

## **Kesher Israel Board Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2005**

### 1. New Members

We approved seven new members:

Shuli Berman

Sheldon and Ann Berman

Rebecca Katz

Edward Perlmutter

David and Bella Krieger

Hylton Joffe

Samuel Rascoff

Regarding membership, Natasha Rosenstock asked whether sisterhood membership (and for men, a “supporter” category) could be included on the membership form. This was agreed. David Sloan said he had told Steve Krieger to move forward with the Darfur membership idea.

### 2. Budget

We have collected \$152K to date this year. The Kol Nidre appeal and dues are coming in. The Kol Nidre number is not final but is in the \$60K range, down from \$80K last year. Shoshana is finalizing the numbers this week. We sold every seat for the high holidays, but we don't know what is outstanding yet. We need to raise approximately \$10K additional at this time.

Our disbursements to date are \$102K. We are one third of the way through the year. We are in good shape on the disbursements side.

We need to plan a fundraiser for this winter/spring. We would like to hold an event in March, our traditional event honoring someone in the community. It may be nice to hold another event with Jon Kaboff as well. We are also considering a capital campaign this year. Our hope is to get 75% of the refurbishment funds from a few people. We shouldn't do that and also have many little events. The March event will be distinct from the capital campaign.

Amy Kauffman has agreed to held up the fundraising event, and others are willing to serve on the committee. The board can participate as well. David Sloan and Roz Singer said they would help with the event.

We will consider 6<sup>th</sup> and I Synagogue again, but it still has the problem of not enough seats for a dinner. A sit-down party at the Park Hyatt has become much too expensive.

We discussed possible honorees for the event. We discussed a possible service award and young leadership award.

### 3. Nursery School

Daria Fane presented the latest for the nursery school. We are currently renting out the house and netting approximately \$1K per month. We would need a major fundraising effort to pay the mortgage and down payment for the house. That is not taking place.

Daria is trying to see if the nursery school is feasible. There will be no nursery school unless we get the zoning permission. There is a hearing for this on December 20. If we get the zoning, we will consider moving forward. To prepare for the hearing, there is an ANC meeting on Tuesday, November 29. At this meeting, neighbors will take a position for or against the school. The current position is divided. We are working with a zoning lawyer, Steven Gale, who recommended holding a meeting for the neighbors to ask questions and learn about the project. That meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 15 at the shul.

Part of the opposition for the neighbors is related to the idea of a “school” which implies a huge number of kids, yelling, and a schoolyard. Because of the legal requirement for outdoor play, we will use Rose Park and there will be no play on 28<sup>th</sup> Street.

Daria recommends that for the first year or two, we open a single classroom in the first Bayit with the second house still being rented. One class will be 10-12 students. We would then wait until the first room is a success before the more costly renovations. For the single room, renovations needed include the kitchen, bathroom, new paint, lockers and shelves. This will reduce the cost of start-up until we have stronger demand.

To enable the space to still be used by the current users, we could create wall-to-wall cabinets in which supplies for Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah, cookie minyan, etc. would be kept, as well as the aron itself. We would need a place to store adult chairs. It was noted that the cabinets would take away from the space of the room. We need to clean out the Bayit in order to do this. The kitchen has already been cleaned out.

It was asked whether the feasibility study is scalable to a single room. The largest cost factor is salaries. For one room, we would expect 3 teachers for 10-12 students. The kitchen could be incorporated into programming, for example for challah baking. The students could come to the shul itself for “shacharit.”

The quality of the school depends on the director, and we would need a solid director even with only 10-12 students. P Street Kids, another local nursery school, has 10 students and a serious nursery school director. We would have to sell “homey and haimish” as part of the school image. The director would understand that, and if it was successful they would know that we planned to expand.

If we get the zoning for Bayit 1, we can keep Bayit 2 as a residence. It was asked whether there is a zoning appeal process.

David Barak is currently working to fix the electricals in the Bayit; the lights and outlets that are not working, etc. There are still water problems with water coming in from the

outside. The Sisterhood is planning a fundraiser to help clean up the upstairs of the bayit and create a room for nursing moms and small children.

David Sloan commended Daria for her hard work. He asked whether we have a plan for raising money given that there will be a capital cost for renovation, start-up costs, payroll and salary. He said that perhaps doing work only in Bayit 1 is something we can handle at this point. If we could show that it is successful, then we could raise money for the additional renovations to Bayit 2.

It was estimated that we would need \$150-200K for start-up, first director and teacher. After that, the school should be self-supporting.

Roz Singer asked what outreach is being done to the community. Daria answered that “dear neighbor” letters were sent to houses within 200 feet of the building, who must be informed. They have been going door to door and have heard some support and some opposition.

There will be a letter of opposition on the grounds of traffic and parking. The Board of Zoning Approval is used to neighbors complaining. With 10-12 students and 3 staff, and perhaps half of the children with parents in walking distance, we don’t expect major traffic and parking problems. We could offer the director monthly parking at the Four Seasons if needed. Some people have heard that there would be buses from Maryland and Virginia.

They have engaged supporters to come and support the school at the meeting. Leon Weiseltier is trying to get prominent neighbors to attend. The rabbi will chair the meeting. Daria is trying to contact members of Keshet who live in this ANC district to sign a petition in support of the school.

