

Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation
Annual Congregational Meeting
May 15, 2022
In-person at JRC and Online via Zoom

Attendance: 62 adult members at JRC/30 on Zoom. Congregational Secretary Robin Byster confirmed this satisfies requirements for a quorum.

Began at 10:30

- I. Rabbi Rachel and Cantor Howard – welcomed everyone with song and a blessing for community.

She noted the very difficult past week with terror incidents happening in our country (Buffalo NY shooting) and also in Evanston at the middle school where nooses/ropes hanging from trees were found after a gathering of students. We are all supporting one another in the religious community in Evanston (especially black church leaders, members) and that feeling of vulnerability is significant. The antidote is love and more love – we must use our voices to say it must stop. We are a “beloved community” and need to hold one another through these hard times.

- II. Emily Harris – Board President spoke and thanked the following (and asked them to stand if they were in the room or on Zoom):
 - a. Zoom Gabbaim
 - b. JRC Tech team – David Tabak, Brad Moldofsky, Alex Silets
 - c. Rabbi Rachel –her spiritual leadership in addition to her commitment to helping us join together in multiple ways (her tech savvy is admirable)
 - d. Cantor Howard Friedland – brings us joy and connection through song. He also brings his singing “on the road” at Backyard Havdalah, Lakefront Shabbat, and outside JRC.
 - e. Rabbi David Eber – for wisdom and community building as well as his commitment to reconstructing Jewish education.
 - f. Mickey Baer and her team – Rachel Sherman, Frank Delgado, Miguel Abonce, Layhao Diep, and newest addition to the team – Alison Stollberg.

Emily noted today we will be presenting speakers that mirror our new board organizational structure which will work in three teams:

- Governance
- Sustainability
- Engagement

These teams will be how the board works together on the new strategic plan that was put together from the focus groups that gave us a wealth of information. Thank you to Becca Sperling, Diana McNellis, Linda Mathias Kaskel for their hard work on that.

Our mission statement is: *JRC will be a thriving, celebratory community that joyfully innovates and reconstructs our Judaism to create an engaging and relevant spiritual home for generations to come.*

Emily said she could not thank Elliot Frolichstein Appel enough for his past years of leadership and dedication, enthusiasm, knowledge and care to JRC as Immediate Past President. He has been her mentor, she is so grateful. She listed the outgoing board members (“they don’t leave or fade away, they just switch hats”):

- Jonathan Markowitz, Treasurer
- Marla Baker, VP Ritual practice
- Robert Israelite, VP. of Education.
- Lisa Servedio, member at large, and
- Carolyn Shapiro, member at large, are out of town and unable to join us.
- Kyra Auslander member at large
- Katie Segall, Youth Member

Governance

Emily thanked, Robin Trilling and Lou Weiss and the Nominating Committee that put together the proposed board slate. The Nominating Committee was appointed in December 2021.

Robin Trilling introduced the slate nominated to serve as JRC's board of directors for FY23, starting July 1, 2022. This nominated slate, along with a reminder of the annual meeting date, was published to members via Constant Contact mass e-mail on April 21, 2022 as well as on JRC's website jrctogether.org.

- o President Elect – Hannah Shearn Education VP – Robin Byster
- o Ritual Practices VP (to include Programming) – Marie Davidson
- o Membership VP - Rick Kulp
- o Financial Development VP – Gail Luxenberg
- o Treasurer – David Block
- o Congregational Secretary (completing Robin Byster's term) – Nancy Katz
- o Members at Large – Luke Adams, Andrew Segall, Hannah Seltzer
- o Youth Member – Celia Osborne

Returning Board Members are:

- President - Emily Harris, Strategic Development VP - Becca Sperling, Tikkun Olam VP - Anne Wildman Administration VP - David Tabak
- 2 Members at Large - Elias Murciano and Irv Miller

Motion to accept the slate – Robin Trilling

Becca Sperling 2nd the motion

Congregational Secretary Robin Byster confirmed that no other nominees were received by her prior to the annual meeting.

Voice Vote: Unanimous– Yes, 0- No, 0- Abstain (in the room). Slate is approved.

- III. Micky Baer and Jonathan Markowitz presented the Financial Report
 - a. Paycheck Protection Program/Loans helped us save (without PPP, we would have had a deficit of 121,000) for FY22, with the rollover from '22 we project a budget surplus of \$8,000 going into FY 2023
 - b. We will be adding more teaching staff in FY23 that is where the extra expenses come in. Dues are the major portion of our revenue, followed by fund raising from members – we will need more members in order to keep our congregation financially healthy. We are budgeting 220k for dues adjustments to ensure JRC membership remains within reach for our diverse community.
 - c. Strategic plan is to grow to 500 members over the next three years- currently we have under 400 member households.
 - d. We usually net \$225,000 from fundraising (Phonathon, High Holiday appeal, Gala) so we are looking forward to everyone’s continuing generosity going forward.
- IV. Anne Wildman and Marla Baker introduced all of the ways our members engage, and noted ways that everyone can be involved with either Ritual, Education or Tikkun Olam programming.
 - a. Edie Canter spoke – Immigration Justice Task Force’s goals are:
 - a.i. Education – sponsor Movie nights or learning sessions
 - a.ii. Activism – collation work
 - a.iii. Service –18 members are volunteering to help 2 Afghan families settle in US (housing, health care, school, legal assistance)These families have extensive needs – the task force are exploring a way to raise funds to continue helping, in addition to the volunteer assistance already underway.
 - b. Frank Hill and Elliot Frolichstein-Appel spoke – Anti-Racism Work (Anti-Racism Task Force (ARTF)/Racial Equity Task Force (RETF)
 - b.i. Frank reported that as part of engaging members, RETF is working toward a racially just and equitable world. ARTF was appointed by the board to help

develop a lens that JRC could use to plan programming, policies, ritual practices, events, and other actions. RETF is planning solidarity circles that we will have with Second Baptist Church in Evanston.

- b.ii. Elliot (and other board members) worked with Rabbi Rachel and Rabbi Sandra Lawson on a congregational assessment that helps us focus on what we don't know in order to avoid possible pit-falls in decision making and organizational structure with regards to race and inclusion.
- c. Gail Luxenberg spoke about the new adult Brit Mitzvah Cohort and her positive experience with 29 members learning together, led by Rabbi Rachel Weiss. Save the date in October (15th) for the culminating ceremony.
- d. At the close, Marla thanked members for all the ways they have been involved this year and asked participants to stand, mentioning this list of groups as opportunities for all to get involved with and join!
 - d.i. Accessibility and Inclusion team, the Anti Racism task force, The Alte Rockers, Backyard Havdalahs, Blood drive, Book Group, Chesed helpers, Choir, Chibur (Our twenties and thirties group), Connection callers, Community Kallah, Covid Advisory Task Force, crafting square, Hannukah Candle Lighting Families, Evolve Series, Feminist Seder, Gala 2022 flights of fancy, garden helpers, Gun Violence Prevention task force, Green Building Tours, Immigrant Justice Task Force, Racial Equity Task Force, Israel/Palestine Havruta.

The business portion of the meeting ended at 11 a.m. and we welcomed Religious School students and teachers into the room for the annual Siyyum.

Respectfully submitted, Robin Byster, Congregational Secretary