

## Project Beit Tefilah Report - May 10, 2017

What a difference a year makes! Over the past year, we completed the merger with Congregation B'nai Shalom ("CBS") and it was approved by the court. So our combined synagogue now owns what were three parcels on North Forest, two of which are being combined because they are adjacent (one of which contains a building that we intend to use as part of our new home). We also have significantly more cemetery capacity.

Once we had the parcel, the next step was to design the building. With the approval of the congregation, we retained an architect and the architect conducted extensive meetings with our various committees and auxiliary groups to ensure that the design met the programmatic needs of the congregation. They then proceeded to develop several conceptual drawings which were then refined over the subsequent months. The design committee ultimately reached a consensus to proceed with a design that will re-use the social hall, kitchen, restrooms and other spaces within the former B'nai Shalom building, and to build a connected sanctuary, community court, office suite, accessible restrooms, a youth/family lounge, a bridal room that can also be used for overnight guests and a mikvah. Numerous sketches and floorplans were shared at town hall meetings, in the Shofar and in the lobby. The design progressed to what is referred to as design drawings. Our site plan will be submitted to the Town of Amherst next week for consideration at its June meeting. Assuming the plan is approved, the final construction documents can be prepared and building permits can be sought.

The budget for the building remains within the parameters set at the outset. Unfortunately, the cost of the site work is more than was anticipated. This is largely due to drainage issues present on the site and additional costs related to utilities. As a result, we may not have significant monies left over from the sale of the Getzville Road parcel which we had hoped to be able to use to pay down the accumulated deficit and to fund an expanded endowment to provide for the additional costs related to maintaining the former B'nai Shalom cemetery. We fully anticipate being able to do so in the near future with fundraising relating to dedications of spaces and items in the new building. Those efforts will be getting underway in the coming weeks. So this is merely deferred. In the meantime, we will use operating funds, and income from existing cemetery funds to provide for the care of the former CBS cemetery. We remain on target to begin building this summer with a plan to complete construction in time for the High Holy Days of 2018. (We will continue to occupy the Getzville Road location until beyond the High Holy Days of 2017.)

With respect to the finalization of the purchase of our Getzville Road parcel, we overcame an important hurdle when the Town of Amherst re-zoned the parcel (to be effective upon closing) to give the buyer the flexibility to develop the parcel after the purchase. We have and will continue to communicate in writing, including through the Shofar and on our website, and we will continue to hold periodic informational meetings as appropriate. If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please contact Harvey Sanders.