

**Congregation B'nai Tikvah Board Meeting
Minutes of Meeting
November 5, 2001**

Attendees:

Cheryl Asnis	Rabbi David Eligberg	Cantor Bruce Rockman
Janice Baer	Harvey Finkelstein	Harold Schneider
Arie Behar	Mitch Frumkin	Lisa Tannenbaum
Gary Bergman	Ann Gold	Gary Tinkel
Larry Cohen	Dan Greenberg	LouAnne Wolf
Elliot Danto	Jerry Kaminsky	Keith Zimmerman
Marc Dillman	Mark Kasdin	
Hadas Elami	Jodi Marcou	

Not Attending:

Jerry Edley	Cindy Gittleman
Madeline Gaynor	Naomi Jackenthal

Non-Board Guests

Marc Binder	Jeff Schwartz
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Call to Order [Mitch Frumkin]

Meeting called to order at 8:00 PM by Mitch Frumkin.

Approval of Minutes of October 4th, 2001 Meeting [All]

Motion for Approval of Minutes [moved by L. Tannenbaum, second by J. Baer]
Minutes Approved [18 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention]

Dvar Torah [Rabbi]

This week's parsha deals with Abraham finding an appropriate wife for Isaac. How do you go about choosing a Matriarch? We look for guidance to a phrase that describes when G-d created a wife for Adam: "ezer k'negdo." "Ezer" means a partner, a helper – all the animals have mates, so G-d gives Adam a partner as well, but then adds the word "k'negdo" – against. He creates someone (Eve) who complements Adam's strengths; she supplements him where he is weak.

Abraham does the same thing when looking for a bride for Isaac – he looks for someone who complements his weaknesses. Isaac is an almost fearless spiritual power (e.g. the binding), but even as he is able to look up and see the realm of heaven, he loses his ability to see the real world. It's as if he is blind to reality. Rebecca is just the opposite: she grew up in a house of machinations, plots and subplots. She had to be hyper in-tune with reality; she had to always look beyond the surface. Thus she complements Isaac perfectly.

Rebecca is the person of action – she sees the problems (e.g., Esau), while Isaac is oblivious to the faults of his children. The partnership between Rebecca and Isaac grows.

Abraham is the first generation – he goes great guns creating changes. Isaac & Rebecca – the second generation – institutionalize those changes. We don't know what the third generation will do because they don't exist yet.

In our own community the first generation were the founders of the Conservative movement, which was born out of the desire to preserve Jewish traditions in America. Maybe we haven't had enough of Rebecca (the spontaneity, etc.) in the second generation – those that institutionalized the Conservative movement in America.

That is our challenge in our generation – the third generation. We need to create a passionate Conservative synagogue. That is not an easy task, but with the help of all the people here we will create the perfect balance between spontaneity and seriousness that is at the heart of every great institution.

President's Report [M. Frumkin]

The code of ethics and the standards that were drafted by John Wolfe were passed at the last meeting. Thank you to John for his excellent help.

Expansion Committee Report [M. Kasdin]

The bid packages were sent out, and according to our architect, 6 of the 7 companies who received the package will be bidding. The due date for all bids to be received is mid-November. Hadas will be doing an audit at the end of the year to determine where the financial aspects are.

Question [A. Gold]: How will the economy affect the prices of the bids? M. Kasdin: We will possibly do better now.

Question [D. Greenberg]: Has there been any plan put into effect for those people who have been downsized, laid off or fired, and therefore can't pay their pledges?

M. Kasdin: we don't have a formal plan in place; one of the possibilities is that we will ask them to stretch their pledge over an extra year – that is, take a year off until they are in better position to pay. G. Tinkle: there have been a couple of small reneges, but nothing big.

Question [G. Tinkle]: When will construction start? A. Behar: probably February or March. G. Tinkle: What about Hebrew school? M. Kasdin: The bids (and the contract will) specify that they need to be done by mid-July.

