

Keshar Israel Board Minutes August 11

Attendees: Gary Winters, Jonathan Frenkel, Lea Mendelsohn, Elanit Rothschild, Natasha Rosenstock, Deborah Rogal, Roz Singer, David Barak, Al Altschul, Jerry Chapman, David Sloan, Michael Gelfand, David Epstein, Evonne Marzouk.

1. The meeting opened with a **dvar Torah** from Jonathan Frenkel.
2. There was an informational discussion about the **cemetery**. The Southern Avenue cemetery abuts the Chesed Shel Emet cemetery (free burial society). We don't sell many grave sites at Southern Avenue any more. Chesed Shel Emet is about to run out of space and wants to work out an agreement under which they can bury people at the Southern Avenue cemetery. The proposal is that Keshar Israel will grant space to Chesed Shel Emet and they will be responsible for maintenance on these gravesites. Over time, this will have the effect of reducing the cost to Keshar Israel of maintaining the Southern Avenue cemetery, because more of the cemetery will be maintained by Chesed Shel Emet. Rabbi Koss is in charge of Chesed Shel Emet. It is unlikely that the shul will make money from this space and Chesed Shel Emet is desperate for space. Our costs are \$700/month for upkeep and they will decrease slightly through this over time. Gary proposed that we arrange an agreement that we can get out of if we need the space. Agreed with unanimous consent. Gary agreed to consult with the rabbi about the issue of acceptable burial policies by Chesed Shel Emet.

3. Discussion on High Holidays. Debbie Rogal indicated that Adult Education will pay for additional machzorim. There will be a Kol Nidre solicitation and also a pre-solicitation event. Board members will get calling lists. It was also decided to put together a 2nd event for young donors.

4. Calendar. Debbie indicated that the Adult Education committee has met and decided on classes. There will be additional programs and we will try to announce them early. We will advertise in the Jewish Week closer to the event. The Nissan Antine classes will be moved back to the shul. The Rabbi is teaching an additional class this year.

Natasha Rosenstock volunteered to be the liaison to the Jewish Week.

5. Web site. David Barak gave an update about the website. A revised version can now be seen at www.keshar.org. Matt Horowitz is doing the web design work. Send comments to David Barak with suggestions for format, etc.

6. Mikvah. Lea Mendelsohn gave a report on the status of mikvah construction. The lobby floor is to be done by the end of next week. The materials will be brought to the shul to show that we have them. The current contractor is working on a new heating and filtration system. The July 31 deadline was extended because there were some additional requirements imposed on the contractor. Gutter guards will be installed. The goal is to have it all done by the end of next week, if not, find a plumber and electrician. After the current contractor finishes, it should be a matter of weeks. If he meets the deadline the mikvah should be ready before the chagim. We'd like him to oversee installation of the heating and filtration system at minimum.

In terms of funding, we have run down the bank account and are now calling in pledges. Rabbi Shem Tov's pledge – for the Borot – may be between \$12,000-32,000 depending on interpretation. The total cost will be about \$250,000 which is what other mikvaot have indicated was the cost. We've spent extra to prevent problems. The Potomac Mikvah is closing because of problems that we have learned to avoid.

Once the Mikvah opens there will need to be more people to get involved and help out. It will be harder to generate daily operational funds once it opens. Lea Mendelsohn indicated that the Mikvah board has presented an operational plan to the board. It was asked whether the right talent is running this project. Lea indicated that the annual costs will be \$30-40,000 based on other mikvaot. Lea will call Michael to discuss the operational plan.

7. Shul improvements. Gary Winters reported that a contract was signed with Shalom Baranes and they are working on a plan for the sanctuary improvements. Norman Jemal will develop a schematic and price and will manage the bid process. This is also covered by the donor. He will manage the process with no fee, the same as he did for the 6th and I shul. The goal is to have this done before Pesach. There may be a meeting on this in September. The work will include the entrance, bathrooms, minimal work downstairs, and also upstairs aesthetic improvements.

8. House next to the bayit. Michael Gelfand reported that we were the successful bidder on the house. Norman Jemal looked at the house structurally and for money we could do anything, including connect the house with the Bayit. We are encouraged by the prospects of a nursery school but we still need to see about codes. We think we can overcome obstacles. Closing will be between October 1-December 25 and will be set by the seller, with 45-day notice. We have to close or we will lose \$75,000. If we can't make changes immediately we could rent the house for a while. We could also decide to sell it, or hold and rent it while raising money. We have a commitment with a bank for a mortgage. It would be an interest-only loan of \$600,000 for 6 years. We would put down \$500,000, \$400,000 from the trustees and \$100,000 from the Bregstone fund. This would leave the trustees with no funds that are liquid.

Michael has spoken to potential funders and people have been generous and positive. He thinks that we have about \$270,000 committed over 3-5 years. The goal is to raise enough to pay the mortgage, trustees, and construction. The house has been bought in the name of the trustees of Keshet Israel. He has put in a call to the former donor for a new building, but gotten no response.

9. Survey of communal needs. David Barak has put together a survey regarding use of all space and would like to send it out for response within 30-45 days. There were concerns with the existing survey, particularly that it raises expectations about what might not be possible, and that it could thwart efforts of a future adult education survey. The adult education survey was held back so as to make it electronically available to the whole shul. David Barak and Debbie Rogal will work out something acceptable to both of them. David will send out a revised version, members of board will be given an opportunity to comment, and then the survey will go out. This will not take the place of "usage planning" but we may redirect plans if we see something very different coming out of the survey than what we expect. We can also use the survey as a consensus building tool.

Regarding the adult education survey, Evonne Marzouk suggested that it should be combined with the communal needs survey and that it would be useful to have the board review this as well. Debbie explained that it had been developed by a committee and did not need to be reviewed by the board, but she would send it to Evonne for her information.

10. Possibilities re nursery school. David Sloan has gathered some information on needs for a nursery school. Children First has recommended a consultant to us on daycare/nursery requirements and has also identified an inspector. Architect/shul member Nir Baras will consult. David Sloan will send his information to David Barak. The new house is still occupied by the current owners, but we can get a schematic and can also use the Bayit which is a mirror image of the current house. Gary will contact the consultant from Children First – we will need to pay for this. This person will tell us about DC regulations. Zoning is different for day care and nursery

schools. Cribs and infants are more complicated. It will be better if we start at the age kids can walk.

Gary will send a letter to the shul about the house purchase.

The board thanked Michael Gelfand and others for getting us to this point with the house purchase.