

Congregation Kol Shofar - Annual Meeting

"Blueprint for a Renewed Kavannah – From Inspiration to Implementation"

June 3, 2009 @ Westminster

President, Joshua Steinhauer's Address: The Year In Review

I. A Year Ago –

We were meeting in the Beit Kneset Katan
We were still stuck in the Court of Appeals
Our construction plans were not complete
We had no financing
We had no building permit
We had lost our program director /and were about to lose another
We had lost our Education Director - and Orah was getting us re-organized as interim director
Chai was finishing wonderful year of Rabbinic leadership
Lavey was on Sabbatical
I was about to leave on Sabbatical!

Our immediate tasks were pretty clear

Resolve the litigation
Get financing – and decide what we could reasonably afford
Complete our construction plans
Get a building permit
Move out
Keep things together
Hire new Program Director and
Consolidate our education program under Orah.
Make room for Lavey

II. What Happened: Its been a YEAR OF MANY MIRACLES.

A) First Miracle: Litigation was Dropped – (October 2008) Appeal was withdrawn.)

B) Second Miracle: We got our Financing. (End of Dec.)

It was Manna from above.

But it was also the result of a lot of hard, tenacious and creative work from our Financing Committee: Howard Zack, Steve Grossman and Joel Ritch.

Why was it a miracle?

Because we got an \$8.4M loan based on our pledges – when there was no financing available.

Because the initial rate during construction is Prime plus 1% – (or currently about 4.25%,)

Because debt service is interest only during construction. We can “pay as we can.”

More details: It converts to a term loan (to 2014) at 11th District Cost of Funds Index (COFI) plus 2% – (4% at current rates). The payment schedule is consistent with our current pledge schedule.

If the loan is \$3M or less by 2014, it will be extended 10 years. We currently anticipate about a \$3M mortgage in 2014.

In Short – it’s a very good loan for us.

- C) Third Miracle: End of the year Pledges came in on schedule and on budget. We collected about \$1M in the December/January time period.

We have approx. \$13.4M in total pledges and about \$3M already collected.

Congregation's participation is very strong;

Over 400 members (over 450 contributors including non-members) – about 75% of current membership.

We surpassed and continue to surpass every expectation, and our collections at the end of 2008 were very encouraging

But, we have more to do,

Goal is that everyone participates, and is a part of this.

Goal is to raise at least another \$3M

- D) Fourth Miracle: We signed leases/agreements

Westminster, Kent and Davidson

We had places to move.

Special thanks to: Bruce Rafal, and to Gary Grossfeld (who arranged Kent Middle School)

We have also arranged to hold 2009 High Holiday Services at the Palace of Fine Arts, in the Presidio, San Francisco.

- E) Fifth Miracle: We hired Hagar as our new Program and Community Building/Outreach Director – Just in time to help plan our Lehitraot Day celebration in February.
- F) 6th Miracle: Lehitraot Day (2//8/09): What an extraordinary day! We marched out of Kol Shofar, to Mark Swoiskin's sounding of the Shofar.
 Right on Schedule
 What an extraordinary welcome we received from our neighbors here at Westminster, and what an extraordinary welcome we continue to receive. There are pictures of our Rabbis on the wall in the lobby and a mezuzah on the wall.

This community's graciousness and generosity is a lesson in community and the true meaning of our faiths. We thank them!

- G) 7th Miracle:
1. The Move out went pretty smoothly. (The result of a lot of patience and hard work by our staff).

AND

2. Operations have continued. (We made the transitions to Westminster, Kent and Davidson).

We are learning, every week and every month to work with the challenges and limitations. For example, using other teachers' classrooms at Kent has been a challenge for them and for us.

It still confusing sometimes: (I sent Patty & Natanya to Davidson last Friday night by mistake when services were at Westminster.)