J. Baer: The school needs to be kept in the loop since they need to send out information in March or April for the following year.

M. Frumkin: J. Baer will head up a room usage committee which will start soon – there is no point in allocating space until we are sure of what we can build.

L. Tannenbaum: What's the interest that we are earning on the money? M. Dillman: About 2% - it's in a money market since we had no idea of knowing when we would need it.

H. Schneider: he also needs to be kept in the loop, since we need to make decisions for summer camp even earlier than school..

M. Binder: Can we let the congregation know how we're doing? Mitch will contact Bette Koffler to see what we can do and report back to board.

New Business [All]

1. Last month C. Asnis asked about having a flagpole with an American flag installed; A. Behar was asked to investigate. The cost will depend on where we install it on our property; the least expensive spot (due to existing lighting) will be right near the existing B'nai Tikvah sign on Finnegan's Lane. The prices range from \$900 [4¼" diameter pole] to \$1230 [6" pole with rope on outside] to \$1450 [6" pole with internal rope]. Each of these is 25 feet high. These prices include installation, we would also have to pay to trim some of the trees in the area.

Motion [moved by A. Behar, second by J. Baer] to install a 25 foot, 6" diameter with internal cable and an American nylon flag, 5 feet by 8 feet, in front of the freestanding sign along Route 1. The cost, including the cleanup of nearby branches and installation, is \$1800, the cost will be searate from the house and grounds budget.

M. Frumkin: What budget is this coming out of? A. Behar: The Shomrei Tikvah or the Capital Improvement Fund.

J. Baer: What about safety with the rope? Will kids try to climb it? A. Behar: That's why we will get one with the rope inside.

A. Gold: Will you consider taking this out of either budget? A. Behar: Yes

K. Zimmerman: Is this something that we really need? It seems to me like we have a lot of other priorities. Maybe we should wait until after expansion to see where we stand.

G. Bergman: I realize that the prevailing mood in the country is to hang flags everywhere, but do we really need to look like a post office? I don't think we should do this.

E. Danto: I agree – this should not be our current priority. This is a knee-jerk reaction – we know who we are and what we stand for. We don't need a flag to tell us who we are.

G. Tinkel: Can we authorize Shomrei Tikvah money without their input? Answer: Yes.

A. Behar: We don't really need the flag – the "United We Stand" banner is good enough.

Rabbi: Is there a definition of the items that the Capital Improvement Fund or the Shomrei Tikvah Fund can go towards? Answer: There is no set definition of what constitutes a capital improvement. There is Board discretion to spend it on anything that improves the structure of the building.

C. Asnis: When this was suggested last month, I wasn't thinking of a 25 foot high flagpole, but we should have something. We are at war. We have an American flag on the bimah, but only because we have an Israeli flag, and we can't have

the Israeli flag without also having the American flag. We should show our support by doing something outside as well.

Motion is Called [by E. Danto, second by J. Marcou]. Motion fails [0 yes, 18 no, 2 abstain].

2. M. Frumkin: the Board had authorized us to make overtures to mayor of Ramla, and we are happy to say that he will be here during December.

Behar: The mayor is very active in Israel – it is very common for small-town mayors to go on to hold much higher offices. He is making trip to the United States to raise money and wants to come to our community because of the great success of the previous program. He will be here December 14th through 16th. there will be a committee [mostly parents of host families] to put on the program. The program will cost about \$1200.

Motion [by A. Behar, second by E. Danto]: “Based on our previous decision to strengthen our relationship with our sister community in Israel (the town of Ramla), B’nai Tikvah will host the mayor of Ramla for a brief ceremonial visit in December. The cost will be \$1200 and will include hospitality, a luncheon, a plaque and a certificate.”

M. Frumkin: We are not sister communities – we are looking at becoming sister communities, but that’s all. We don’t know what they expect from the relationship, we don’t know costs, we don’t know anything yet – it is premature to present a plaque and certificate to that effect.

