

Kesher Israel Board Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2007

Attendees: Rabbi Barry Freundel, Yoel Oz , Gary Winters, Elanit Rothschild, David Barak, Suzette Klein, Gamliel Kronemer, Elana Lederman, Seth Opert, David Sloan, Leon Wieseltier, David Levin

1. Dvar Torah—Rabbi Freundel explained that this year Simchat Torah contains within it a celebration of a combination of many of the holidays—the freedom of Pesach and the break we need from so much holiday celebration; the rules and restrictions given to us on Shavuot and the need to understand the limitations when erev Shabbat follows Simchat Torah, experiencing the world around us as we do on Sukkot, and balancing the outside world with our inner selves as we do on Rosh HaShanah.
2. The draft August minutes were not circulated for review due to Jesse's unavailability; the Board wishes Jesse and Elana Mendelsohn mazel tov on the birth of Zev
3. New member applications (listed below) were reviewed and approved by those present, albeit final approval (including email approval) is necessary by those members of the Board who were not present at the meeting:
 - Susan Taylor
 - Marc Diener
 - Ryan London
 - Richard Beigel
 - John Leinhardt and Toni Glickman Leinhardt (plus two children)
 - Bension Dworkin
 - Dr. Ludwig and Ruth Sternlicht
 - Natalie Lascar
 - Aaron Hopp
 - Steven and Nava Pickman
 - Scott and Ilana Mathias
 - Jeremy and Rhoda Rabkin
 - Michael Lipin
 - Joshua Goodman and Tammy Korolnek
 - Batya Lebinger
 - Justin Isaac Goldberg
 - Craig Oppenheim
 - Adam Samuel "Sammy" Roth
4. There will be a new members' lunch sometime in October, the date to be decided and announced.
5. Suggestion was made to invite new members for holiday meals. Gamliel pointed out that Sukkot would be a particularly good time for invitations, because finding a sukkah is especially difficult for newcomers to the area. Rabbi Freundel stated that a number of people will soon be completing the conversion process and becoming members. Dave Sloan emphasized that a meal is a good way to integrate people into the Kesher community. The consensus was that each new shul member should be assigned to a member of the Board, and the Board

- member should invite the new member to a meal and explain that the invitation is part of an integration process established by the Board.
6. Discussion turned to whether to combine the two Simchat Torah minyanim to try to reduce the difficulties arising in connection with the celebration of the Chag, which are exacerbated due to the Chag being followed immediately by Shabbat. Among the issues discussed were that scheduling the start time for the upstairs minyan is problematic, due to the “late” start that inevitably results due to people staying out late the preceding night and the absence of a minyan and the “scheduled” start time; an early chatsot; finding a way to shorten the hakafot and, even that, would only save a little more than an hour.

David Barak proposed that the hashkama and upstairs minyan be merged and that a compromise start time of 8:15 be selected, and the service be kept moving so as to finish by 1:30.

Gamliel polled the hashkama minyan two weeks in a row and there were more against combining the minyanim for Simchat Torah, than there were in favor.

Leon pointed out that there is now a custom of having an early minyan.

Gary recommended an earlier start time for the upstairs minyan, cutting down the time for hakafot, and getting the women back earlier from kriyah.

Rabbi Freundel stated that if the upstairs minyan started on time, it would finish before the hashkamah minyan, but that there is not a minyan of people who come upstairs on time; there is no timely critical mass at the upstairs minyan. He added that the last time Shabbat immediately followed Simchat Torah, there had been no hashkama minyan.

Dave Sloan stressed that the celebration is more enjoyable and the ruach greater when more people participate. This argues for not having such an early start for the upstairs minyan as was being proposed.

Rabbi Freundel noted that one way to boost the ruach would be to invite a “Torah Tour” from Yeshiva University. Rabbi Oz thought it would not add to the ruach so much as it would impose an out of town “vibe”; Gary thought that it was unnecessary.

Leon suggested the need to point out from the pulpit the problems associated with Shabbat following Simchat Torah. Rabbi Freundel concurred and said he would make the point from the pulpit.

David Levin asked why the Board had decided to have two minyanim on Simchat Torah. Rabbi Freundel explained the history and that the hashkama minyan had been the result of an effort to make the holiday more enjoyable for more people.

Rabbi Oz suggested that the hashkamah minyan could be held upstairs.

Rabbi Freundel stressed the need for congregants to come to daven on time and that whatever we do this year will be an experiment from which we will learn for future years. He also urged the members of the Board to talk to their friends to encourage timely attendance.

David Barak suggested that the hashkamah minyan send late comers upstairs. Gary agreed and suggested that the upstairs minyan start at 8:45 and that

anyone who comes after 8:30 should be sent upstairs, rather than davenning at the hashkamah minyan. The majority of attendees favored these points.

Rabbi Oz suggested that the beginning and ending times for hakafot be published in the SAP. The majority of attendees favored this point.

David Barak suggested that the hashkamah minyan begin at 7:30, that the upstairs minyan start at 8:45, and that the gabbaim send the Board the proposed schedule for Simchat Torah. The majority of attendees favored this point.

7. The August 2007 financial statement was circulated and reviewed.
8. David Barak announced that new white covers (7 small and 2 large) for the shulchanot and shtenders were arriving in time for Rosh HaShanah, and that the donations for these new covers had already been received.
9. Gary explained that Alfred Moses wanted to make a donation to replace bima furniture, including a new shulchan. David Epstein is in charge of finding bima furniture, and thus far he has had no success. Rabbi Freundel suggested that he look at furniture from Kibbutz Lavi. Gary said that no furniture will be purchased without Board approval, and that Alfred Moses has accepted this condition; his donation is not contingent upon his pre-approving furniture.
10. Gary discussed Bayit 2. The lease runs until February 2008. The lease does not cover the cost of Bayit 2. To the extent the costs exceed income from the lease, payments are made from the Trustees' fund. This shortfall is less than \$10,000 annually. If Bayit 2 could be sold profitably, that would be preferable to renewing the lease. Kira Epstein, David Epstein's daughter who is also a real estate agent, is monitoring the market for a possible buyer. Without explanation, it was stated that there is no conflict of interest in Kira's assisting with the sale of Bayit 2.
11. Elana noted the need to make reminder announcements about mikvah privacy issues during the holidays.
12. Gamliel suggested that the number of piyuttim said should be reduced. Rabbi Freundel was not averse, but stressed that the same minhagim must be followed at the upstairs and downstairs minyanim.
13. After discussion about signage for the combination lock for using the courtyard and the mikvah kelim during the chagim, Gamliel agreed to arranged to have the signs made.
14. Suzette said that a project is underway to replace the chairs in the social hall.
15. Rabbi Freundel announced that a large number of visitors had informed him how much they enjoyed the shul. Suzette added that the shul has long been a place that was fun for the holidays.
16. The meeting was adjourned.