

Kesher Israel Board Meeting Minutes – August 13, 2006

Attendees: Rabbi Barry Freundel, Gary Winters, Roslyn Singer, Al Altschul, Marty Ramirez, Elanit Rothschild, Shelly Weisel, Dave Sloan, David Barak, Jerome Chapman, Elana Lederman, David Epstein, Baruch Fellner, Eliezer Halffinger, Yoel Oz

1. Rabbi Freundel gave a dvar torah on the subject of children's busing (mishnaic-era source for education to be within the city, in other shuls also)
2. Gary stated that Dave Sloan and Marty Ramirez would like to switch positions: Marty will be the new financial secretary, and Dave will be a director. This will be accomplished by the two of them resigning their current positions, and then being appointed to opposite positions by Gary. The Board voted unanimously to approve Marty Ramirez as Financial Secretary and David Sloan as a director.
3. New members –The Board approved two new members: Leia Rosenberg and Howard Goldrich.
 - a. Dave Sloan stated that in the past board, the sisterhood took care of arranging for new members to have meals at the homes of board members for Shabbat. He asked whether we as the board retake that responsibility? There was general assent.
4. The President's appointee to the board has not been yet consulted. Gary will send out an announcement at a future date.
5. Minutes from the last meeting were approved by acclamation.
6. Gary Winters reported on the status of the Rabbi's contract. Rabbi Freundel is reviewing a draft at this time, and we expect to have this finalized soon.
7. Al Altschul stated that the shul has received money from the Bregstone estate, and we're continuing to do so. In addition to cash, there are some mutual funds which are coming as well. This will require a resolution to open new accounts to receive them. Al requested approval for a resolution for the president and treasurer to open accounts. Jerome Chapman made a motion, David Barak seconded it, and the Board voted unanimously in favor.
8. David Epstein moved to require shul to replace some lost state of Israel bonds. Once they are reissued, they can be tracked down and the funds returned to the shul. The bond number is CTF 50178441. David Epstein made a motion, Jerome Chapman seconded it, and the Board unanimously voted in favor.
9. Budget:
 - a. Gary Winters stated that we are at the beginning of the fiscal year, everything is as expected.

- b. Al noted that the budget numbers provided to the Board are the 2006-2007 budget. Last year's budget was \$374K, this year's is \$371K - everything is based on the prior two years.
 - i. David Barak asked whether the cemetery expenses are still charged as repayment of the loan to the trustees for Bayit I, and whether this line item should be treated as operating expenses?
 - ii. Al Altschul stated that we are going to do a reconciliation soon to determine the amount repaid to the trustees, and we'll update that line at the time. Gary Winters noted that the loan likely has been repaid in full, but he recommends continuing to pay cemetery operating expenses out of the general operating funds of the shul, rather than putting that obligation back to the trustees.
 - 1. Roz Singer asked whether the dues letters gone out.
 - 2. Gary responded that they have.

10. Eliezer Halffinger discussed a proposed contribution by the shul toward the purchase of a school bus for the Hebrew Academy.

- a. A note was sent out by Mindy Horowitz about this issue. Over the past dozen or so years, there had been a bus here. The goal of the Academy is that the users should support the bus. Based on the low ridership currently, there is no way that completely works. This year's cost for the bus is about \$2600 per student (it's \$1200 in other neighborhoods).
- b. Typically, bus service is only offered when ridership is greater than 12 students per route. Eliezer is asking the synagogue to help defer the cost of providing the continuing bus service. The existence of the bus service is one of the things which permits families to continue living here past the time that their children have more than a dozen teeth.
- c. Jerome Chapman asked whether the contribution would be for the purpose of buying a new bus.
- d. Eliezer stated that it is. The old minibus was decrepit and failed – the Academy bought a (used) bus, and so the money we're looking for is the replacement used bus.
- e. Gary stated that the Academy has asked the parents in other communities along the route (OSTNS, Woodside) to contribute as well.
- f. Eliezer stated that there is also the possibility of making the bus route stop at the girl's yeshiva and the Torah School.
- g. Baruch Fellner asked whether this would be a continuing obligation?
- h. Eliezer said no, the request here is only to defray the capital cost of purchasing the bus and is a one-time contribution by the shul.
- i. Baruch asked: shouldn't we work with the other shuls on this? Isn't that an obligation of the parents?
- j. Eliezer noted that each shul board is independent but agreed that other shuls should be encouraged to contribute.
- k. Al Altschul stated that he supports the contribution. He does not want to defer a decision this from this morning. There is money sitting in the

Bregstone fund, and he believes we should support this. Al moved to commit \$5000 toward the purchase of this bus.