Rabbi: Will you accept an amendment to the motion removing the reference to ‘sister community’, the plaque and the certificate? A. Behar: Yes.

D. Greenberg: Will you accept an amendment changing the amount to a ‘maximum of \$1000’? A. Behar: Yes.

M. Kasdin: Why is coming to us? Is it solicit funds here at B’nai Tikvah? A. Behar: No. It is to report on what’s going on in Israel.

J. Kaminsky: Is there a teenage exchange planned at that time? A. Behar: Maybe, we will see.

G. Bergman: his pitch will probably be to get people to come to Israel.

G. Tinkel: I see no problem charging a nominal fee to have people come to eat.

A. Behar: I don’t like the idea – this is an important politician who could very well be a cabinet member one day. We shouldn’t charge anything – we should get as many people to come as possible.

Rabbi: We do many things in the temple that are not cost effective, but we need to put forth our ideals. This is a way of making a statement that we are attached to the state of Israel. We can always find something else to spend the money on, but we should do this.

Motion is reread (with amendments). Second by E. Danto.

M. Kasdin: Exactly where is the money going to come from do to this?

A. Behar withdraws the motion.

3. M. Kasdin: There has been feedback that a number of people went into the office on Sunday mornings looking for information but nobody was there.

A good project would be to have members of the Board staff the office from 10 AM to noon on Sundays—which is when there are a lot of people in the building. We would need a little training from Hadas

A. Gold volunteers to help M. Kasdin pull the project together.

4. H. Finkelstein: Tomorrow is Election Day, which is important to us all.

It's equally important to register to vote as a member of the Mercaz party – which represents conservative Jewry in Israel. The Jewish Agency distributes \$300 million to groups in Israel – the only way that conservative institutions get their fair share is by joining Mercaz.

This is extremely important to us all. It costs \$4 – you can do it by mailing the ballot [distributed] or by going online to www.mercazusa.org. There will be a mailing during November to all households.

Vice-Presidents Reports

Activities [E. Danto]

There are 29 new member families!

We had over 120 people for Lunch & Learn with Kerry Olitsky – make your reservations now for the scholar-in-residence program with Rabbi Lankin on November 30th (dinner) and December 1st.
November 15th is the absolute deadline for the next issue of HaKol.

The Social Action Committee [headed by Janice Baer] finally got started this week. They are asking to participate in a program of adopting local families for the holidays. They are working with the South Brunswick Welfare Department, which has provided names of families [list distributed]. It can be several families that get together to sponsor one needy family. Cyndi Kleinbart is chairing this program.

Ways and Means [J. Marcou]

The New Years party is up to 40 people already, which is great. There will be ads going into local papers this week.

There have been some additions to the scrip program [latest list handed out] – please try to participate – it's a great program.

Administration [A. Behar]

Nothing beyond what was already discussed.

School and Youth [H. Schneider]

There are 52 new kids in religious school.

Question [J. Baer]: How is the collection of religious school tuition going? Everything that has been billed in the first billing has been collected.

Financial Report [G. Tinkel]

Membership stands at 448 members, which is down from 451 at the holidays. We are doing very well in dues collection.

Treasurer's Report [M. Dillman]

This report [attached] is somewhat incomplete with regard to nursery school. We are pretty close to budget, but we are now slightly behind in dues collection [about \$10K].

J. Baer: Why is there a charge for the trailers? M. Dillman: The charge was for the removal of the trailers.

Men's Club Report

No report this month.

A consultant will be brought in soon to meet with interested parties to see what can be done about revitalizing the Men's Club.

Sisterhood Report [C. Asnis]

There have been several excellent programs recently: a program by a financial planner, a trip to the Zimmerli Art Museum and a Pampered Chef party at the home of Jodi Eligberg.

Our upcoming program is on November 15th – the paid-up membership dinner.

