

Historian Summary

Hilton Rubin, Jake Pasternak, and Ari Hirsch (members of the visioning steering committee) were tasked to obtain the perspective of members of Temple Beth-El who had participated in prior building or location committees in an effort to complement the ongoing work done by the steering committee on the One Campus initiative.

Their goals were threefold. First, to determine whether they had any “data” that may help the steering committee for current and near future use on this project. Second, to update them on the most recent efforts of the One Campus initiative. Third and most importantly, to listen and learn from them.

During each interview, a few specific questions were asked; however, the majority of the discussions were usually left open ended. In those discussions, a wide range of information and opinions were shared and much was learned.

The following questions were asked:

1. What precipitated the desire for a one campus solution?
2. Why didn't we consolidate at Grove?
3. What would you have done differently?

There were a few common themes in terms of answers to the above questions. Regarding question one it became clear that economic pressures were highest on the list in pushing Beth-El toward a one campus solution. Also mentioned frequently regarding question one was the consideration of an Or Atid merger and need to intervene on a declining and costly Grove Avenue facility. There were many answers for question number two. A declining economy, lack of funds, a lack of unity within the many subgroups among the temple members were all common answers to this question. There were two important themes or answers to question three. First, the congregation needs to visualize or see what is OUR one campus solution. Specifically, an architectural firm needs to be hired to give us renderings of our vision of Temple Beth-El. Second, collecting data is necessary but not sufficient to move forward on a One Campus solution. Although attempting to get the pulse of the temple had been done, some felt the prior work groups didn't know what the congregation truly wanted. The current Focus Group Report is an attempt to bridge that gap.