

## **Kesher Israel Board Meeting Minutes – October 14, 2007, 9:20 a.m.**

Attendees: Rabbi Yoel Oz , Gary Winters, Ken Weinstein, Jerome Chapman, Al Altschul, Suzette Klein, Gamliel Kronemer, Elana Lederman, David Epstein, Roz Singer, Jesse Mendelson, Shana Siesser, Sheldon Weisel, Dave Sloan, David Levin

1. Dvar Torah—Rabbi Oz explained that when Abraham was chosen to carry on the mission to improve humanity, he took command of his own path and that of his family to them to justice and righteousness. With the selection of Abraham for this role, the focus moved from the universal to a family unit that will serve as a model for the rest of the world. Each of us, too, by personal example—ourselves, our families, our community—can influence the world, like concentric circles of improvement extending beyond our own shul.
2. The draft September minutes, which had been circulated for comment and revised with the input of Board members, were approved by the Board as revised. The draft August Board minutes have yet to be circulated by the former Recording Secretary for comment.
3. There were no new member applications presented for approval.
4. New member applications, which had been presented and approved by those in attendance at the September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, have yet to receive the necessary, final approval by those members of the Board who were not present at the meeting:
5. Gary requested that each of us reach out to our Board buddies, which were previously assigned via email by Seth.
6. There will be a new members/new faces lunch on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Jesses agreed to see to it that notice of the lunch will be sent to the entire shul listserv.
7. Gary announced that pledges of more than \$100 thousand have been received; generally about 80% of the amounts pledged are received without additional pleading. Gary stated that he will send a letter to every shul member who did not make a pledge.  
At the beginning of each month, a bill is sent to everyone who owes any money to the shul (other than dues and a pledge). Jerome suggested that we bill monthly for dues, too. The suggestion was not acted upon. Gary stated that, in December, everyone will be sent a bill for all unpaid amounts, including unpaid dues. This end of the year push is to encourage payment before the end of the tax year. A question was asked about amounts owed for sponsoring a kiddish; in response the shul's kiddish policy was stated—all amounts are to be paid in advance of the kiddish, although not necessarily on the date of the request to be a sponsor.
8. In light of all the new members, a request was made to prepare a new shul directory including corrections to any information in the current directory. Gamliel volunteered to review and update the addresses to conform to the information that members have already provided. Suzette volunteered to help with the mailing of the new directory.
9. Dave Sloan suggested that the monthly financial statement reflect the Kol Nidre pledges made (debit) and collected (credit). The consensus was that a line item to this effect should be added to the financial statement.

10. There was discussion about the need to fix the door to the mikvah kelim and to put up permanent signs not only with the combination for the new lock, but also advising people to “pull and open.” The door is currently off its hinges from being pushed, rather than pulled.
11. Roz inquired if the Rosh HaShanah “event” for large donors had resulted in larger pledges. No one had information to provide a response to her inquiry.
12. Discussion turned to the lobby bulletin board, which is in disrepair and not being used. Gary suggested that something nicer should be acquired rather than repairing the old bulletin board; Jerome offered to get one, if the Board decided to replace the current bulletin board. Dave Sloan suggested that we use the SAP and purchase a display case that will permit the front and back of the SAP to be displayed side by side. Concern was expressed that the type size is too small for such a display; that concern can be addressed by printing the “display” SAP using a larger type size. David Levin stated that one major advantage to displaying the SAP was avoiding confusion in the past resulting from differences between davening times posted in the SAP and posted on the bulletin board. Among others, Jerome emphasized the importance of avoiding such confusion, which had arisen numerous times last year.
13. Gamliel initiated a discussion about Hachnasat Sefer for the shul’s new Sefer Torah. A number of the Board members were not aware of the details presented by Gamliel, due to an oversight in not circulating those details to all Board members.

There was considerable discussion about the details Gamliel presented:

Date: Neither of the suggested dates (January 20 or January 28) appeared to be workable

Duration: Concern was expressed that the parade route from the Bayit would be trying, in light of the likely cold weather. Additional concern was expressed that the entire event as proposed was too long—1/2 hour parade, 1 hour to fill in letters in the Sefer; an hour shiur by Rabbi Freundel; and 1 ½ hour shiur by yet another Torah scholar from out of town.

