

Minutes
Temple Sinai
Congregational Meeting
May 21, 2007

Present: Mark Levin, Charlie Newman, Stephen Selig, Ellie deVries, Matt Cort, Jerry Silverman, Rabbi Linda Motzkin, Rabbi Jonathan Rubenstein, Barbara Haynes, Selma Harwood, Gil Harwood, Rhoda Pickus, Trudi Renwick, Melissa Strauss, Ronda Fein, Amy Rosoff, Deb Wertheim, Sid Hellman, David Wren, Rebecca Oppeneer, Judy Beck, Matt Cohen, Joe Sherber, Susan Sherber, Ronald Maenza, Andrea Newman, Gary Wine, Jeff Paul, Arnie Barsky, Mark Bauman, Bernie Forman, Martha Dexter, Scott Dexter, Howard Lebowitz, Maxine Lautenberg, Christine Vescio, Ronnie Silver, Bert Bloom, Bailey Bloom, Karyl Maenza, Carol Schupp-Star, Cheryl Hoffman, David Spingarn, Bhavani Kurtz, Carol Meisel, Tina Marlow, Michael Marx, Ben Gordon, Melissa Woods, Art Ruben, Sandy Welter, Rita Balmuth, Dan Balmuth, Camm Epstein, Roy Meyers, Deborah Meyers, Diana Fenton, Michael Fenton, Michael Cohen, Dianna Goodwin, Pat Spokane, Terry Lowenthal, Arthur Lowenthal, Christina Pitt, Larry Fein, Peter Seidman, Deborah Bernnard, Phil Bernnard, Jeff Olson.

Meeting opened at 7:10 p.m.

1. President Stephen Selig and Rabbi Jonathan Rubenstein gave introductory remarks and prayers. Selig said the Board intends to formulate a new proposal after the meeting and bring it back to the congregation for approval at a subsequent congregational meeting.

2. Architect Mark Levin gave a presentation on his company, its work, his personal background, the proposed contract with Temple Sinai for his services, and the process that he follows when working with a synagogue. The highlights of his presentation include:

- ❑ His company has worked on 118 synagogues and is the most active architecture firm working on synagogues in the world.
- ❑ The process he will follow includes “research” on the current building, a needs assessment for the congregation, cost estimates for his work, and provision of master plan documents.
- ❑ The process includes having the congregation create an “ideal synagogue” from scratch, taking into account the needs of the congregation. A comprehensive questionnaire will be provided. The goal is to find out “who the congregation is” and “who it wants to be.”
- ❑ The cost estimate provided will be broken down by individual items such as sanctuary, school classrooms, etc.
- ❑ 85 percent of projects are done in phases.

3. The following is a summary of the Q & A section of the meeting:

Congregant: Do you take into account “green” considerations?

Levin: Yes, I can, but it will raise costs by an estimated 10-15 percent.

Congregant: Have you worked with any small congregations in the Northeast?

Levin: Yes, and the process is the same, no matter the size and location.

Congregant: The styles of your work shown in the slides reflect more of a suburban style?

Levin: We work in all styles and bring you choices.

Congregant: What would be your first step in evaluating our current building?

Levin: To look at the current mechanical systems, roof, etc. and get estimates from local contractors for the work

Congregant: Why should we hire you from out of town to contract with local contractors when we can hire our own local contractors?

Levin: If all you want to do is “fix the boiler,” you won’t need me. But it would be a waste of money to fix current systems now and then find out later that they and the current building is inadequate for the temple’s needs.

Congregant: What does the current fee cover?

Levin: The needs assessment process, cost estimates, and a master plan with two scenarios. If the congregation decides to stay within the current building, rather than off-site, then the fee would be lower.

Congregant: How can we talk about another building without any particular site in mind?

Levin: I won’t do a plan for an alternative site until Step 2 and only if the congregation decides it wants to move from Broadway.

Congregant: We need a design that maintains the character of the current building, a larger sanctuary, room for the religious school, and enough other needs to unify the congregation.

Levin: The process is dynamic and interactive among the Board, the congregation, the architect, the rabbis, etc. The needs assessment will differ from the one already done for the congregation because it will include dialogue and interaction.

Congregant: What more can we do here at Broadway with finite space?

Levin: There are things that can be done. I faced the same situation with a synagogue in Savannah, Georgia.

Congregant: How can we afford to pay \$27,500 and still have enough for a fundraising feasibility study?

Levin: You are under-funded.

Congregant: What is the timeframe?

Levin: 2-3 years from start to dedication of building.

Congregant: Will you help with fundraising?

Levin: Yes, I will take my plans, renderings, etc to fundraisers. Temple should consider phases, if the whole project is unaffordable.

Congregant: Would you come to our Shabbat services and other events to get to know the congregation?

Levin: Yes, this is a passion for us, not just a business. I just finished 3 years as president of my congregation and have been on the Board of my synagogue for 27 years.

Congregant: How many congregations start a building project with an operating deficit?

Levin: Most congregations run deficits.

Congregants: We should first figure out the cost to bring the current building up to code before proceeding.

Congregant: Can you be bias-free about this building?

Levin: Yes, I have to meet your needs, not my needs.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jerry Silverman, recording secretary