

Board Meeting  
February 22, 2024

Heidi- Call to order 7:05

Rabbi: Good evening Erev Tov. D'var torah: The Jews were asked to bring finery (acacia wood, gold, silver, etc.) to build the ark and people had to give from the heart and the gift would be whatever they could give. But as a board you have to give and build our institution by building relationships to make TJC a more vibrant, caring, loving community. But we do also need the gold and the wood to build the ark. Where did the Jews get these material goods when they were wandering the dessert? When they left Egypt, they took precious things with them so that they would be able to barter and build. We as a board discuss the relationship building part, but we also have to talk about the physical building part. It is our responsibility as a board that the roof is repaired and that all the financial goals are met. I want to thank Heidi on the work for the Gala but it cannot only be Heidi. It has to be on all of us and we all have to do work for the Gala so that TJC can raise funds and we will continue to thrive and exist. Heidi has large fundraising goals, but she believes that it is crucial this year to allow us to have a safe building and to see TJC move into the future. So we are going to have the Gala, an incredible event where we bring our finery to build a vibrant Jewish future. Our gala should represent who we are. I'll tell you who we are:

Last week 2 teenagers came to daven by themselves.

We have a tot program where people want to meet other young Jewish families.

If you come to my class on Tuesday, people discuss Israel with different views peacefully.

We do not fight with each other.

We support each other.

We are where someone comes for the first time on a Saturday and a congregant makes sure they have a table of people to sit with them during kiddush luncheon.

We make sure that sick people have dinner on a Friday night.

That's who we are! So let's build our sanctuary as well and bring people in and make them happy here. We want the Gala to properly honor the honorees by packing the room with friends and family and we also want to make our fundraising goals.

Heidi- So, we are having the Gala with a cruise ship theme, but we are really celebrating all the people and events over the last 75 years. It is our job to make sure we are still here for the next 75 years. It is critical to me that we have a future here in Princeton area.

Rabbi mentioned the Tot spot, which we started a month ago for 3 year and under and we had 4 kids at the first meeting. Then we had 17 adults and kids at the next one, and then next one will have 27 adults and children. There is clearly a need and the word is out and the program is growing in an organic way.

We have a new program called the “seasoned Soul” for adults 85 and older. We are going to provide coffee dessert and transport for those who need it. Martha Friedman said she would drive people. Anyone who wants to come can. I think it is going to be very special. Seniors will bring their own lunch and come to dine with their cohort.

Heidi- Committee updates

- 1) Apartment. ABC successfully raised all the money we needed to upgrade the apartment, get it furnished etc. It is finally ready to be inhabited. We got the C.O. from the town. A small blip—our insurance company is now in the process of helping us find the appropriate insurance coverage so residents can move in. They need 2 weeks, so I hope we’ll have an answer soon.
- 2) Israel and Us Committee by Moshe: The Israel mission trip has been a roller coaster and in the end, we have to postpone. The March trip is canceled because we had an underwhelming response, so we couldn’t make the numbers work, or the flights work. We had a second trip designed to go to the Negev, so we are looking at that now. RAM: we are going to try to get a critical mass before we can go on any Israel trip. We are trying to map out dates to coordinate with the other shuls in Mercer County to plan one trip to Israel for the entire county. Moshe has done a lot of work on this already. So, I would love for him to head a committee with the other shuls so we get a good date that works for the area. It looks like Spring of 2025 might work. So stay tuned for a communal trip. I am sad about the canceled trip, but a lot of people are going to Israel with other groups like JNF, Federation, etc. The planning Committee was fantastic at arranging this trip and it would have been amazing but the timing wasn’t right. We should all go if we can.

Why didn’t the trip fill? I heard a lot of reasons: it’s too soon; it’s not soon enough; it’s not after school is out. My spouse doesn’t want me to go to a war zone. Flights are scarce and only on El Al and now United will go once a week. So, we do have people going to Israel, but we didn’t have critical mass for the dates of our trip.

Brad Bailey—I think it was very short notice; what if we planned it for June. Is that possible.

Heidi- the issue is still, will we get enough people? Rabbi tried to get enough people for a trip before the war and we couldn’t do it and now we couldn’t get enough people during the war. It’s hard to try to plan a trip and then no one can go. That’s why we want to have a communal trip to get enough people to go.

RAM- we are in contact with Beth El and Beth Chaim. We are going to plan it as a joint synagogue trip, and anyone can go.