Cost: Gamliel expressed concern about paying an honorarium to the out-of-town speaker for a shorter shiur. Gary pointed out that the cost of the event itself was low, except for the honorarium. This led to discussion about why there was a need to have an out-of-town Torah scholar, when we are fortunate enough to have a renowned Torah scholar in Rabbi Freundel.

Fund-raising: Gamliel suggested that we charge \$36 to buy a letter, \$72 to buy a word, \$180 to buy a pasuk, and \$250 to fill in a letter. Suzette pointed out that in the past, people who had rarely if ever come to shul came and made donations for Hachnasat Sefer. Jesse noted that in the past, these events were infrequent, but that in the very near future four shuls in the area were having such events. There was discussion about the donations being symbolic and community builders (and therefore affordable for the majority of our shul community) rather than being a major fund raising effort; Roz suggested that this should be our winter fund raiser; Gary opined that the shul’s annual 6<sup>th</sup> & I function is still necessary and that we are endeavoring to get the shul community accustomed to this as an annual event; there was recognition that the annual 6<sup>th</sup> & I function may

have to be postponed until April, if the Hachnasat Sefer was to be a fund raising effort; questions arose about whether there should be a charge for the person who carries the Sefer and the four who carry the chuppah or whether these should be honorary functions; there was no consensus on these various issues. There was also discussion about listing sponsors in a program for the event. Suggestions for price and structure of the event are to be emailed to Gamliel and Ken.

Gamliel and Ken will consider these issues and the emailed input referred to above, and they will then make a recommendation to the Board on all these issues.

14. Gary announced that the next major event for raising funds is the shul's annual dinner, which was to be in March, but as noted above may be pushed into April.
15. The September 2007 financial statement was not available yet for circulation at the meeting.
16. When David Barak returns, he is to circulate a list of what we learned from our experiments with the Tishrei holidays this year. Gary noted that the logistics worked better this year and that a number of people had commented to him that they were generally pleased with the arrangements.
17. Gary announced that the Washington Jewish Federation will be sponsoring something on the Mall to celebrate Israel's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this in June 2008. The Federation has established a synagogue group to promote interest in the Federation, and the Federation is seeking to promote participation in the group. Gary is looking for someone from the Board or otherwise who wants to participate on behalf of our shul in the Federation's synagogue group.
18. Gary announced that there will be an event at Ohr Kodesh in December focusing on how to make synagogues more accessible to the disabled. Our shul is a sponsor of the event. Gary is looking for someone from the Board or otherwise who wants to represent our shul at the December event.
19. Suzette and David Epstein stated that the tables and chairs downstairs will be replaced by the end of this year. David Epstein said that two sample chairs would be available in the coming weeks for congregants to sit in and provide comments.
20. Gary announced that we are going to try to hold joint events with the DC minyan and that the Rabbi has already given his approval. There will be a joint Oneg Shabbat on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and a joint Chanukah party on a date to be announced. There was considerable discussion about the implications of holding joint events.
21. Jerome Chapman, at the request of Max Klein, said that consideration should be given to starting some kind of men's club, inasmuch as the establishment of the Sisterhood had been wonderful for the shul. The next step is to see whether there is sufficient interest among the men and, if there is, then the Board will be approached about a next step.
22. Dave Sloan reminded everyone about the joint event (making sandwiches for the homeless) with the Georgetown Ministry that was taking place while the Board was meeting; he encouraged Board members to participate in the event after the Board meeting. Dave and Roz mentioned that these kind of events may see a revitalization in the shul's social action committee.

23. Gary stated that we need a more functional Bikkur Cholim. Audrey Segal from the Greater Washington Bikkur Cholim is looking for a point of contact at the shul.
  24. Jesse said that there is an organization that works with returning Birthright participants. Although he did not state the goals of the organization, he did state that he would be the shul's contact with the organization.
  25. Gary explained that we need someone to take over cemetery responsibilities, that is, to be a point of contact for the purchase/sale of plots.
- The meeting was adjourned at 10:35.