- l. David Epstein noted that we have had a long time policy of not using shul money to support other institutions. He also noted that while he is unaware of the terms of the Bregstone bequest, there was an extensive report by Howard Rosen about how the money should be used.
- m. Gary noted that the Rosen report was not adopted, and that the money was unrestricted.
- n. Al noted that of the money in the original bequest, \$100K was given to buy Bayit II, and \$50K was given to the mikvah for the endowment. There's about \$50K sitting in the fund now. He suggested that the money should be used to meet our needs and expressed the view that this is a legitimate activity.
- o. Baruch stated that we don't spend more money because the importance of having some substantial amount of money in the fund means opportunity costs – if and when the building to the west becomes available, we don't have the money, that would be a tremendous problem.
- p. Gary noted that the \$100K from the Bregstone Fund given for Bayit II was invested in Bayit II, not spent – it'll come back if and when we sell the building. He also noted that we spent about \$15K from the Bregstone Fund on redoing the bait midrash about 5 years ago.
- q. Jerome stated that the Bregstone money needs to be spent for the benefit of the congregation. Having said that, he did not dispute the notion that helping with the education of children benefits the congregation. He is concerned about the linkage with one of the several day schools which are available and does not want to limit that to the Berman Hebrew Academy. Could we condition this on going to other institutions?
- r. Eliezer noted that yes, the contribution can be linked to the yeshiva and the Torah school. JPDS has a different bus, and the start times don't work well together.
- s. Roz noted that we don't have a local school, and she is concerned about us supporting only one of the institutions.
- t. Baruch said that Jerome put his finger on the issue – “what is supportive of keeping the largest number of parents in the school?” As soon as we say “we're giving money to the Academy but not JPDS” we're doing something wrong.
- u. Rabbi Freundel stated that everyone knows that he is not a fan of the Academy. However, he supports this – one consideration is that it's a full-length school, where JPDS runs out in sixth grade. Our primary mission is to raise Orthodox kids – our secondary mission is raising Jewish kids. This bus proposal covers three schools, not one.
- v. Baruch stated that he disagrees that our primary responsibility is to educate Orthodox Jewish Children. He believes that busing doesn't fix the pull to the suburbs of having the schools out in the suburbs. He is reluctant to do this as a one-shot deal. If there is a sense that this is

essential to the community, can we get back a more concrete motion from the other synagogues?

- w. Dave Sloan suggested that we could authorize this as matching funds along with other shuls.
- x. Elana Lederman stated the contribution would directly benefit us – we need to do it whether or not others do.
- y. Sheldon Weisel asked whether the operating fee to parents will change as a result of this contribution?
- z. Eliezer said no, this is capital expense.
- aa. Sheldon Weisel asked will they stop this if we don't give any money?
- bb. Eliezer responded, not this year, but maybe next year.
- cc. Sheldon Weisel asked if we give money, and no other neighborhood did, would they keep the service up?
- dd. Eliezer said it would be viewed as a vote of confidence.
- ee. Gary Winters stated that he thinks it's reasonable to see what other shuls are doing.
- ff. David Barak disagreed, saying that someone needs to be Nachshon and walk into the water first. He believes we should lead, and let the rest of the community follow.
- gg. Eliezer asked if the Maybergs, the Mellmans, or my family still be living here if this hadn't been supported 10 years ago?
- hh. Jerome Chapman said that the other shuls should step up, but the question is "is this to the benefit of Keshet Israel?" I think \$40K wouldn't be, but the amount of \$5K is. I second this motion to support transportation to the schools in the suburbs.
- ii. Motion is "Keshet Israel will make a \$5000 contribution to the Hebrew Academy from the Bregstone funds earmarked to the purchase of a bus." Jerome Chapman asked for an amendment to make sure that the understanding is that the bus would be available to take other students to other schools in the region., and Eliezer said that has already been agreed to by the schools in question.
- jj. Jerome Chapman responded that as long as that's clear, he's prepared to support it. Al Altschul stated that will be included in the letter.
- kk. Board vote was unanimous (to be included in the letter), and there was general assent.

11. Nursery school – Gary asked to clarify the status of the nursery school.

- a. David Barak stated that the economics were analyzed by the nursery school committee, and they concluded that doing the nursery school only in Bayit I would not be self-sustaining.
- b. Eliezer Halbfinger noted that most of the nursery schools in the area are for-profit ventures – we should consider approaching one about partnering with them.
- c. Gary asked Eliezer Halbfinger to investigate the possibility of setting up a partnership.

