

# TEMPLE BETH SHOLOM

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Dear Temple Beth Sholom Member,

On Tuesday evening, March 25, there was a congregational meeting to discuss the possibility of building a new Solomon Schechter Upper School building (Grades 6-12) on our property. This meeting was the next step in a process of dialogue that has been going on with the Solomon Schechter Day School of Long Island for some time now. We want to take this opportunity to report the details of this meeting and invite your input.

The idea was proposed five years ago, but after preliminary conversations with Solomon Schechter, we decided not to pursue it. Since then, Schechter pursued other possibilities which did not come to fruition. About four months ago, they approached us with a new proposal. The concept was presented to our Board of Trustees who referred it to a committee for further study. This committee, made up of our Past Presidents Larry Glass and Steve Seltzer, our current President Susan Zelman, Executive Vice President Louis Naviasky, Financial Vice President Marc Magid, and financial consultant Steve Kober, met with a committee from Solomon Schechter. After many meetings and hours of negotiations, the committee came back with a concrete proposal. After a well-prepared presentation and a long discussion with the Board of Trustees, the Board voted unanimously to recommend this proposal to the membership, and asked the President to call a special congregational meeting.

The Board of Solomon Schechter also voted unanimously to pursue this project. The concept was presented to the Rabbinical Assembly of Nassau and Suffolk County with representatives from Queens, and by unanimous acclamation, they added their voice of support to this initiative. We also received a letter from the Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary Arnold Eisen adding his voice of support and encouragement.

The meeting last Tuesday opened with comments by Susan Zelman, and a presentation of the proposal by TBS trustee Morty Schaja (representing Schechter) and Rabbi Lev Herrnson, Head of School for Schechter. This was followed by Rabbi Lucas' remarks about how the proposal fits into the vision that we have formed for TBS over the past several years, through our strategic planning initiatives Vision Beth Sholom and Project Re-Imagine. Marc Spector, principal of the architectural firm the Spector Group, engaged to design our new Early Childhood Center, presented a conceptual site plan outlining how such a building *could* be situated on our property and what it *might* look like. Steve Seltzer gave a full report on the financial negotiations. Danny Fisher, past president of TBS and chairman of our camp committee, enumerated the benefits to our day camp as well as their concerns, and endorsed the project. A question and answer period followed, during which congregants had the opportunity to express their questions and concerns. Thoughtful and important questions were raised, a closed ballot vote was taken, and the proposal received the overwhelming support to move forward by a vote of 146 in favor and 14 opposed! The resolution adopted by the congregation states:

*Temple Beth Sholom's membership (TBS) endorses the concept of allowing Solomon Schechter Day School (SSDS) to build the Solomon Schechter Day School, Grades 6-12 on the Temple Beth Sholom campus. TBS further agrees to allow SSDS to perform due diligence and to commence all necessary feasibility studies (including but not limited to environmental, legal, local & State requirements) necessary to allow this concept to come to fruition, provided that SSDS pay for all of said studies, and understands and agrees to allow TBS Board of Trustees to reject this concept after review of all necessary studies referred to herein. TBS agrees that if all studies performed are satisfactory to it, it endorses the financial terms and conditions that have been negotiated and approved by the Executive Committee and The Board of Trustees and will allow SSDS to build its school on the TBS campus of which the financial terms, conditions and building design are further subject to the execution of a duly negotiated legal agreement between the parties.*

This is not intended to be a sale of land, but a long-term lease agreement. And while it was not structured solely from a business perspective, but from a community one as well, nonetheless, there are significant benefits to our congregation. The financial terms require SSDS to give TBS \$1,000,000 upon receipt of permits, and an additional \$250,000 at groundbreaking. SSDS will pay an annual rent to TBS of \$125,000 plus an annual COLA increase, and shared maintenance expenses. Before they can proceed, SSDS must have 75% of anticipated construction costs raised in cash or guaranteed signed pledges. And TBS will commission the necessary Engineering/Feasibility/Impact studies, to be reimbursed by SSDS, which will address all the concerns identified by our board, our members, and the Village of East Hills regarding traffic, building and land usage, etc. We have many questions and these questions will have to be answered to our satisfaction before this project can proceed.

In addition to the increased revenue that will help us to meet our operating costs, keeping your dues down, we will be receiving the following benefits at no cost to TBS: Our camp will benefit by an upgrade to our pools and ball fields. The school will have an indoor gymnasium that will be available for the camp (saving us more than \$15,000 annual rent to the public school), and our youth groups during the year. We will have additional classrooms for the use of our religious school and Machon Beth Sholom, use of the building on holidays – especially the High Holy Days, when space is at such a premium, and more parking spaces will be added.

If these questions can be answered to our satisfaction, we believe, and the unanimous vote of our Board of Trustees and the overwhelming vote at the congregational meeting support us in this belief, that this is good for the future of Temple Beth Sholom as well as Jewish life on Long Island. We know you have a lot of questions – we have answers for many of them - and for those that we don't, we are committed to finding the answers to our mutual satisfaction. In the months to come, we will invite you to meetings with experts in one or another area of impact to hear your concerns and answer your questions. We will keep you informed every step of the way and we assure you we will not move forward without the input of all of our members.

When all the studies have been completed and all the questions have been addressed, we will again call a congregational meeting to report the findings to you in

detail. The Board of Trustees will give final blessing to this project *when and only when* the studies have been done, the approvals have been secured, and the concerns of all our members have been addressed to our satisfaction.

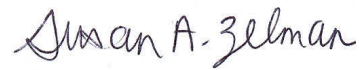
This is an exciting opportunity for Temple Beth Sholom, and we are thankful to our founding families for having had the foresight to purchase sufficient land to enable us to pursue this partnership with Solomon Schechter. This is a wonderful opportunity that will enable Schechter to find a new home and ensure its vitality for years to come. A successful Schechter is an important building block to a vibrant Long Island Jewish community. We are confident that you will agree with our Board and those who attended the meeting on March 25<sup>th</sup>. We look forward to your participation in this exciting new chapter in the history of what we believe is one of the most dynamic Conservative synagogues in the country.

For more information, please contact Donna Bartolomeo in the synagogue office. We will be glad to make available the full transcript from the March 25 meeting and copies of the PowerPoint presentation that accompanied it.

Sincerely,



Alan B. Lucas



Susan A. Zelman