- H) Eighth Miracle: (also in 2 parts)
1. Our plans moved pretty smoothly through the review process with the Town of Tiburon.
- AND
2. We got our building permit – at end of Pesach (5 years after filing our initial application)

- I) Ninth Miracle (again – in 2 parts)
1. Started construction, in Mid-April right after Peach

AND

2. The Project is on schedule and on Budget

- J) Tenth Miracle: Neighbors. We met with our neighbor's and nothing happened. It was a good, constructive and low key meeting:

(Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting organized by Steve Sokolov).

- K) Ground Breaking – (11th miracle?) Brought the community together for an inspiring and wonderful day on the site. Being together, seeing the site and foundation work and exposed DOME – described as our congregational “Kippah” – or “Tent.” It’s inspiring and exciting!

- L) Also like to mention the JCC/Pre-School. We are completing an agreement with the JCC for:

1. renovation of the pre-school space, and
2. the operation of the pre-school when we return to Blackfield Drive.
3. Note: Enrollment capped – To save \$250K traffic Mitigation Fee: We agreed, in consultation with JCC, to cap pre-school enrollment at 100 students; the same as under our prior permit, in exchange for Town's waiver of a \$250,000 traffic mitigation fee. If we want to increase enrollment in the future, we will go back to the Town.

III. BUILDING PROJECT (Few points to mention)

- A Schedule. Project is on schedule – back in Summer 2010 for High Holidays

- B. Project Scope.

We are building what we need/not more and not less.

The Board made a decision to defer construction of new additional classroom wing.

(It is in the building permit; but not in Cahill Contract)

There will be enough classrooms to meet our current needs, including 3 new classrooms in the combined classroom/admin wing, and more usable space in the multi-purpose room.

We do not need additional classroom wing right now, and we will proceed with this portion of project if, and when, additional funds or designated funds become available for that purpose.

C. Project Costs

1. Total costs about \$17 Million (started at \$8-10M)
2. Miracle: we ended up bidding in the best bidding market in the last 30 years – at least.
3. Some numbers to help understand the total project costs –

Core construction:	\$10.7M
FF&E and Classroom/Admin wing remodel: (includes ark, pews, furniture and equipment)	1.2M
Transition costs	400K
Total Soft Costs*	4.3M
[Soft Costs spent:	\$3M]

(*includes architects, engineers, designers, EIR consultants, legal, building permit and plan check fees, etc. over past 5 years).

Add'l \$: contingencies and allowances

FUNDAMENTALLY – THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE BUILDING PROJECT ARE STRONG.

IV. OTHER –

The building project took a lot of our focus in time and energy and resources, But there were a lot of other wonderful things happening this year:

A. Area of Communication/Corrections –

1. We worked on improving our Communication Infrastructure
 - (a) Revamped and revitalized website up is up. (Thank you Ellen Tobe and Steve Schiff)
Its great – we need to start using it more.
We need participation - feedback AND Content
2. More Substantively: We are making a very conscious effort to deepen our connection as a community by deepening and opening our connection to each other as individuals. DEEPENING OUR FOUNDATIONS –

We started a series of conversations – Through Panim el Panim – (led by Mark Swoiskin), but in other venues as well. At Board meetings, committee meetings, services, classes.

We recognize that we come to CKS:

For the services/to pray, for the classes/to learn, etc.,

But, also, to see each other.

We come to be together

I can remember – my first personal conversation with so many of you here:

- Those conversations are so important to our sense of connection
- Its not just the work we do – or even the prayer or learning. It is seeing each other and wanting to get together.

3. Other communication highlights: Board and Staff tried to "advance" our communications and working relationship at a "retreat" in November

4. Congregational Retreated to Camp Newman. in May, was a beautiful weekend, especially wonderful to have the participation of new members and families. We talked about what was important to us in building a community.

B. A Few Learning and Spiritual Growth Highlights:

1. Special In-depth program – Rabbi Derby “Vetaher Libeynu” course

2. Focused opportunities for Spiritual learning and growth – “Coming to the Idra” programs

3. Two Shabbatons – including one where we learned to find our inner and outer "wow" with Aryeh Ben David

C. Fun

1. We had fun: Shushun Night Fever Purim Spiel in March and, in April we committed to "Staying Alive" with a fun and successful fundraiser.

