

As you know, construction has begun. On the Monday after Yom Kippur, the construction crews started to show up, and demolition began. As I am writing this article, we are about six weeks into construction, and so far everything seems to be progressing well. Our contractor Novo Construction is very professional and is managing the construction very well. Our Design Committee, Steering Committee, and Board are working well together addressing issues as they come up. We continue to be on schedule. A few surprises showed up during demolition. So far we have been able to manage them. We continue to make adjustments to our existing facility to accommodate our ongoing activities, programs, schools, holidays, and simchas. We recognize the existing facility can be confusing and that parking/access is complicated and inconvenient. Even though it is complicated, we still believe we made the right decision to continue to use the facility while we are in construction. Renting another facility while in construction would have been significantly more difficult on everyone. Having said that, you will be amazed how fast this project will proceed; we expect to be finished in the spring. Before you know it, it will be finished. In the meantime, please enjoy the sense of excitement about what is coming and, at the same time, please be patient with the normal inconveniences that come with construction.

While we are very excited about the renovation, we must also remember that a large portion of our facility will remain unchanged. Keep in mind this renovation is only the first phase. The unchanged part of the facility will continue to need the ongoing maintenance that is typical of a 30-year-old building. Over the last two years we spent nearly \$35,000 in repairs. A large portion of it was associated with replacing heaters in the school wing, repairing the heater in Sanctuary, cleaning up after the flood last winter, and making repairs to prevent another flood. Before that, we experienced significant costs in repairing old appliances in the kitchen. This year we need to do major tree trimming, repair concrete and drainage, fix several interior and exterior lighting issues, and add rain gutters. And of course there will be the typical unexpected repairs that will arise due to the age of our building and our appliances.

At the low point of the recession, the Board recognized that we needed to provide some financial relief to our members and, at the same time, encourage new members to join our community. One thing we did on a temporary basis was to end the mandatory five-year Building Maintenance Fund assessment on new members. At that time we had about \$80,000 in our Building Maintenance Fund. Since that time, the fund has reduced to about \$45,000 because of the repairs that I mentioned. We believe now is the appropriate time to get back to funding our Building Maintenance Fund. The Board met in October to discuss this issue. After a thorough discussion of the alternatives, it was concluded that ongoing maintenance of our building was the responsibility of all members, not just new members. It was felt that we need to change our policy so that all members shared in the responsibility of taking care of our facility. This approach is followed by many Synagogue communities.

With regard to the old policy, while it worked for many years, we have learned from recent experience that assessing new members was not accomplishing our goals. While we don't have direct evidence, it was widely believed that the old policy discouraged families from joining. In addition, many new members are in the early part of their careers; they have a maximum they can give to CBJ which typically includes dues, Religious School tuition, and the Building Maintenance Fund. When we asked for an additional amount for the Building Maintenance Fund, it was not uncommon for them to say that is the

maximum amount I can afford now. So in the end the total funds received from a new family didn't change.

The Board voted on a proposal that we start an annual building maintenance fee of \$100 per member family. The Board vote is a recommendation; it is not a final mandate. The Board wants to take this issue along with its unanimous recommendation (with one abstention) to a membership vote. So it was decided that we will bring this matter up for a membership vote at the December 2010 Semi-Annual Meeting. In the meantime, I encourage you to discuss this matter with our Board members and among your fellow members. If you have any questions about this proposal, feel free to contact me or any Board member.

If approved, this fee would go into effect on January 1, 2011. The fund will be used only for repair and maintenance of the facility. It will not be used for ongoing maintenance that is part of our operating budget. For example; cleaning supplies, routine landscaping services, janitorial service, carpet cleaning, etc., will come from our operating budget. However, unanticipated repairs and major preventive maintenance would come from our Building Maintenance Fund.

The Semi-Annual Meeting will take place on Monday, December 6, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. In addition to voting on this issue, we will also vote on new Board members and officers. A slate for the new Board will be sent out in November along with an agenda for the meeting.

Let me conclude by saying that we are in very exciting times. While the construction is a bit complicated, it is also a lot of fun. When I speak to members at services and various events, I'm always pleased to hear how many people share my excitement about what is to come.

As always, feel free to contact me with your questions.

Greg