

Congregation B'nai Tikvah Board Meeting
Minutes of Meeting
March 4th, 2002

Attendees:

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Cheryl Asnis | Rabbi David Eligberg | Jodi Marcou |
| Janice Baer | Harvey Finkelstein | Cantor Bruce Rockman |
| Arie Behar | Mitch Frumkin | Harold Schneider |
| Gary Bergman | Madeline Gaynor | Lisa Tannenbaum |
| Larry Cohen | Cindy Gittleman | Gary Tinkel |
| Elliot Danto | Dan Greenberg | LouAnne Wolf |
| Marc Dillman | Naomi Jackenthal | Keith Zimmerman |
| Jerry Edley | Jerry Kaminsky | |
| Hadas Elami | Mark Kasdin | |

Not Attending:

Ann Gold

Non-Board Guests

| | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Marty Abschutz | Allen Kane |
| Marcy Finkelstein | Jeff Schwartz |

Call to Order [Mitch Frumkin]

Meeting called to order at 8:01 PM by Mitch Frumkin.

Approval of Minutes of February 2002 Meeting [All]

Motion for Approval of Minutes [moved by L. Wolf, second by L. Tannenbaum].
Approved [17 yes, 0 no, 3 abstention]

Dvar Torah [Rabbi]

Ours is a very technological society, which is great until it goes boink! I was going to use the opaque projector this week, but it was broken, and after consulting all the experts we determined that there was no way it could be fixed.

We love inventing tech toys that make all kinds of noises; we have become very dependent on many of these devices. They have helped us become more efficient at work, have given us great culture and pleasure, to our lives and the lives of society. We truly value them.

But, at the first sign of trouble, we discard them. Our love for things is functional. We even build in obsolescence. Cars, homes, and everything else seems to be easily traded in.

When you think about all that transition and turnover, we seem to lack roots. The torah presents us this week with a very different model. Moshe places the tablets in the ark. The rabbis notice that the word "tablets" is plural, and there are two tablets. In other words there are two sets of two, or four tablets – what are the other two, besides the two whole tablets? The rabbis say that he also placed in the ark the smashed tablets – the shattered fragments of the original ones. They represent not the covenant but the fragmented relationship G-d and the Israelites. They represented something unconditional – his unconditional love for the Jewish people.

Consider your simple wedding band, which you probably had many opportunities to replace with something more valuable and expensive. But we don't, because of what that particular ring represents. Not everything exists for a practical purpose, but we treasure them anyway because they represent happy thoughts or cherished memories.

What values can this moment kindle in my heart – that is the question to ask continually.

President's Report [M. Frumkin]

1. There has been major problems with the fire alarm system.
 - A. Behar: The ADT tech just leaving. They found a smoke detector disconnected inside the ductwork. The fire marshal is coming in at 10AM tomorrow to test. No nursery school, but most probably there will be religious school.
 - N. Jackenthal: The alarm first went off three weeks ago, but nothing was done until now. Why?
 - A. Behar: 2 weeks ago Wednesday, Evan replaced a ceiling tile, and that caused the disconnection. That triggered the North Brunswick Fire Department; they showed up, and we explained the situation. They said to get it fixed. ADT was called that night, but our experiences had been limited. We relied on the FD to guide us. ADT came out next morning, and decided that the only fix was to replace the panel, which they don't make any more. FD showed up again because it was triggered again. FD saw they were working on it – said fix it. No problem. We found out the next day it would take at least 2 weeks. We asked FD again, they said no problem – we will keep watch on it. The Fire Dept and the Fire Marshall (part of Police Department) are 2 separate entities. Last Wednesday, the Executive Committee was notified in preparation of asking the board for money to replace system. The EC felt we should close the building. They called the nursery school, called fire marshal, they told us we needed to close building because of code violation.
 - M. Frumkin: No one here had any experience, but the people who made decisions made them based on all the info they had at the time.
 - M. Gaynor: why didn't the FD refer us to marshal?
 - A. Behar: Who knows?
 - J. Edley: You took the right steps, and using ADT is a good decision – they are a good company.
 - G. Bergman: There must be internal expertise in the congregation. Why wasn't a call for help put out there?
 - N. Jackenthal: Next time, we need to skip the fire dept altogether.
 - D. Greenberg: Is there any monetary ramification to us being in violation? Are there any other costs? No fines, but we will have to pay \$1100 to have fire marshal in the synagogue on shabbas. Does our lease with the caterer specify any damages in a situation like this? Not a lease, we have a contract that does not apply.
2. Marty Abschutz: we received a letter from very nice letter from the mayor of Ramla praising us and the program that we are running for our guests from his town.

