

Minutes
Congregational Meeting
January 11, 2009

PRESENT: Jerry Silverman, Melissa Strauss, Kirsten Mishkin, Michael Getz, Amy Rosoff, Jeff Paul, Pat Paul, Cheryl Hoffmann, Rhoda Pickus, Sid Hellman, Margo Olson, Joel Lautenberg, Maxine Lautenberg, Andrea Newman, Charlie Newman, Rhona Koretzky, Bernie Forman, Carol Meisel, Lisa Potkewitz, Steven Hoffmann, Melinda Schoen, Jack Schoen, Michael Fischer, Lester Gerhardt, Karen Gerhardt, Karyl Maenza, Phil Bernnard, Stephen Selig, Rabbi Linda Motzkin, Nadine Keisler, Frenchy Loeb, Carol Schupp-Star.

Meeting opened at 10:20 a.m.

1. Rabbi Linda Motzkin gave the d'var torah to start the meeting.
2. Charlie Newman explained the agenda for the meeting and thanked those who worked on Project Genesis.
3. Melissa Strauss explained the voting process.
4. Q & A from the congregation.

Q: How much of the approximately \$4 million needed will be raised from fundraising, how much through a mortgage?

A: The Board has not had determined that yet.

Q: Please clarify the voting process.

A: It will take a 2/3 super-majority to move forward with either ballot option. There is no minimum number of votes required (i.e. a quorum), but the Board will make get-out-the-vote phone calls if it determines that a large number of congregants have not voted by a certain time period.

Q: We need more information on the finances, including what kind of a burden will be placed on congregants.

A: The current vote is on "stay or go." After that, we will consult with fundraisers and address the financial issues.

Q: Moving involves selling 509 Broadway and we may not be able to. The timeline in the FAQ sheet is not reasonable.

A: The timeline in the FAQ is a tentative timeline proposed by John Waite in the Master Plan. It is subject to change.

Q: Has the Board considered that staying at 509 Broadway allows for a phased approach and would, therefore, be financially easier?

A: Yes. John Waite has discussed a possible phased-in approach with the Board.

Q: What is the Board's opinion on the two options?

A: The Board is neutral, but Board members will have the opportunity to speak during the open mike period today.

Q: How can we afford it?

A: The vote is to stay or go, not on the finances.

Q: Does the current building have to be sold to a non-profit?

A: No.

Q: We should not start construction until a certain amount of money is raised.

A: Yes, we will not begin without congregational approval of the spending.

Q: It seems backwards to decide on stay or go before fundraising. Why?

A: All the professional fundraisers consulted by the Board recommended we first decide where we will locate before undertaking a fundraising campaign.

Q: Where would we go to?

A: There are a number of options that would be considered, if the vote is to find an alternative site.

Q: We need more information before we can make a decision.

A: There has been a great deal of discussion and meetings and the Board has released a great deal of information.

Q: Have we met with Shaara Tefille about potential joint arrangements?

A: Yes. They are willing to discuss possible joint arrangements after the Project Genesis vote.

Q: What is our current mortgage?

A: Less than \$25,000

5. Open mike statements.

Congregant: We have the most control of our finances by staying at 509 Broadway because we can phase in the project and we have a facility to use.

Congregant: Board has done a great job. The next step should be getting a professional fundraiser, not pursuing further details on constructing and designing the building.

Congregant: We should pursue fundraising first, and then stay or go.

Congregant: Accessibility to the building by children and the elderly is my main concern.

Congregant: I love our presence on Broadway.

Congregant: We need a definite plan on stay or go first because the congregation needs to feel passionately about the option. There are many wealthy people in Saratoga in and out of the congregation, Jewish and gentile.

Congregant: Current recycling efforts have not taken off. If we can't keep the current building clean, how can we keep a bigger facility clean?

Congregant: The downtown presence is very important, particularly for post-b'nai mitzvah students. It's part of providing a Jewish identity for our kids in upstate New York. Shaara Tefille has a nice building, but none of the kids hang around.

Cheryl Hoffmann: As the treasurer, I would never vote to mortgage us beyond our capacity. I hope we can raise funds from outside of the congregation.

Rhoda Pickus: I support staying at 509 Broadway. It's important for the kids to have a Jewish presence downtown that is visible to the community. Shaara Tefille's space does not meet our school needs.

Congregant: We should go, not stay, because of the safety issues for our children and the elderly; an entrance on Long Alley will create new safety problems; access for the handicapped is limited; there are more hidden costs for 509 Broadway; 509 Broadway is an old house that is not suitable for our needs as a synagogue.

Congregant: We need more space. Being downtown is very important. We need to use our creativity in either option that we choose. There are options at 509 Broadway and elsewhere that have not been explored.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jerry Silverman, recording secretary