel, Alan Medvin, Sandie Rabinowitz, Abigail Rose, Lana and Elliot Sambol, Ziona Silverman, Jordan Ullman

Meeting commenced at 7:30 pm.

Rabbi Feldman welcomed everyone. He asked for everyone to remember that we all care deeply about our ECE and synagogue. He asked for our respect and attention.

Gil introduced Moshe and Josh who would conduct the meeting. Moshe introduced the format of the meeting.

Susan Kanter and Martha Friedman gave their presentation after introducing themselves (*please see attachment #1*) and then Gil handed out summary of presentation

Moshe opened up the floor for questions from the Board.

Q: Question; C: Comment; A: Answer

C: clarification on demographic trends was requested

A: Anecdotal evidence shows there are fewer Jewish families buying in the Princeton area.

Q: What kind of programming will bring members? What is making the older members not wanting to stay?

A: Expand Adult Education and Youth Programming (ex. USY); cut-back in Kiddush Luncheons

Q: How many Jewish families are enrolled in ULNS?

A: Unable to answer because U-League doesn't ask their families this information

Q: Has U-League made a commitment to improve aesthetics or expand the facility?
A: ULNS has mentioned they would like to improve aesthetics (e.g., furniture, painting) but they have not made a full commitment yet.

Q: What is the tuition of the ECE versus U-League?
A: Although the ECE tuition varies because of many variables, the basic tuition rates of the ECE and ULNS tuition for non-University staff are comparable.

Q: Has there been any indication of what programming will be offered?
A: There hasn't been any indication of specific programming to date.

Nikki Maizel and Lana Sambol gave their presentation with Nicole Soffin and Lisa Jacknow sitting with them. Each speaker introduced themselves regarding their children's ages and if and for how long they were TJC members.
(please see attachment #2)

Moshe and Josh opened up the floor for questions/comments from Board members.
Q: Question; C: Comment; A: Answer

Q: If U-League and the ECE were not in the same building how would that impact your views and feelings?
A: It creates a different scenario. If we can maintain the whole school building then it's a different case. We don't celebrate Halloween or Valentine's Day at our school and we don't want it being celebrated on our premises.

Q: When was the last time we offered feeder programs?
A: 2012-13 Yad b'Yad and K'tontonim were offered but they were not offered in the 2013-14 school year. There are still toddlers and babies in the community and this was the first year we had Baby 'n Bagels. Classes could be held in the synagogue building but then the families won't see the school building.
C: There haven't been any registrations received for this upcoming school year for these young classes but the classes are still being offered at the moment.

C: Four concerns: amount of space, location of Jewish school kids, length of a lease, presence of non-Jewish holidays

Q: Are all of these concerns of equal importance? Would it be acceptable to have a tenant meet two or three of your criteria?
A: We are interested in a collaborative process. Primarily we need the space to grow. Regarding the location of our classrooms, we don't want to be in the basement. We have concerns about celebrating secular holidays.

Q: Will it break the lease if we request four rooms with a guaranteed five-year lease?

A: Joel is negotiating the financial terms and the length of the lease and he isn't here to answer this specifically.

Q: I can appreciate your concern about celebrating secular holidays on the premises but we need to teach our children about them someday so why not when they are young?

A: Our children celebrate Halloween in secular school but we don't want it celebrated here. We can teach our children as they grow and mature but not when they are in pre-school.

C: It was suggested that the Negotiating Team could ask U-League about Halloween and Valentine's Day celebrations.

Q: Since growth is very important for the ECE is it a possibility to have a fourth classroom?

A: We are looking at the space with Josh. Our goal is to have three classrooms with a fourth one in which to grow but ULNS does not want our space unless they have five classrooms.

Moshe thanked the parents for a great presentation.

Josh opened up the floor for questions or comments from the audience and requested that everyone be respectful and not repeat questions.

C: A congregant mentioned that she has a third and fifth grader who both went through the ECE, she is not Conservative, she joined because of the excellent nursery school and she believes that the ECE should have the best and most classroom space.

C: A family who has been a member for less than one year, who has one child enrolled in the ECE and another child ready to enter, wants to know if Jewish families in the area know about TJC ECE instead of just Har Sinai's and U-League's nursery schools. This parent's spouse who is a Kindergarten teacher in the Princeton school district sees that the ECE students are ready for Kindergarten more so than other preschool students. This parent wants to know if they can have hope to see the ECE grow.

C: My three children came here for nursery school many years ago. The name is the "Joan Levin" school.

Q: Have we reached out to the families whose children went to the preschools that have closed?

C: I have held many positions here; there are not many Jewish families in our community anymore; I don't understand why we can't co-exist; nobody is saying that they want the Joan Levin school swallowed up from UL; Rabbi Tucker's new synagogue has co-existing secular and Jewish schools for many years.

A: UL is large and we are not; UL are our competitors; we offer Jewish content but our smaller status doesn't look good.

C: We need to take into consideration the young families. They have a low morale now. Some of the money and attention going forward should be talking up the school; effort needs to be made by the school.

C: We are very happy with the school. My concern is that our children learn holidays on our terms, not the Board's terms; we will dilute the Judaism they learn.

C: A family who has been members for nine years thanks the Board for listening to us [the parents]. The parent stated that he doesn't see the value of this proposition; we are not looking at the risk; there is a loss of four potential members; tuition is very important to know but we still don't have the information; co-existing will not be easy; I don't understand the rush; where is the pressure (from UL?); there is a reason why people choose this place; we are building a foundation for our kids; we haven't talked about other options, such as music or art.

C: A parent stated that she came back to the ECE even though it's tougher on her schedule. There may be a strong increase of families who work without the influx of Jewish families.

C: A parent argued that the lease terms are too restrictive; anecdotally, the hours haven't been good for working parents; "I need you"; "I need this Jewish community"; "I'm a Jew by choice"; "I want my son to know that he's normal. I'm worried that we can lose the good stuff that is already here."

C: A parent with two boys said that she heard the parents say they want space for potential growth. I would like for the Board to gain space to grow.

A: There are eight classrooms; there are ways the building can be reconfigured to make more room but there is a great deal of money involved.

Gil welcomed Joe Herrmann. He will be the interim Director of Administration.

9:26 pm

Gil excused all guests and vice-chairs.