3. There will be a congregational meeting scheduled for March 19th to present the plans for moving forward with the expansion.
4. Marcy Finkelstein. Went to convention as a delegate to United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. Gave detailed report of 5 days at convention. Went from 7 am to 1 am every day. Absolutely wonderful time. It was a very hectic way to spend 5 days. Opening joint session on Sunday night honored 3 diplomats who are pursuing peace: Max Kampelman, Stuart Eizenstat and Dennis Ross. At least 3 shachrit services each morning – traditional, egalitarian. A variety of speakers including the Chancellor of the Seminary. After that, broke up into tracks. "Jewish living the conservative way." Lunches were broken into groups as well. They presented Harvey with a beautiful tzedakah box.
5. Allen Kane brings up the issue of adding another row of pews. Seems like this is the time to do it, since we are going to replace the carpet. J. Baer: We had already considered another row. A. Kane has done a feasibility study. We now have seats for about 182; another row would add another 26 people. The spacing is now 36" backrest to backrest. If we move the front row up 19" (towards the steps) and close in the spacing of the other rows by 2.5", the last row would stay where it is. By show of hands, should we continue to investigate this? Yes. Allen Kane will continue to investigate.
6. Jeff Schwartz. Last matter regarding Sidney Nevins bequest. We received the \$60K per his will. We also need to accept our pro rata share of tax liability, if any, by virtue of a Refunding Bond and Release that has been already executed by the President (M. Frumkin) and attested to by the Secretary (D. Greenberg). Motion (by J. Edley, second by J. Baer) to adopt the Refunding Bond and Release. Approved unanimously. Also, on another matter, the definite date for cantor's installation ceremony is June 9th.
7. C. Gittleman: we are looking at making changes to the wording of the bar mitzvah kiddush fee – will follow up.
8. Marty Abschutz: the Ramla kids are coming!!
9. L. Tannenbaum: we are looking at either March 23rd or April 27th for presentation to Jesse Olitsky.

Expansion Committee Report [M. Kasdin]

Many of the bids had come in at \$160-\$180 per foot. Paul Zankel, Arie Behar, Mitch Frumkin, and Jerry Platz were a subcommittee that tried to value engineer the project. They identified 8 different areas to make changes. After these changes, the 2 low bidders came in at \$100-\$110 per foot. One of them built Pierre's, the other built the Pesach Raymon yeshiva. The next step is to bring to the congregation on March 19th.

Vice-Presidents Reports

See attached.

Administration [A. Behar]

Arie: The budget – we are approaching new budget year, and we need numbers. Marty Abschutz will chair budget committee starting on March 31st. Moved [by A. Behar, second by J. Baer]:

To replace our existing fire alarm system with a new one from ADT at the price of \$4,600. The monies will be paid from the Shomrei Tikvah account.

To enter into a service agreement with ADT to maintain and service the fire alarm system for 5 years at an annual cost of \$1,842. The monies will be paid from the Shomrei Tikvah account for the next five months (March – July 2002) and will be line itemed for the remainder of the contract.

M. Dillman: What happens after 5 years? As long as we use them (ADT) to maintain the system, no problem. How much would it cost to buy and maintain? \$12,000 to buy, \$921/yr to maintain. G. Bergman: This was a small part that went awry – is there any way insurance will cover this replacement? No, but if the system goes bad again, ADT will replace it at no charge. Install and rewiring is free of charge under the maintenance contract. Arie will continue to investigate. D. Greenberg: How much money do we have in the Shomrei Tikvah fund? About \$25,000. K. Zimmerman: Is there any expertise in the congregation regarding alarms? We'll try to see. M. Kasdin: the key is that the existing panel can't support the addition. Also, the technology is changing rapidly, in 5 years our system will be obsolete anyway. J. Edley calls the motion. Motion carries [19 yes, 0 no, 1 abstain].

For the past two years, arie has been the one that gets a call once or twice a month when the alarm goes off in the middle of the night. Any volunteers? Can we track who locks up the building? Not really. K. Zimmerman and J. Edley volunteer to be on the list. They will get together with Hadas to find out procedures.

Activities [E. Danto]

Great year, but we are down \$2,000 because of unforeseen circumstances. Motion [by A. Behar, second by J. Edley] to allocate \$2,000 from line budget of maintenance of building that was not used this year to activities. Motion carries [unanimous].

