

TBI Rabbinic Transition Committee
Meeting minutes from 6/1/15

Present: Michael Griffel (chair), Pearl Wolfe, Naomi Kirtner, Jeff Goldenberg, Julie Weise, Joan Bayliss, Davis Ozdogan, Karrie Walters-Warren.
Sent regrets: Reut Livne-Tarandach

The meeting began at 7 pm.

Opening prayer, introduction of members, and explanations of our relationship to TBI and why we accepted the invitation to serve on this committee. Members of the committee expressed sadness at the loss of Rabbis Yitz, Rabbi Boris, or both, and some expressed pain about the difficulties surrounding the rabbinic search process. Karrie in particular expressed that our committee should conduct itself with open acknowledgment of these difficulties. All felt a strong personal motivation to ensure a successful transition moving forward, for the sake of Rabbi Ruhi Sophia as well as the community as a whole.

The committee agreed to be consensus-based when possible. This does not mean that everyone agrees wholeheartedly with every decision, but rather, that if they are a dissenting minority they can at least live with the decision. Jeff noted that over time, we would hopefully start to arrive at such consensus naturally.

Michael asked if anyone would be willing to take minutes and Julie agreed. Julie proposed posting minutes on the TBI members-only website section. Some expressed concern that this could inappropriately expose sensitive or personal information, while others argued for the importance of transparency at this sensitive time. Committee members ultimately agreed to post the minutes, with redactions as needed when they would reveal private personal information.

Michael shared Rabbi Ruhi Sophia's transition "wish-list":

- wants to know which families require her particular attention right now, due to difficulties in general or with the rabbinic transition (Shirley can help with this)
- a listening tour – small meetings
- parlor meetings on specific topics
- would like us to keep our eye on gender dynamics as the community switches from male to female rabbinic leadership

Michael informed us that Rabbi Ruhi Sophia is happy to eat vegetarian food prepared anywhere. Her spouse Jacob will eat raw food (eg. salads) anywhere, and is also willing to facilitate by bringing his own cutting board and knife when this would help him participate in social events.

The rest of the session was spent brainstorming needs and suggestions for the rabbinic transition. These were:

- A large installation along the lines of the article Michael circulated, with invitees from throughout the community
- Smaller, open-house style TBI welcoming event on Saturday and Sunday at lunchtime (each event will appeal to a different constituency)
- Do some events out of the building (Eg. Hiking)
- Rabbi Ruhi Sophia should be able to use us, the transition committee, as her sounding board while she acclimates to the community
- Someone (Joan and others?) should provide Rabbi Ruhi Sophia with a longer historical context of rabbinic and other transitions at TBI
- Anyone in the community should have the opportunity to host Rabbi Ruhi Sophia for a coffee date, event at their home, hike, etc. We would encourage people to gather a group of 10-15 people for such events, but it isn't necessary. Such events would be at the expense of the host.
- We need to ask Rabbi Ruhi Sophia what her limits are. How many such events does she want to do each week?
- We should ensure that such meetings allow her to get to know the elder members of the community (as those above Baby Boomer age are not represented on our committee) as well as those still mourning the loss of Rabbi Boris
- She should meet with all committee heads
- She should be informed of key facebook groups she could join (Eugene Jewish Families and others)
- We should ensure her arrival is covered in the newspaper (front office will likely handle that)
- We should ensure she is oriented to local resources (restaurants, services, doctors, etc)
- Eventually (not an immediate priority) we should find a way to introduce her to ex-members who may consider our community again at this new moment
- We should introduce her to the two real estate agents who advertise in the TBI directory (if she is looking to buy, which we hear she may not be)
- We should introduce her to other faith leaders in town.
- Should she be encouraged to start a blog?
- She should attend meetings of the Brotherhood, Sisterhood, and Yiddish Club
- Perhaps a half-day retreat with the transition committee at some point?

Julie agreed to connect with Dan in the front office to set up our page on the members-only part of the website.

We confirmed that we would see each other when Rabbi Ruhi Sophia comes to town next week, for a potluck at Maram and Justine's. The committee's next meetings will be:

Thursday, June 11 at 7 pm

Monday, June 29 at 7 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Weise