Heidi- there is a Religious school trip this shabbat –the HS kids are going to DC this weekend. Rabbi- 7 kids are going to a program run by the Reform Movement teaching social justice, advocacy and civics in a Jewish way. They will learn during shabbat and go to the Holocaust Museum and to visit the Hill. Sharon and parents will be chaperoning.

When the kids come back they will do a mini program to the congregation about what they did while they were away.

ABC- yes this is a great opportunity to see the synergy between social action and religious school.

Heidi- and there are other trips being planned for the other grades.

Heidi- The Nominating committee will be head by Mike Leopold. If you have any ideas or want to volunteer, please let Mike know.

Mike: we had our first meeting. It was a very good meeting. We set up some structure and already got some names out there to discuss and ask to serve. We are in the initial process. We are going to have a Zoom meeting next week to keep things moving along.

Heidi- Shabbat of appreciation and recognition committee will be formed. We are putting together a committee to pick the Gil Gordon Award. The service will be May 17.

Heidi- I have an idea and we have the funding for it – We still have funds from the money we raised for the Bimah accessibility improvements. We have enough money to put in a chair lift going up to the teen lounge and down to going to Avi's office. It will help people who have trouble with steps, but it is not for people who are wheelchair bound. The lifts are lockable so they will only be accessed when needed. It gives us more options for use of the spaces upstairs and downstairs. So, I would like to get your approval on that. It is a 10K investment, but it makes us fully accessible at that point. I need approval from the board.

Moshe- How much is left in the account?

Joel- we have 30K left in the accessible account.

Pam- JCW has money that we wanted to use for something meaningful so we are going to discuss it at our next meeting so we might be able to provide some funding for the chairs also. How much space does this take up?

Heidi- it takes about 6 inches. It should not impact the staircase. Ari Meisel has measured the space to make sure this would fit and not be in the way. We investigated an elevator but that requires a lot more space and is very expensive.

I love the project for the Bimah, but I worry about egress to the stairs and kids. Do we really need to do this?

ABC- is there a big need for this?

Heidi- I don't spend money frivolously. The staircases are wider than normal, so I think it would be good to have the option. We don't know who is not attending events in those spaces

because of the stairs. Some bar mitzvah families won't use the youth lounge because grandparents can't get up there.

Neal—you should check with the insurance company to make sure this is allowed.

Do we need both up and both down? Maybe we only need a lift for upstairs since the rooms downstairs aren't used as much?

Joel- well if someone needs to get downstairs to be with their kids or to an art room then we still need a chair lift going down.

Pam- I think we should research the elevator some more. Maybe there is a new elevator that we could install if we have the money?

Heidi- it would have to be a heavy substantial elevator; sturdier than a standard house elevator so it would be very expensive.

ABC- could we vote on this next month and get some more information?

Heidi- sure. Please send me feedback and thoughts.

Pam- it would be nice to have it for the gala.

Heidi- we can get the chair lifts installed in 2 or 3 weeks once we decide. The gala is going to be in every room so that would be a good thing to have the lifts installed for the gala.

Moshe- I sense a positive thrust for this, and there are more questions than hesitation, so it might be worthwhile to do some homework.

Heidi- we'll take this offline and get some more information for the next board meeting or sooner.

Joel- we can have a Zoom meeting to vote.

Heidi -we have a generous congregant who has agreed to pay for a vestibule in the front of the building so there is double access to enter the building for security purposes. There will be a vestibule 10 feet ahead of the existing front doors. The design has been done and the engineers have looked at it. So, we plan to move forward to improve the security of the building. It's the same shape and structure as the existing front doors. The top of the vestibule will be a clear glass triangle.

Joel- one door can't open unless the other one is locked. There will be a double buzzer and access card.

Jesse- it's sad we have to do this, but it's a good idea.

Neal- can we see a picture?

Yes- we have drawings we can show the board.

Can we check on this for the insurance costs also? Yes, we will

Where would the security guards sit? Joel- probably one inside and one outside to give more time and more distance in case something happens at the door.

Jesse: have you checked with the professionals to make sure a vestibule really helps?

Heidi- yes- we spoke with the police and the security guards and 2 design companies, and local schools. We were told it's better to see out through the glass instead of having an opaque glass and that the vestibule and two door lock system is a good safety measure.

Heidi- Motion? All in favor of adding a vestibule for security?

Unanimous yes.

Joel there is still leg work to be done and we would have it installed over the summer.

Heidi –so we will bring this back to the next meeting with a graphic design and more information.