Education [H. Schneider]

Nursery school registration is ongoing and filling up fast. There are 2 pre-k classes, and there is only 1 open spot left. There will be 2 3-year old and 1 2½-year old classes. We got some very nice publicity in the South Brunswick Post. J. Baer: Will there be reimbursement for the days that nursery school was closed due to alarm situation? No. It is comparable to snow days – which we didn't have this year at all. If school resumes by Wednesday, no reimbursement.

Financial Report [G. Tinkel]

443 families – 308 Dues Paying Equivilents. 76 are on financial arrangements.

We dropped 4 families who haven't paid in over a yeat. There are 18 families who have paid 0 this year, 8 of which made pledges, 3 in school. 4 are out of work, 1 who made expansion pledge. Of the families who haven't paid anything are on the board.

H. Finkelstein: Have the 18 been personally contacted? Yes. Has the rabbi been told who the 18 are? No. L. Tannenbaum: Registration should not be allowed for next year for those kids that haven't paid this year. M. Gaynor: What about the idea that children should not be denied a Jewish education? They aren't. The only people that are dropped are those that no longer wish to be members. A. Behar: if someone doesn't pay us and they go to join another temple, do we give input? Yes, and we have gotten paid that way several times. H. Finkelstein: we should look at taking legal action against some of these people who clearly have no intent of paying.

Treasurer's Report [M. Dillman]

See attached.

N. Jackenthal: add \$20,000 to nursery school – she was late with the numbers.

Men's Club Report [J. Edley]

We have raised dues from \$25 to \$36, and have begun to collect that money for this year, which we had never done. We are also negotiating away our back debt and should be solvent again shortly.

Sisterhood Report [C. Asnis]

The tai chi demo got a very large turnout. The pottery program was great. See Gail Dillman for Pesach flowers. We had 25 golden groggers – made a lot of money. Fashion show has a lot of stuff being donated. Last sisterhood board meeting we talked about possibly donating some proceeds to tzedakah. M. Frumkin: where do the monies go now? Small donations to Jewish family services. The money we raise is kept for working capital and spent primarily on programs. A. Behar: how much money do you have right now? Don't know. Regarding fundraising – according to bylaws, all fundraising must be done under auspices of VP – Ways & Means.

50+ Club [M. Gaynor]

March 19th will be next meeting. There will be a theater party in June ("Alone Together").

New Business [All]

1. M. Kasdin: where are we with the audit? A. Behar: we have gotten 1 quote – we will receive a 2nd quote after tax season.
2. L. Wolf: Thanks to Janice Baer for coordinating food drive. Also to Renee Levin who delivered 145\$ that was collected Purim night.
3. K. Zimmerman: There is an issue with a tattoo on one of the maintenance men's hands. Please elaborate. A. Behar: One of the maintenance men has a tattoo of a swastika On his hand. We have a contract with Ed Molina – he supplies the labor. He is a Puerto Rican guy who didn't know what it meant – he got it as a gang initiation when he was a kid. He now wears a glove or Band-Aid to cover it. Ann's feeling is that he is really good and that he just did a stupid thing years ago. E. Danto: It is absolutely not appropriate and we shouldn't have him here. J. Baer: we really should make him wear a glove. M. Kasdin: can this person be reassigned by Ed to one his other clients? A. Behar: we shouldn't get too involved in Ed's business – one of the issues is that some of Ed's employees are probably illegal. J. Edley: and ex-gang

member with a swastika in a temple is probably not who you want here. M. Kasdin: we need to have security checks done on anybody who works in the building. We also should ask that this employee to be reassigned.

4. D. Greenberg: what about the 'temporary' windows on the ballroom doorsa? doors. The caterer was supposed to fix – we will send out another letter.

Good and Welfare [Cantor]

- Look for ballots and vote for Mercaz.
- Thursday eve – 7 pm – South Brunswick High School – The SB Clergy Association will present their last presentation of ongoing dialogue. It's been a terrific program – please join us.
- What can we do as a congregation to make a difference in israel? Many of us have felt a loss. New program called 1 family. Make families who have been victims of terror part of communities around the world. Will discuss with social action committee.
- Refuah Shlema to Lou Rosen, Barbara Abramson and Rebecca Roller.
- Congratulations to the Angsteich and Berk families on their B'nai Mitzvot and to Marci Abschutz (who stepped down from the school board) and Harvey Finkelstein on his new position at USCJ.
- Welcome back to the Kutliroffs.
- Condolences to Maxine Kasdin, Linda Jacob, Sandy Newman and Vicki Baumann.

Confirmation of Next Meeting

Next meeting is Monday, April 1st, 2002.

Motion to Adjourn

By K. Zimmerman, second by D. Greenberg. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 10:45 pm.