Debbie Rogal said that we had considered a nursery school for Bayit 1 but people said we wouldn’t be able to get zoning. She asked if it might be different if we get zoning for a two-building concept but only plan to use one. She suggested we ask Steve this.

If there is no zoning approval, we need to decide whether to keep the house for the income it is producing. It won’t cost us to keep it.

#### 4. Renovations

We are seeking a line of credit for borrowing funds. We can get an equity line of \$150K on our building, which we can pay back as soon as we get. We need a resolution authorizing the president, financial secretary and treasurer to open the line of credit. No one individual person could act.

Reich Management (recommended by Ken Weinstein) will look at the renovation drawings and the estimates. Their role is to be the “owner’s representative.” We are using their services for free at the moment, but if worthwhile we will use for upstairs as

well. They will pick up the detailed architectural plans but will also need the cost estimates. They have not been to the shul, but they can come.

It appears that the estimates for the front area is much too high. The bathrooms along are estimated at \$95K. The kitchen estimate, \$100K, may be realistic. We have no detailed breakdowns for these costs. It was asked whether the building contractor would agree to a lower price even if Reich suggested it.

We would like to do the kitchen and bathrooms at the same time, the time estimated for this is 6 weeks. The Bayit kitchen has a refrigerator and storage, and we should be able to function with this. The Bayit kitchen still needs to be cleaned. More discussion is needed to approve the kitchen work. If agreed, we will do both at the same time. There will be some disruption of the downstairs activities, but the social hall should not be affected. We may need cold food.

We have agreed to hold off on upstairs renovations until March, for a Bar Mitzvah in February.

We are rethinking the windows. It may make sense simply to tell the Gottesman family that this is not in our best interests. The cost is tremendous, \$80K, and there is no clear assurance that it will not impact the heat and light issues in the shul. It would also involve a long displacement from the shul building.

The contractors want to do the seats, floor, and carpeting all at once, and we would be displaced from the shul in March through May. We are seeking locations for us to hold services during this time. Shanna Winters is looking at alternative spaces, including the school at 24<sup>th</sup> and N and the Francis Middle School. Hashkama could still meet downstairs at Kesher. The big challenge for minyanim is the transportation of books and supplies. We could try to hold both services downstairs, with an overflow minyan at Hillel. We can only fit 50 chairs in the Bayit.

##### 5. Capital Campaign

Gary described his thoughts regarding a shul capital campaign. The goal will be to raise \$300K in a capital campaign. We would identify people to give \$10-25K per person, then campaign for below. This effort is a “twice in a lifetime” opportunity for the shul, the first time a project like this has been done in 70 years. We are supported by a \$500K gift. He hopes to raise 75% of the funds from 20-25 people. At the same time, we would raise capital to improve the rabbi’s house, including a kitchen renovation; and improvements to the Bayit. We are at a high water mark for membership, and this is the time to expand.

Roz Singer suggested that we engage the efforts of someone who does development professionally, since this is a very significant amount of money. She suggested someone who knows how to get buy-in from the whole shul.

We still need to raise our regular operating budget, but it was expected that this would be raised through the March event. This capital campaign would really focus on larger donations, and give people the opportunity to be recognized. We could have names of big donors on a shulchan cover, etc. This should be done with fanfare.

Roz suggested her friend at AIPAC who works on estate planning and might know people who would be helpful. Kim Brumer is also a fundraiser. We should see if someone would be willing to donate their time or charge a small fee.

Jerome Chapman asked whether we should do the capital campaign over a period of time, donations payable over a period of years. It was also asked whether we could handle this at the same time that we address the other house funds. We are not actively fundraising for that now. The nursery school money would also be a separate campaign. The capital campaign money is needed now.

**Al Altschul made a motion that Keshet Israel enter an equity line of credit of \$200,000 at BB&T, with any borrowing designated by two of three representatives: president, treasurer, and financial secretary. The motion was approved unanimously.**

David Sloan requested that the monthly budget statements include balances of the building fund and the line of credit.

Elanit Rothschild said that this effort will affect everything done at Keshet Israel this year. Gary agreed and said that we need to discuss and identify solutions. We might need to opt not to do certain activities? Gary said he didn't want to cut back on programming. We will work on where to daven first. The kids' programming will also be displaced, though we can still use the bayit. We might need to cut down on the learners' service.

Gary will put out the word beyond mid-December to warn people that we'll be under construction. He will also check for events that might already be on the calendar.

## 6. Good and Welfare

Ari Elias-Bachrach has volunteered to help organize the shul library. Gary Waxman and the rabbi should be invited to participate. David Barak will help. It was also suggested that they work on the Bayit library.

David Barak said that the high holidays services have gotten positive reviews from 70-80% of attendees. There was favorable support for the continuing "home-grown" daveners. We had a total of 600 people for Yom Kippur. The learners' service was a huge success, despite tremendous logistical challenges. People loved going to the Four Seasons. The donor was very happy with the shul's response and the success of the event. The leaders received uneven views.

For the future, it was suggested to have a Rosh Hashanah service downstairs in addition to the one on Yom Kippur. It was also suggested that we may want to sell some seats downstairs on Yom Kippur. We could bundle this with membership and put it on people's bill. Of course, we would never turn people away. Gary supports this and says we should decide in May/June when we discuss the budget.

Next Sunday, David Barak is going through old siddurs for the shul and replacing with new siddurs. Volunteers are appreciated.

Gary will meet with the rabbi soon to discuss his contract, which expires in May.