Heidi- I want feedback on creating a policy about funerals. Do we do funerals for nonmembers? Do we do funerals to relatives of congregants? Do we charge?

Jesse- what do we do now?

Heidi- we respond case by case, so we need a policy.

Neal- If it's a relative of a current member then I think we should definitely do that. But for a non-member we should ask them to pay.

ABC- it's at the Rabbi's discretion and TJC members get first dibs. Some people stay members so that they have a rabbi for a funeral. A Rabbi for a funeral is a privilege of being a member. Do we really want to codify this? What if we have a case down the road that doesn't fit the policy? Is there a real need for this policy?

RAM- I think I heard that if it's a parent/child who are members of the congregation then it sounds like that should definitely happen. Rabbi Friedman will cover for me if I have to do a funeral.

If our Rabbi does do a funeral for a non-member, then they might join the shul after the funeral because they feel connected.

Heidi- who volunteers to be on a committee to talk about creating a policy for funerals? The problem is every decision is a unique discussion. Right now Rabbi and I agree, so I think we need a broad policy that can be followed.

Joel- we need a policy so we have guidance when we ask the question.

Jesse- this discussion shows it's a very back and forth decision, but which way do we lean?

Is it untoward to have a fee bases?

Joel- it's not just about the money. Do you want to have a funeral here on Sunday during religious school?

Judy Kutin- isn't it up to the Rabbi?

Joel- Well she needs a policy to follow or at least to use a baseline.

Judy Kutin- but I don't want to take away her prerogative. This should really be up to the Rabbi.

RAM- can we define the questions? What is the policy for:

- 1) Someone who is a mourner and is responsible to organizing the funeral.
- 2) If it's someone off the street who needs a Rabbi.

Rabbi – some other shuls only allow funerals in their sanctuary for very tragic or large funerals.

Diane and another Board Member will be on the committee and do some research.

Neal- we should set a price for the funeral—like a bar mitzvah fee. Running an event here costs money.

Brad – I don't think we should charge a price because what if someone can't afford it.

Heidi- ok; the "funeral committee" will research this and get back to us with information. Next topic—plaques where we name things for people. For example, someone wants to put a plaque on a tree in memory of a relative. ON an existing tree. They claim that they planted this tree in memory of their relative and TJC was supposed to put a plaque on the tree. We don't have a policy for that. Do we allow that? In this case the tree was planted a long time ago, but the plaque was never put in. Do we allow this?

Jesse- there is a policy about installing things in the shul and on the property . Isn't' there a gift policy? Doesn't the new vestibule fall under this category too? It's a change to the building structure and it's a gift.

Diane- So only named gifts have to be subject to the gift policy?

Joel- there is a gift policy from 2018. I have to find the updated policy.

ABC- this sounds like a specific historic dilemma and a Rabbinic decision. But in general we do have a protocol for naming and giving amounts for plaques.

Heidi- sounds like the rabbi will handle this tree issue.

Pam- update on raffles—we're getting closer. We had our license approved and the permit was filed. We anticipate it will be returned to us by the end of March. The raffle tickets will be priced at \$100 . You can win one of 3 prizes for each ticket that are travel related. You could use the prize for anything travel related. 10K is first prize and comes with a travel concierge. \$7500 is second prize. Third prize is 5K. Tickets will be sold by board members and in the lobby. The drawing will take place during the Gala but you do not have to be present to win. We are counting on each board member to sell a minimum of 10 tickets.

- Neal- is there a max number of tickets that will be sold?
- Yes- we will sell only up to 1000 tickets. (and if we can sell that many tickets it would be amazing!)

ABC- make sure the link on all social media is linked directly to ticket sales.

Joel- we have an actual Venmo account that we can use for sales also.

Pam- The Venmo account is required by the State to keep the raffle funds separate from our general TJC funds.

Pam- you can buy or sell as many tickets as you want.

ABC- how long do you have the raffle license?

Pam- 2 years and it's easy to renew for only \$100. So put it on the calendar so it can be renewed. Right now it's been a lot of work to get the license, but the renewal will be easy so make sure it gets renewed every 2 years.

Heidi—thank you Pam so much—you have done an unbelievable job. Round of applause. And Linda Greenstein has gone above and beyond for us to get this done sooner.

Heidi- Cemetery plots. Joel can you talk about this.