There will be another flower fundraiser for Thanksgiving [signup sheet distributed] – flowers are \$25 – please support Sisterhood and buy Thanksgiving flowers through them.

Sisterhood will be sponsoring a needy family through Jewish Family Services – they are a single mother with young children who recently had a fire – they are in need of everything – please help.

E. Danto: Can you work with the social action committee to combine efforts? C. Asnis: Will bring to the Sisterhood board.

50+ Club

No report this month.

Good and Welfare [Rabbi]

- The annual community interfaith Thanksgiving service will be held at Kingston Presbyterian Church on November 18th. It is sponsored by the South Brunswick Clergy Association, and for the first time, the proceeds will go to the Clergy Association itself for distribution. All are welcome.
- The USY is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year with a series of events. One of the things they are doing is establishing a scholarship fund that will offset the

cost of some their programming. They are looking to raise \$350,000 in North America, and one of the ways they are doing that is through a tribute book. The cost ranges from \$18 through \$2,500 – there are about 10 categories in between. A half-page is \$180, a full page is \$360. Motion [by A. Gold, second by D. Greenberg] to allocate \$360 from the Youth Fund to put a full page in the tribute book [17 yes, 0 no, 3 abstain], motion carries.

- Refuah Shlemah to Marc Becker, Bobbi Bergman, Miriam Steck, Edith Wexler, Stephen Koffler, Carol Marks, Anita Roller and Rebecca Stoloff.
- Condolences to Stephen Breitkopf on the loss of his father, Richard Diatlo on the loss of his father, Marc Dillman on the loss of his stepfather, and Dennis and Bruce Kessler on the loss of their mother.
- Mazel tov to Ben Baum on his retirement, Brad and Penelope Cohen on Rachel's Bat-Mitzvah, Sharon Ferraro on Alyssa's Bat Mitzvah and Ira and Phyllis Schloss on Karen's engagement to Justin Rapp.
- K. Zimmerman: wants to publicly thank Mitch Frumkin, Arie Behar, Gary Tinkel and Dan Greenberg as well as all the other congregants for coming out and making calls on Super Sunday.

Confirmation of next Meeting

Next meeting is Monday, December 3rd, 2001.

Executive Session

Board of Directors Meeting went into Executive Session at 9:40 PM.

**Congregation B'nai Tikvah Board Meeting – Executive Session
November 5, 2001**

1. Motion [by A. Behar, second by J. Baer]: In the case that the clergy holds a simcha at the synagogue, Congregation B'nai Tikvah will waive the customary per head or flat commission received from the caterer at this event. The cost of the event will subsequently be reduced by the amount of the commission.

J. Baer: would this include the clergy's children? Yes.

J. Kaminsky: To clarify, this means that the clergy will save the money? Yes.

J. Kaminsky: we should consider a rebate system, so that we are not reliant on the caterer to implement the savings. A. Behar: that could get very complicated to administrate - it may also be taxable income to the recipient. E. Danto: I think we can trust the caterer.

The motion is called. 18 Yes, 1 No, 0 abstain. Motion is passed.

2. M. Frumkin: The Cantor is getting married next month – we should consider giving him a gift, just like we did the Rabbi when he got married.

Motion [by J. Baer, second by E. Danto] to give the Cantor a wedding gift of \$500 from the congregation. 18 Yes, 0 No, 1 Abstain. Motion is passed.

3. A. Behar: Last meeting, there was some discussion of all the different appeals with a goal of trying to reduce their number. Where are we? It has been tabled.
4. M. Frumkin: Please try to have any motions presented at least a week before, so that everyone knows what's coming.
5. J. Baer: What is the status of the Rabbi's contract? M. Frumkin: The Rabbi's contract calls for review in November. The Executive Committee is meeting on Monday to pull together the input they have already received.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn. [Moved by H. Schneider, second by D. Greenberg] Motion Approved. Adjourned 10:07 PM.