12. Citizens Association of Georgetown (CAG): David Barak stated that several people in the congregation approached the leaders of the Mikvah, expressing concern about security after the Senitt murder in Georgetown. CAG has a guard program which walks people to their cars inside Georgetown. Keshet is *not* a member of CAG, but every other religious institution is a member. David has approached the Sisterhood, the Mikvah, and Keshet about collectively joining CAG. The cost would be \$65/year for membership. The guard program is \$250/year, and more for businesses. David's proposal is for the Mikvah and Sisterhood to contribute \$500 each, and Keshet to contribute \$1500. He said that this is part of being a good neighbor, and will increase good will among neighbors for us. The Mikvah and Sisterhood have agreed to this. The amount was pulled out of thin air, but Keshet can do it.
- a. Gary noted that Sisterhood money is shul money, out of the operating fund, so it isn't actually separate – therefore, this would be \$2000 from shul, and \$500 from the Mikvah.
 - b. Elana stated that CAG won't give us a number regarding how much other religious institutions have given. She said that women are more nervous about coming to the mikvah, attendants as well. We need to give people a sense of security. Just the idea that a guard is available to walk with them to their car or home will make the women feel a lot safer.
 - c. David Barak noted that Keshet has women walking alone at night.
 - d. Rabbi Freundel stated that his family is a member of this program, and it is very helpful when kids come home late. He said we also need the good will.
 - e. Al Altschul said that at the community meeting after the Senitt murder, it was very unusual to see so many people from so many constituencies. We need to participate in this program, and support more security in the area.
 - f. David Barak noted that whomever calls the program would call from Keshet or from somewhere to come to Keshet. But it would primarily be for people leaving Keshet.
 - g. Baruch Fellner noted that his family is also a member of the guard program. The principal value is the presence of a program. If we are substantial givers, let's make sure whomever works with them knows what our calendar is, and that they can patrol when we are around.
 - h. David Barak moved to authorize the expenditure of \$2,065 to support this program. This would be matched by \$500 from the mikvah. Elana Lederman seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.
13. Selichot: Baruch Fellner stated that we have traditionally had Selichot services at 1 AM Sunday morning – that puts us walking home at the peak time for problems and muggings etc. He believes the timing of the services is inappropriate, and hopes that we can change them. He asked the Rabbi about the halacha.
- a. Rabbi Freundel stated that the Shulchan Aruch says you have to get up “early in the morning” which has always been understood as “past the middle of the night.” The two options are the way we do it now (like 1:03) or right before sunrise (5:30 in the morning). The origin of doing it

early is from the old days in Brooklyn, where they started doing it at 10 PM at night under the aegis of “we can’t do this any other way.” He has spoken to the police department and noted that there is a bell curve of crime, where it rises from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., and the peak is midnight. Moving the time an hour earlier would actually have people getting out when crime is higher. Also, Rabbi Broyde offered to give a shiur for selichot this year, and he believes Rabbi Broyde would not do it if selichot were earlier than 1 a.m.

- b. Gary suggested that the shul should offer a rideshare program –the office will coordinate it. Baruch Fellner stated he does not think that is sufficient.
 - c. Elanit Rothschild asked where would the bright line be? Also, setting up rideshares would help introduce people to each other in the neighborhoods, and that would help with other occasions as well.
 - d. Dave Sloan suggested opening a bulletin board which can let people set up their own rideshares. There was general assent for this approach.
14. Renovations: Gary stated that we have about \$50K left in the Gottesman gift, but we might have more assuming we can work out the windows. There’s another \$50K from an anonymous donor. The chairs will NOT be in for the Schildhaus bat mitzvah on August 26. That will be the first Shabbat back and we will remain in the shul after that point. Thus, we will have to rent chairs for several weeks. He noted that the test window does not work, and the architect has ordered a darker green glass which still allows you to see through, but will be much darker. We’re doing a couple more test panes.
- a. Elanit offered a tremendous yashar koach to Gary and David Epstein and the others who have made sure that everything has gone so well.
15. High Holiday Learners Service: Roz Singer stated that we have not secured the funding for the Four Seasons yet. There was discussion about alternative locations, including the shul.
16. Security memo. Dave Sloan addressed the issue raised in his memo circulated before the meeting. There was general assent to going forward with additional panic buttons in the shul. Dave Sloan will coordinate.
17. Other matters:
- a. Elanit mentioned that we should get a gift of some kind for Rabbi Ari Ross, who has been tremendously helpful over the summer. There was general agreement.
 - b. Gary will be away for the next several months. Ken Weinstein will be functioning as acting president for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur purposes.
 - c. Jerome Chapman asked whether we are doing a pre-Kol Nidre warmup for donors, as we have done in past years?

d. Dave Sloan offered to work with Al Altschul and Jerome Chapman to set this up.

18. Elanit made a motion to adjourn. Barak seconded. Meeting adjourned.