

February 23, 2023

## TJC Board Meeting Minutes

Heidi is running the meeting. ABC is on vacation

We are starting the meeting with the full board to approve the minutes from January 2023, and to approve the agenda. Then we will adjourn so the Atidaynu group can meet.

### On Zoom:

Heidi Joseph  
Joel Berger  
Rabbi Merow  
Charlene Borsack  
Barbara Abramson  
Nancy Lewis  
Eve Coulson  
Neal Masia  
Moshe Margolin  
Michael Leopold  
Jesse Treu  
Abbye Cornfield  
Lynne  
Debbie Orel

### In person:

Gabrielle Cayton-Hodges  
Samantha Hirshberg  
Leah Boustan  
Polly Strauss  
Edye Kamenir

Heidi- meeting called to order.

Approval of minutes from January—add Hirshberg to minutes as in attendance on 1/26/23

Abramson- First  
Leopold- Second

Heidi Joseph read this statement from Alexandra:

Heidi- reminded everyone to sign up to be a greeter

Rabbi Merow—said we are starting the Bnai Mitzvah season again. These are simchas for the entire community. I urge you to come to services for bnai mitsvah to be part of the community and celebrate. This week is the first one and they will keep coming

The meeting is adjourned and moved into the Atidaynu session.

## **Meeting of the Board of Directors**

### **AGENDA**

#### **Youth Lounge**

**February 23, 2023**

**7pm**

**Zoom link for those who have already participated in an Atidaynu Session will be emailed separately.**

1. Approval of the Minutes from November 17, 2022 Board Training\* and approval of Consent Agenda.\*
2. President's Message/Abbreviated Executive Session
3. Atidaynu Listening Session - Edye Kamenir (1.5 hours)

### **Committee Reports and Pre-reads for the Feb. 23, 2023 Board Meeting**

1. The meeting will take place in the Youth Lounge as we have a rental in the Social hall
2. The rental in the social hall might be 100 people or more so parking might be at a premium. Suggest they come a little earlier.

### **Board Reports**

#### **Arts and Cultural-Polly Strauss**

Sold out crowd attended Sarah Aroeste program with Sephardic food tasting which was enjoyed by TJCers of all ages. A great day for TJC!

Cocktails in the Corridor wine & cheese this past Shabbat, featuring Venezuelan art described by TJC congregant Becca Meurer, was very well attended. Becca (husband Jan, kids Catherine, Emma, Noah) is not just a new member, but she is our co-chair (with RS parent Gabrielle Markand) of the

revived TJC Lobby Art Gallery. This is a case study for getting to know our congregant's gifts and engaging them!

Next up: Passover Cooking with Susie Fishbein, noted personality and author of Kosher by Design cookbooks, on Tuesday, March 14th at TJC. Cost of \$36 includes light dinner. Register now as space is limited.

### **Israel Committee - Riva**

We are planning the 75th celebrations for Israel, and we will kick start it with a performance of one of Israel's beloved and famous singers David Broza. The concert will be on Wednesday, May 3rd, from 6:30. Our committee is working on promoting the event. The Hebrew school will also be involved; we hope the students can perform a chorus of one of his songs.

We will plan another event thorough out the year to celebrate Israel's significant milestone.

### **JCW: Debi Gitterman**

Women's Retreat March 26 @ 2 pm D&R Greenway Johnson Center  
SOGIE — sexual orientation and gender identity education— programming in the works

### **Lifelong Learning 2022-23- Submitted by: Moshe Margolin, Chair of the Lifelong Learning Committee**

With the advent of the re-organization of adult learning at TJC, the Adult Learning Committee transitioned into the Lifelong Learning Committee. The transition was not merely a name change.

Last year, we started the process of self-examination. What was right, but, more importantly, what needed improvement?

Some things have not changed. We still strive to bring in a variety of presenters from across the country and Israel who are experts in their respective fields within Judaic Studies and on the global Jewish community. We try to create a program mix that features a wide variety of topics designed to give our audience new insights and understanding into various aspects of Judaism, both past and present. We provide our fellow congregants with an opportunity to learn from and interact with both scholars and authors.

This year, our presenters included an up-and-coming archeologist from the Israeli Department of Antiquities, an expert on Pirkei Avot, the former 2<sup>nd</sup> in command at the Jewish Agency for Israel, a professor of Pastoral Education, a Bible scholar, and the author of "God is Here: Reimagining the Devine".

We continued our focus on Jewish Communities Around the Globe with a program on the Abayudaya - Jewish community of Uganda.

This year, we initiated programs on Sunday mornings to foster intergenerational learning.

