

Facility Task Force Report
December 2016

Task Force Chair: Dan Taubman, Members: Gail ben Ezra, Sarah Goldblatt, Holly Greenfield, Ben Honigman, Joel Judd, Dan Prendergast, Emily Roet, Joyce Thorn , Howard Tishler, Marilyn Winokur, Staff: Hal Aqua, Becky Epstein, Rabbi Evette Lutman

Following the summer listening sessions attended by about 150 B'nai Havurah members, the Facility Task Force (FTF) has been quietly at work, approaching the point of making a recommendation to the Board of Trustees regarding a new facility.

I. During the past several months, the FTF explored but rejected the possibility of renting space from BMH-BJ Synagogue. After a site visit and discussions between Rabbi Evette and the BMH-BJ rabbi, the FTF concluded that a number of obstacles, including religious practice differences, precluded the BMH-BJ space as a viable option. The FTF also decided that the option of razing our current building and replacing it with another building was not cost effective.

II. In a meeting in late Summer with Denver Jewish Day School (DJDS) a contingent from the FTF met with DJDS, Head of School/CEO, Avi Halzel and members of their land committee.

A. We became better acquainted and discussed several items: buildability of the parcel we are considering; the amount of land that DJDS would sell; their openness to exploring various purchase options; the possibility of sharing space (B'nai is interested in using DJDS' classrooms and parking and DJDS expressed an interest in using our sanctuary and social hall). Both B'nai and DJDS felt that the synergy between our organizations was potentially extremely beneficial for both groups.

B. Interestingly, Halzel came to Herzl-RMHA by way of Memphis, where he served as head of school at the Bornblum Jewish Community School in Memphis, TN. The Bornblum School happens to have a model similar to that which we are exploring: Beth Shalom, a conservative synagogue, shares land and space with the school. Avi was involved in the early stages of negotiating a relationship between the two groups.

III. The FTF then returned to consideration of purchasing land from the Denver Jewish Day School (DJDS). Although the FTF considered two sites at DJDS, that school's board decided it was not comfortable with selling us land inside its current quad. While that alternative was favored by many members of the FTF, it also presented possible future problems if DJDS were to sell its property at some time in the future.

A. Accordingly, the FTF is now exploring the possibility of purchasing property at the other DJDS site. Both the FTF and the DJDS board are very interested in working out an agreement for B'nai Havurah to purchase property at this site. Before an agreement can be negotiated, however, several steps must occur:

1. DJDS has agreed to pay the cost of an American Land Title Association (ALTA) survey to determine whether any of four identified easements on the property would preclude building on this site. We believe this survey will be completed within the next month.
2. The Headmaster at DJDS, Avi Halzel, has ordered the ALTA study. Manhard Consulting is doing the work. At this time, Manhard has offered no completion date.
3. If the ALTA survey indicates that the property is appropriate to build on, we would need to determine how much land we would want to purchase, with possibly obtaining an option to purchase additional land on this site, which has just over two acres.
4. The FTF would also need to adapt a building analysis from the ones created by the feasibility study task force, or have someone draw up a new analysis for the DJDS site. That analysis would be different from those already prepared, because it would not need to include classrooms for the religious school (and possibly for adult education) since we would be able to use DJDS classrooms.

IV. Important Considerations regarding DJDS

A. We would need to ensure that the cost of buying land from DJDS and the cost of building a new building would be financially feasible. That is, it would have to fit within the fundraising projections of the fundraising feasibility study conducted earlier this year. That study, conducted by Ray Merenstein, indicated that B'nai Havurah could net approximately \$1 million from the sale of our present building and that we could raise between \$1 million and \$1.5 million from B'nai Havurah members.

B. Once these steps are accomplished, the FTF would need to submit a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. Board Chair Alan Greenberg has said that he will then provide an opportunity for B'nai Havurah members to provide feedback in person and in writing to the Board concerning the FTF recommendation.

C. If the Board were to approve a recommendation to purchase land from DJDS, an agreement with DJDS would need to be negotiated and a capital campaign undertaken.

V. Additional Activity and Updates

A. Becky Epstein met with Terry Varkony, owner of Buccaneer Development. Buccaneer Development is in the beginning stages of building a Jewish Memory Care facility on DJDS land.

1. They have concluded their ALTA study, also with Manhard Construction. Terry projects that the groundbreaking will be in Spring of 2017 and was unable to indicate when the building will be completed. The facility will house about 150 residents.

2. They will turn the facility over to another company to run the business. Terry mentioned that they would be very pleased to see B'nai in the area, as there could possibly be synergy between the care facility and B'nai Havurah, just as there is potential for B'nai and DJDS to work together to the benefit of all.

B. Becky also met with Sarah Goldblatt and Rick Schepis. Sarah Goldblatt is an architect, B'nai Havurah member and member of the FTF. Rick is owner of RSI Realty, a Boutique Commercial Real Estate Company specializing in Tenant Representation of Office and Industrial Work Space.

1. Though there is no decision to sell our building, Rick confirmed that our assessment of \$1 - \$1.5 M for our building is accurate.

2. Sarah reported that our building is zoned for both commercial and residential, which is very positive since land for residential development is in demand.

3. The possible limitation of our property is that there is a 3 -story limit. A residential multi-story building can get \$100/sf. Our building is \$10,000 square feet.

4. Sarah reiterated the importance of the DJDS ALTA study as the information reported will inform our plan for building on the site.

5. We passed along quite a bit of information to Rick and discussed various scenarios with him. He agreed to let us know if he sees a building or a property that may be appropriate for us. A familiar conversation followed regarding the importance of being nimble and quick when it comes to seizing available land/buildings.