D. Israel

1. It is important that we deepen our foundation with the Land and People of Israel: Bridges to Israel has been reconstituted – to renew our commitment to bringing Israel back into the discourse of our community. (Thank you, co-chairs: Miriam Goldfein and Jeff Saperstein)

- Look forward to organizing events and special trips to Israel

E. Tikkum Olam

1. MOC. I'd like to mention the work with the Marin Organizing Committee.

We've also begun a renewed effort to get better organized and re-focus our energy on Tikkun Olam – within and beyond the confines of our community.

2. Resource Network. We created a resource network – Utilize the skills of our community to help our community – and, most importantly, we let people know that that we care, that we can be there for each other. We can do more, but just getting that message out, was and is SO important.

V. WHAT'S NEXT?

- A. Our task this year: Is to position ourselves, organizationally, energetically and spiritually, to be ready to move back in to the building in Summer/Fall 2010
with Joy
Strength
Optimism
Creativity

We need to be prepared to move into the New Building with New Spirit.

- B. On the Shabbat before Shavuot, Chai asked the question:
"What is our communal center?"

I listened to the wide range of responses:

All good answers; heartfelt, and thoughtful.

We are lots of tribes/interest groups

There are many different ways we connect to and express our Jewish identity

I hope we can:

Continue to recognize/embrace our diversity of interests

Communicate with each other at our points of commonality/intersection
and, identify our common vision.

Rabbi Chai asked the right question:

We absolutely need to focus on this question:

We need to answer this question again, for ourselves, for our time

What is our common vision?

What is our communal center?

What do we believe this sacred community is about?

Building Project: Was/Is distracting – BUT

It also shows us that when we are focused on a single vision

If we're dedicated
We can do things we never thought we could
We need to bring this kind of focus to our planning for our communal future.

C. We have already started this communal project in various ways:

1. Through "Panim" type conversations
2. Retreat – conversations
3. Continuing those conversations into the committees, into the various “tribes” or segments of our community, AND
4. Continuing that conversation through an organized strategic visioning process:

We are almost ready to send out an RFQ/P –to recruit a strategic planner –
To help facilitate and guide a visioning and strategic planning process.

This process will involve all the various constituencies of our community,
as well as our Board, Rabbis, staff.

We will re-examine and re-develop our vision and mission statements
AND

Develop a strategic plan that will be translated into concrete action steps.

I hope we will all be a part of this process and those discussions, with open minds and hearts – listening to each other.

COUPLE OF OTHER QUICK POINTS

D. Membership

Our membership and BB enrollment have been holding reasonably well
(I wouldn't include Tichon enrollment in this category – that is an area that requires very particular attention.)

But, in this economy, in this time of transition, we must be proactive

To continue our efforts to consolidate our connections as a community

To reach out to our members – with respect to renewals and high holiday participation.

To pursue opportunities for new members

E. Finally – with respect to Revenue and Budget:

Our budget is very tight:

Like most synagogues, we have gotten used to being hand to mouth.

But, its getting tougher/tighter with this economy.

We have made some reasonable – projections in this budget: re membership etc.
If those assumptions are incorrect we will have trouble.
With this economy and with our move – this is not a typical year for having confidence in our projections.

More importantly, we are missing too many opportunities:

- opportunities for teacher training;
- opportunities for proper staffing;
- opportunities for programming, study and development;
- opportunities to engage our members.

We try and continue to hold onto what we have been doing/rather than thinking about what we should be doing.

We simply must focus more attention on bringing in more revenue. We must look for grants; different segments of the community need to do more focused fund-raising. It has to become a greater part of our culture. We will need your help and ideas.

VI. CONCLUSION

These are our tasks for next year.

There is a lot of hard work and decisions to be made with respect to the building.

But, we will deliver the building, and

I believe it will be delivered to us on time and on budget –

to move back in sometime next summer

We now need to focus on delivering the community.