

Community Planning Meeting dvar Torah
September, 2012

When the Coordinating Committee decided to schedule our Community Planning Meeting for September 9, I must say that I was a little skeptical – would people come so close to the beginning of the school year and Rosh Hashanah? What if there was beautiful weather?

But look around you – it's so wonderful how many of you have come to quite literally tend to the needs of our community. Even more than that, over 50 people participated in a focus group this summer, and 60 people took the survey.

This is a community that cares deeply about who it is and where it is going.

We could not have done it without the incredible amount of work that Dawn Berney, Cathy Kaplan, and Tom Kaplan poured into creating the survey and the many in-depth documents about Shaarei Shamayim. Many others served on the four different subcommittees that created the documents, and several of you also facilitated the focus groups. Thank you.

Kent Lesandrini, our consultant, has helped us through this process, and I really don't believe that we would have gotten this far without your patience, thoughtfulness, persistence, and generosity. Thank you.

So there's this great Talmudic principle called TEKU. When you are debating an important point of law, and despite all attempts you just can't come to a definite answer, you say TEKU. TEKU is an acronym that stands for *Tishbi Yitareytz Kushyot U'va-ayot.* The Tishbite (meaning Elijah the prophet) will someday come and explain all unanswered questions. Elijah is the forerunner to the Messiah, and one of the ways that we will know that the Messiah is here is that Elijah will return to answer all of our unanswered questions. But until that time – whenever it may be – there will be some things that we cannot know, or agree upon, or explain.

So as we discuss many hard issues, I want to leave open the possibility of TEKU. There may be some things that we will not resolve today – or even before the Messiah comes. Building a sacred community is difficult work and good people can disagree with one another and see things differently and that's not only okay but important. This meeting is just one piece of an extensive planning

process, and hopefully we will create a plan that really reflects many of the interests, aspirations, and goals of the members of our community.

As we begin our meeting, let's be extra generous with each other. Let's be willing to listen with open hearts and let's be slow to criticize. And let's remember that as we advocate for our own interests that we keep the needs of the community in mind.

L'shanah tovah, wishing you a happy new year.