

Kesher Israel Board Meeting Minutes – April 10, 2005

Attendees: Rabbi Freundel, Gary Winters, David Barak, Jonathan Frenkel, David Epstein, Roz Singer, Dave Sloan, Al Altschul, Elanit Rothschild

1. Shul Renovation

Gary Winters has received the estimate for the renovation. The cost is \$417K, which includes lots of things, some of which may or may not be doable, such as replacing windows. Two donors have agreed to cover almost all of this amount.

The main concern is that there will be some displacement. The timing is uncertain, though we have spoken about minimizing it. The goal is to do the work between Shavuot and Rosh Hashanah. We need to explore the possibility of alternative venues for Shabbat services. Gary requested volunteers to look into this for June through August.

The board expressed concern about displacing the congregation for the summer, and about the likely duration of the displacement. Baruch Fellner suggested staggering hashkama minyan to keep the congregation in the shul. David Sloan expressed great concern at displacing the congregation for months, especially in the summer when we add 20% of our members each year, and especially with the competition from other congregations.

The intention is to have this project be a once-in-a-75-year opportunity. The Bayit may be a location for a separate minyan. Al Altschul expressed that although we may lose a few members, it is worth it to beautify the shul.

The conversation turned to possible locations for alternate services. There are some places which are obvious but not halakhically acceptable, and there are others we don't know about which might be okay. David Sloan volunteered to find someone to find alternative spaces. The rabbi said that there is no problem with using a basement of a church if there are no crosses, but you'll have people who won't do it at all.

The renovations will include the kitchen, walls, painting, seats, bathroom, and flooring. The donors are in favor of a maximalist expansion, so more is better.

David Sloan expressed concern at how long it will take, and said anything longer than a month shouldn't be done. Elanit Rothschild said that she thought it was worth it, and that the congregation wants it. Michael Perkins suggested doing the work in stages.

Roz Singer said that the most important thing is to be clear with the congregation about what we're doing and when. Gary said he would forward the information to all of the board members for now.

We will establish a design committee to deal with details, and the board will make the major decisions. Gary is waiting to have Baranes give us some estimates on what it

would all cost. He will be speaking to the donors this week to get some hard commitments, and to get some real details about the timing.

2. New Members

The board approved the following new members:

Noah and Mindy Levin

Stacy Schwartz

Eli and Jen Strassfeld

3. Budget

We have not done our collections yet, and we have about \$7K outstanding. That will bring us close to our goal. David Sloan recommended expanded our collections meeting to include those people whose donations have dropped off by 50% or more. Rabbi Freundel said that all of the other categories are going up. He said that we should reach out to the hotels the way that Rabbi Shemtov did. Leon had committed to writing a paragraph about us for this. We need to follow up on this.

4. Kaboff concert

Roz Singer reported that the event will be scheduled for Tuesday June 28th. John Kaboff is a cello player who will be doing a concert with a woman who is his accompanist. The songs will be primarily Jewish or composer oriented. They have discussed holding it at 7:00 PM, with a reception from 7-8, and then concert from 8:15-9:45 with a ten minute intermission. The hall is across the street from the metro.

Gary asked about the viability of this event. We've never done this before. Roz indicated that Kaboff has a network he reaches out to, of cello fans. The room holds about 120 people. We need sponsorship to make the event a fundraising success. If we want \$25K, we'd need a lot of sponsorship. It's only \$600 to rent the space for 4 hours. Kaboff has agreed to base his fee on what we're making, but it will be approximately \$1000.

David Sloan calculated that the first \$25 of each ticket will go toward covering costs. We're going to barely cover costs with ticket sales. Who exactly will sponsor this event? Gary said that we always have sponsors of our theatre parties. Michael Perkins said that the Strathmore is right in the middle of several congregations who have a lot of arts supporters and might attend.

Gary explained that we're not having a theatre party this year, so this might help us raise a smaller amount of money. David Sloan will also be doing a Yom Iyun.

Al Altschul said that we need a fundraiser this year. We won't raise \$25K, but if we raise \$5-10K, that's great. He suggested a reasonable ticket price, less than \$75 per ticket. Gary said that if the prices are that low, we shouldn't do it, since we need to net about \$100 per ticket. Al disagreed.

David Sloan suggested developing a draft budget which makes this work. David Epstein asked whether the intention is to have people go because it's Keshet, or because it's a

cellist. If it is meant to be a shul fundraiser, can we expect members of other shuls to attend?

Gary asked Roz to find out the costs from Dahan.

5. Yom Iyun

David Sloan would like to plan a capstone event for Nissan Antine's time here – a Yom Iyun, during Sefirah, on a Sunday. We could leverage Chovevei Torah students. He has asked Gamliel to find out whether Nissan will be here and interested at that time.

There is a good team putting together the event. There will be an organizational call this week to finalize the details. Dave would like to use this as an opportunity to expand the educational options here.

Rabbi Freundel suggested including Saul Berman and others aside from just Chovevei Torah. Gary said that we need to schedule it and get out invitations quickly because these people's calendars fill up fast. Rabbi Freundel was very positive about using an education event to raise money. Dave said that lots of people like to sponsor educational events.

Rabbi Freundel said that George Stephanopolos wants to do his dialogues as an annual event.

6. Update about the OU

Rabbi Freundel has called Rabbi Weinreb several times but gotten no response.

7. Minyan Issues

David Barak said that there have been a lot of complaints about the lack of a shkia minyan on Shabbat between April 1 and May 15. For example, this Shabbat, the shkia time would have been at 7:20. The minyan which was called for 7:00 ended up starting at 7:10 with 15 guys there, and 50 people showed up about 7:20. One suggestion was to have a shkia minyan in the Bayit. The rabbi did not want to do this because of the Mikvah.

Rabbi Freundel said that we used to only have a 7PM minyan. The 7PM minyan was the predominant one, and everyone said that the 7PM one was the "main" minyan and was the one which mattered. Gary said that lots of people with kids want a 7PM minyan. Baruch agreed that people need it for family reasons.

Jonathan Frenkel said that he has always been in favor of having the Friday night minyan be at shkia. Having it at 7:00 does not respect those who come on time because it always starts late. He suggested giving it a try because he thought the majority would want it at shkia. Jonathan said that the issue should be decided by the people who attend minyan rather than by the board.

Gary did not want to decide this issue with such a small number of board members, but suggested that we try the shkia time in August. The sense of the board was to try it.

8. Good and Welfare

David Sloan discussed the Yom Haatzma'ut concert being sponsored by the Green Group to support the Alexander Stream in Israel.