Last year, we initiated the re-introducing of Israel-oriented programming with a presentation tracing the development of modern Hebrew given by a professor of Hebrew language from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This year, congregants learned about an archeological dig site outside of Jerusalem – Tel Motza - from a Ph.D. candidate from Tel Aviv University who co-directs the excavation.

The 2022/23 program year concluded with a conversation between our congregant Professor Leora Batnitzky of Princeton University and Fordham University's Professor Ayala Fader. Their topic: Jewish Doubt

To further our goal of expanding our audience to include parents of Religious School students, we invited a representative of that cohort to join the Committee.

The 2022/23 Lifelong Learning Committee members were:

Fred Appel, Lynn Coopersmith, Sharon Diamondstein Ex Officio, Judi Fleitman, Emilie Kovit Ex Officio, Jane LeGrange, Neil Litt, Moshe Margolin Chair, Rabbi Andrea Merow Ex Officio, MiRosenthal, Lynne Ross Ex Officio, Elon Shore Representing RS Parents, Shoshana Silberman and Tirza Wahrman. They continued their commitment to bringing the very best in adult learning to TJC. Looking ahead to next year, we would like to expand the Lifelong Learning Committee even further. Those interested should contact Moshe Margolin, the current chair of the Committee ([momargolin@gmail.com](mailto:momargolin@gmail.com)).

### **Membership- Abbye Cornfield**

1. Highlight: We had a great meet and greet Havdalah at Andreas house with about 10 new member families. Rabbi Merow, Joel, Alexandra, Heidi, Emilie, Nancy Lewis, Gabrielle, Samantha, Shari, Leah Boustan, Jerry, and Abbye were in attendance.
2. Working on: We are looking at the "year of a life of a new member." Looking at different ways and times to engage with new members and make sure they feel welcome.
3. Planning: Recent news- Martha and Harold Friedman are in the beginning plans to invite senior new members for brunch. We look to have a similar program for exploratory/religious school new members as well.

### **Men's Club Committee Update Report:** Jeremy and Brad

- Sponsored World Wide Wrap on February 12 (tefillin/wrap during minyan that takes place every Super Bowl Sunday)
- Holding a Torah on Tap with Rabbi Bob Freedman on February 22
- Planning to support the Purim carnival on March 5 with grilling
- Hosting a March Madness NCAA basketball tournament event with Howard Levy on March 19
- Sponsoring a Passover wine tasting event with JCW on March 28th
- Assisting on moving platforms for TJC garden with Peter Smith

### **RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE UPDATE, FEB. 2023**

- **Overall**, we continue to pursue ways to: 1) encourage attendance at services and religious programs, 2) build a community of daveners to participate confidently in services, and 3) keep our services well paced and meaningful for a wide variety of congregants. This effort extends to our children, in coordination with Rabbi Merow, Avi, Sharon, and Ethan.

### **SHABBAT SERVICES**

- We discussed and agreed on the new practice of allowing a non-Jewish parent to stand on the bimah during the spouse's *aliyah* so both parents can be on the bimah while their child reads from the Torah.
- We changed the *maftir* custom. Starting as soon as possible, TJC will use the *maftir* from the end of the entire *parsha*--not the end of the triennial reading--as the *maftir*. This is not only officially correct but also means anyone who has learned those verses can chant that *maftir* at any point in the triennial cycle.

- We are exploring different ways of handling the Misheberach list to make it more manageable during Shabbat services.
- Ethan has set up an automated system to invite b'nai mitzvah back for an *aliyah* with the opportunity to read Torah on the anniversary of their bar/bat mitzvah. He has revised the online system for volunteering to participate in Shabbat services to make it more user friendly and allow for more lead time.
- The Torah procession has returned, and the route has been modified to conform to the practice at other Conservative synagogues.
- Rabbi Freedman is now offering mentoring for people who want to lead Musaf. Ethan is training individuals for *hagbah*.
- Suzanne is offering training as a Zoom monitor.

## **HOLIDAYS & MISCELLANEOUS**

- We have been engaged in planning for Purim and Pesach with Rabbi Merow, Avi, and other staff and members.
- We updated the TJC Kashrut policy.
- We undertook a review of Shabbat L'Kulanu to assess what worked well and what might be improved.
- We co-sponsored the Sarah Aroeste event for Tu b'Shevat.
- We welcomed Renee Altman as a new committee member.

