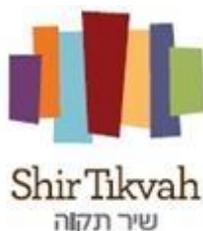


February 28, 2018
13 Adar, 5778



Shalom Chaverim,

We write to update you on the facilities exploration activities we've conducted over the last several months. On November 19, 2017 approximately 45 congregants met to hear a summary of the recommendations developed by the Facilities Assessment Group and to share comments and questions (report can be accessed by clicking [this link](#).)

What an exciting time for Shir Tikvah. Take a moment to consider the amazing growth of this synagogue in just 30 years—from a small group meeting in public spaces to a large community pushing the capacity of its own dedicated building. Our synagogue has reached this milestone for as many reasons as we have had congregants but perhaps the overarching reason is that we continue live into the world our mission of radical hospitality and social justice. Our success, of course, requires constant nurture and, the Board believes, attention to this question: What are the facilities we need in order to do our work in the world, to advance and enhance our [mission and vision](#)?

The Facilities report identified three alternatives for moving forward that should be explored simultaneously: investing in our current building, exploring other commercial real estate opportunities, and exploring partnerships with other organizations, starting with First Universalist. We have also added a congregational engagement process concurrent with exploring these facilities alternatives.

Our meeting this past November raised a variety of useful questions and comments, including whether we would be limiting our search to the city of Minneapolis. We remain committed to viewing ourselves as an urban congregation, but this does not rule necessarily rule out possibilities in suburbs contiguous to Minneapolis. From that meeting, several congregants stepped forward with interest in the work and are being engaged in one more of the pathways described below.

Just after Passover, we'll begin a next point of congregational engagement. Board members Eli Kramer and Amy Funk along with Rabbi Rappaport have been working to design a process for congregational input that affirms our values, considers our growth and our future space needs, and feeds into the work of our space exploration subgroups. This part of the effort will help us develop a set of criteria to know what space will meet our needs ("how will we know it when we see it?) and to set the table for future decisionmaking on facilities options. We are planning to host these conversations with volunteer congregants who have demonstrated facilitation experience. Watch your email next month for news of these meetings!

And in the meantime, an update on our facilities work! At its January 25 meeting, the Shir Tikvah Board of Trustees authorized expenditures up to \$20,000 from the Caryl Barnett Vision Fund to support architectural work, the mechanical assessment of our current building needed for each of three options, and engagement of a commercial realtor to gain more information about each of our options. Below you will find a brief summary of our work to date with each option.

Activity Update

- 1) **Invest in 1360 Minnehaha:** Congregant Howard Orenstein, a former board member at Shir Tikvah and the immediate past president of the St. Paul JCC, is quite familiar with the recent \$15 million renovation of the St. Paul JCC. Along with Executive Director John Humleker, he conducted a walk-through with Mohammed Lawal of Lawal Scott Erickson Architects. Mr. Lawal is experienced in projects like ours and has worked with other Jewish organizations; he saw opportunity and possibility in our current space. We have invited Mohammed to do some sketching and planning for us based on his walk-through and learning to date; work that will begin in April. More information about Mohammed Lawal can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
- 2) **Commercial Real Estate Options:** Board member Kay Harris and past board president Judy Hollander reviewed proposals from several commercial real estate brokers who would represent us in both a potential purchase of a new location as well as a sale of our building. Kay is a professional commercial real estate agent. Judy Hollander retired as the Director of Property Services for Hennepin County. They have selected Cushman and Wakefield to represent us going forward. We have an agreement, with no up-front fees, for them to assess the value of our “asset” (land and building) and explore other locations potentially suitable for us to buy, rent, and/or partner with others.
- 3) **Partnership with other organizations:** At First Universalist: Conversations with First Universalist have been conducted by President Luke Weisberg and President-Elect Bruce Manning, Shir Tikvah staff, and Board and staff from First Universalist. The two clergy teams have also met to consider high-level space needs and programming opportunities for our two organizations to share space at 34th and Dupont. An additional meeting of the clergy teams is scheduled for later this week. Continuing to explore this option would require significant relational learning and investment in addition to financial and logistical concerns. First Universalist is currently engaged in renovation planning and, as we move forward, we may engage their architects to explore our needs in the context of their design work for the building.

The Facilities Assessment Group continues to explore partnership with entities other than First U. The architect has talked with us a bit about collaborative spaces and members of the Facilities Assessment Group will be touring another potential partner’s space this coming weekend.

Next Steps

We will bring our working group leads together in the next few months to keep communication open and build on potential synergies. We are also committed to continued and transparent communication about our progress with the congregation as a whole.

A last word: Almost every conversation we've had about this work with Board members and congregants is brimming with excitement, anxiety, a little discomfort, and an openness about the possibilities for Shir Tikvah. We thank you NOW for your ability to hold all those feelings and opportunities as we work together towards meeting our facilities needs in ways that allow us to fully be the congregation we want to be in the world!

If you have questions about our progress or would like to volunteer to help our efforts going forward, please contact Luke Weisberg (lukeweisberg@gmail.com) or Bruce Manning (brucemanning@gmail.com).

L'Shalom,

Bruce & Luke