Joel: There are no remaining plots in Princeton Cemetery or in the cemetery in Dayton. In the Woodbridge cemetery we have 27 plots available. We are going to put an ad in the bulletin to sell them at 4K, so then we can use that money to buy more plots, perhaps in Princeton Cemetery. But it's an important service to offer our congregants.

RAM- I urge everyone to buy plots as soon as possible because the land will only get more expensive. Pre-planning is the way to go financially and to make sure your spouse and children don't have to do this for you when you pass.

Jesse- at what rate have members of the shul needed plots?

Joel- I have had 10 people ask me. So now I have verified what we have so now we will advertise this in the bulletin. You can purchase plots in Princeton cemetery for 5K each but they are not in the Jewish section so they are not part of a Jewish cemetery.

ABC- we are an aging population so I think this is a good service and we may see an increase in need. Is there a way of polling to find out how many plots we might need?

Joel- Orlands said they would be happy to offer a session on funeral planning, etc..

Andrea- what about interfaith burial?

RAM- each cemetery has its own rules. Typically, an orthodox section will exist in Jewish cemeteries, and then the other plots are allowed for interfaith couples.  
After the Gala, I'm happy to do a session with Joel Orland about the entire funeral process.

Heidi- The Gala itinerary is on this handout. It should be great. Please think about being a sponsor and bring your friends. There will be kids programming in the school building.

Andrea- We have 2 new members: Gary Johnson and Anne come every Friday night; and to bible b'oker.

Yvgeny and Lawrence Minard- have 3 children—Neal Masia met them before they were members.

We would like a Board member to be their mentor/buddy. Neal- I will be happy to do it. Send him his information.

Saturday -we are having a get together at my house with 20 new member and kids with Havdalah with the Rabbi If anyone wants to come, please let me know.

Heidi- Andrea hosted this last year and it was really well received. So we are doing this again. A lot of the members who attended then became very active and got plugged in right away so thank you for doing that, Andrea.

Michael Goldin- Emily Kovit will be making new welcome baskets for 12 members and some of you agreed to help deliver the baskets and be a point of contact to the new families.

Heidi- thank you to the Membership committee. Next, I want to remind you about the daffodil project—the bulbs will be coming up soon and we are aiming for March 17 to have the ceremony in Palmer square. The RS kids will come and be part of the program. We are going to invite all the clergy and it should be a special moment.

Neal- RS report: we had 153 kids last year, and we budgeted for 140 kids for the current year, but we are back to 153 so we are trending in the right direction. So good job to whomever is making this happen.



Social concerns committee report- Cochairs- Alyson Resnick and Melissa Hager:

Reminder- program on gun control and violence this Sunday at 4 pm. It's a zoom. Lynn is holding a blood drive on March 10 . We need more donors.

We need volunteers for Arm and Arm.

We want to role out the booklet on the Social concern initiatives that are in the community so people know what is going on in the community. Everyone who contributed to the booklet on social action has a lot to offer.

We are thinking of an annual calendar to be set in advance so we know in advance what the monthly drive will be. So the congregation knows what to expect for monthly social action events.

**Our committee agreed that there should be a way to help create community:** How do we make anyone who comes into the congregation feel welcome and understand the mission of this congregation? For example, the LGBTQ flag can be displayed. Because no one is going to pick up the initiative booklet when they walk into the lobby. I understand not a lot of people go to our website. Maybe we could check the analytics and if the website is used more then perhaps we can put things on the website.

Mike- when people go shul shopping, they look on the website so we can have statements on the website.

Joel- we have our mission statement and social justice statement on the website.

But that doesn't come out when you walk into the lobby.

ABC- this is a full-on congregational change you are asking for.

Heidi- we can put together a subcommittee to think about how to incorporate those types of changes.

Moshe- There is an Israel and Us event on Sunday. We have about 30 people signed up, and there is still time to sign up for the zoom from 12-1. And it's a people to people project. Rabbi Merow will be leading discussion.

RAM- there is always something good on Shabbat – Cocktails in the Courtyard with the artist this Friday. Ruth Shulman has a special birthday during services. March 2 is a whole school shabbat. Hebrew school is canceled on Sunday so all the kids can come to services. The third graders will receive their siddurs that day, including Abby and XX children.

ABC- thanks for recycling the Number 1 plastic cups.

Joel- we just sent out the Purim schedule and we have a lot going on.

March 9 is the life and legacy shabbat. And we will have a lot of Passover activities.

Brad- we need people to grill on March 20 for the Purim carnival at 4 :30 pm.

Meeting adjourned.