### **School Report: Gabrielle Cayton-Hodges and Samantha Hirschberg**

- the attendance at the youth groups events this weekend we're not good (3 kids at the grades 5-7 event and 4 kids at the grades 3-4 event but one was a sibling in 1st grade). It was a holiday weekend so maybe the events should have just been canceled due to low attendance.
- Sharon is going to be presenting on a proposal for updating the b'nai mitzvah program.
- there were a lot of new members with kids at the membership event, the kids got to know each other and most of the parents met each other.
- -family Shabbat dinner for grades 3-5 was very successful. Families met each other and the kids loved participating in the service. We should try to do more events like this that are low cost and high return.

### **School Report- Continued by Sharon Diamondstein**

- I would also add that mid-year Hebrew reading and prayer assessments have begun.
  - The Tu BiShvat birthday party for the trees has a great turnout, and we had a lovely havdalah pajama program for young families as well. On March 26, we will have a school wide chocolate Seder followed by a young family program at 12:30.
  - On April 23, there will be a young family picnic for teddy bears and their people in celebration of Earth Day.
  - Also, on that same day, Samantha Vinoker Meinrath is coming to Sulam to discuss anti-Semitism with our teens. She recently published a book called #Antisemitism Coming of Age during the Resurgence of Hate.
- Purim carnival will need volunteers. I'm trying to get a list of slots from Ethan so that we can make a signup genius and try to help him staff this. As of now, would be volunteers need to email Ethan directly.
- we are trying to arrange a meeting of the academic advisory committee to discuss potential schedule changes for next year. We would like to extend Sunday morning to allow time for the kids to eat breakfast together. We also have very low enrollment for Tuesday virtual religious school and are

contemplating eliminating it and only having Wednesday in-person school, but this needs to be carefully weighed in the ramifications of the kids who can't make it on Wednesday.

### **Safety Committee --Corey Langer**

Last year, at the height of the pandemic, our committee agreed that when Mercer County entered the "orange" zone, we would be mask mandatory, while making the synagogue and its interior public spaces mask optional at levels yellow and green. Currently, with level orange, masking, per the CDC site, is strongly recommended, though not necessarily mandatory. Under these circumstances, we believed it was important to revisit and potentially refine our current policy for the congregation in the sanctuary and in communal spaces indoors. To this end, we "met" by email and phone.

Our current guidelines formulated on 01/12/23 follow:

- Mercer Co community risk – level orange: Masks are very strongly recommended, though not mandated indoors; please be aware of and sensitive to the needs of those around you, particularly those who might be more vulnerable to infection. If ill with respiratory symptoms, please stay home and watch services on livestream or Zoom.
- Mercer Co community risk – level yellow: Masks are optional, though still recommended; they are not mandated.
- Mercer Co community risk – level green: Masks are optional; they are not mandated.
- If at some point, the Princeton area school system returns to a "mask-mandatory" policy due to an increase in infection rates or hospitalizations, then we too will adopt a "mask-mandatory" approach
- We will continue to provide masks on the table in the lobby for those who need them.

We fully realized that a single policy may not satisfy all congregants, but these guidelines have evolved after considerable discussion and give and take; and we believe they underscore our desire to keep the congregation as healthy and as safe as possible, particularly as new, more transmissible COVID variants emerge.

### **Security Committee update.** -- Tom Will

The TJC Security Committee met on Feb 8. Summary of discussion/work items we covered:

- Security Status Update. Joel working with local authorities to get better notifications on security issues within NJ.
- Discussion: School session drop off/pick up security protocol. We discussed school building door coverage during school sessions. Staff (usu Sharon) at the door for arrival/dismissal times, but during school session, would like to have a person at the locked door able to facilitate entry if appropriate. Sharon to try to see if a volunteer corps of congregants and parents can be set up to take shifts to provide.
- Review of training underway and planned. Avi Meisel, local paramedic/new member, offer to bring CPR, Stop the Bleed, Narcan training, etc.
- New Federation Security Initiative "Livesecure" was reviewed. May provide support for state wide threat notification procedures.
- Nonprofit Security Grant Program NSGP 2022 Update, and review of submissions to FEMA, and project plans/photos. Thanks to Josh Zinder for supporting our design work and submission details.
- NSGP 2023 Plans? SAFE assessment tool output from March 2022 assessment sent out, as we can use to identify needs for grant opportunity NSGP 2023.
- Tom to write a draft of "what we do" for TJC security

### **Social Action: Dana Molina**

- Blood Drive at TJC planned for May 10. Looking for a chair of this event is anyone is interested.
- regular monthly TJC group at TASK back in action on 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month.

- Working on scheduling a regular monthly TJC slot at Princeton Community Soup Kitchen as well
- New TJC members starting a monthly Mitzvah project. Stay tuned for more details coming soon.
- New Chesed project adopting a bed in the TJC garden.
- Refugee resettlement always looking for volunteer drivers, work opportunities, and donations.