

KOL AMI: NVRC 2012 Annual Meeting MINUTES

June 10, 2012, 4 to 7 p.m.

Thirty two members and guests attended the Meeting. After an opening niggun, a welcome and introductions, the meeting started by adopting the agenda with one change: the word “consideration” was replaced with “discussion” in item #9. Don K. presented the President’s Report highlighting accomplishments during the past three years, such as the development of a strategic plan, a culture of volunteerism, a balanced budget, an improved website with greater usability. The Community has slowly grown. A culture of leadership succession has been put in place. Everyone was thanked.

The Rabbi’s report mentioned how she has served the Community, for example, leading High Holy day services, Simhat Torah services, Selichot, a new tradition (the next one to be held on September 8). She has established a new format for some Shabbat services, shorter with more singing and time for Hevruta study (in groups). She led a three part adult education series, “living a Jewish life” held after services, and is offering a study series of Rabbi Teutsch’s GUIDE TO JEWISH PRACTICE (v. 1). She is interested in exploring ways to get parents of young children to attend adult education programs. She has visited the B’nai Mitzvah class, as well as JCEP’s older class. She has had discussions of ethics and other issues with upcoming B’nai Mitzvah parents. She has done a lot of counseling and consultations. The discretionary fund has been affected by misfortune and difficulties in the Community, and is in need of more donations.

Amy S. spoke about the UUCA construction plans. She has been working with Church officials. There will be no access to the activity room for 9 to 12 months. Services will be moved into the Chapel, with the library used for Kiddush and oneg (no food permitted in the Chapel). The closet in the Chapel will be used. Room 11 will handle what doesn’t fit. The parking lot should present no real problems, especially on the weekends. During the week there may be restricted or limited access since the lot will be paved. Parking for the High Holy Days may be impacted. As a result of the construction, there may be new space for the Community on top of the activity room. This option will be looked into. There is not yet information about changes in rental rates. Updates on the construction will be communicated to the Community by email.

Committee reports included a written communication by Dr. Richard R. on the seven adult education sessions held during the year. Requests have been made for more education in services. The aim will be to develop adult education programs to meet all the Community’s needs. It was noted that Sundays between 5 and 6:30 p.m. when kids are in JCEP the Rabbi could offer adult education, if there is a commitment from JCEP parents. Exploring intergenerational programming is another option. Janice C-L described the Care & Concern Program, what has been done and what is being planned. The program has more volunteers and

expanded responsibilities, for example, the yahrzeit list. Harriet E. will serve as a resource in the aging field. The Children and Family Program and services has had a great year.

Responsibilities have been assigned to Hope W.(B'nai Mitzvah), Erika F.(tasks for children's services and holiday celebrations), Mindee R. (JCEP, teachers). 30 kids and new families were involved in JCEP, with 4 age groups and skills. Seven b'nai mitzvah's are being planned for 2012/2013. There has been increased childrens' time with the Rabbi and with celebrations. The ICEP grant has been chopped to \$500.00. The fund raising committee, as reported by Noel L., started last year with tzedakah boxes. These were brought to and distributed at the Annual Meeting. A motion was made and passed to give the money from these boxes to the Rabbi's discretionary fund. The Rabbi presented a new idea for fund raising: a benefit concert offered by her cousin, a retired violinist. Don spoke about the need for a new person to take over the outreach committee. Under the direction of Lance F.and David L., ads have been prepared and sent for High Holy Day services, an event for new members was planned, the Community participated in the Northern Virginia Israeli festival. Amy S. indicated that she will help with this important committee until someone steps up to handle outreach.

Jane S. speaking for the Ritual Committee presented a followup to the conversation and meeting held with service leaders, focusing on what constitutes a Kol Ami service, what is being looked for; what found or missed. The results of this process indicated a desire for dialogue and education, along with a respect for creativity and Jewish traditions. The aim is to offer warm, welcoming and gentle services, preserving the autonomy of the service leaders to design and lead services. The Community is interested in including more liturgical education in services. More information about what the service leaders are planning is desired. However it is too much to ask service leaders to be responsible for outreach, as well as for designing the service. More detailed description about each service will be put on the web, and sent to Amy to include in "This Week". A comprehensive strategy to increase attendance at services is needed, including advertising services more aggressively to the larger community. An informal poll was taken among participants about changing the beginning time of the services. Rabbi Leila will conduct workshops to mentor service leaders. A listing of service elements will be made accessible on the web. Jane S.will be completing the schedule of services. Those interested in leading services should contact her.

Mary K. spoke about implementing strategic planning to help insure that needs of the committees are met. The Steering Committee serves as a means to facilitate connections between committees. Members have stepped up and volunteered. An example is that the Children's and Family Program and Services is now a real committee. There is a need for someone to step up for fund raising and for outreach, as well as for strategic planning. There is a need for help with kids services. Succession planning is important to clearly identify members staying on or leaving committees; making sure their experience and the experience of the President will be shared. A programmatic audit, recommended by strategic planning, helped get

information to prepare the budget more effectively. Peggy R. indicated that Tikkun Olam will involve gleaning in the fall, working with the Arlington Food Bank. Suggestions and ideas for new projects are needed.

The By laws amendments presented included two changes: adding the name “Kol Ami” in several places and inserting the immediate past president serving as a voting member of the Steering Committee. A motion was made and passed to accept these amendments.

The adult b’nai mitzvah policy and process was discussed.. The policy was not intended by the ritual committee or the rabbi to be connected to the current B’nai Mitzvah class. It is distinct from the guidelines for children, which is more structured with a specific time frame. Development of an adult policy was motivated by a concern with finances, fees and other issues, such as the definition (within Reconstructionism) of being Jewish and the recommended course of study . These issues were identified and clarified in the guidelines. The proposed policy was discussed by the Steering and Adult Education committees. Don and the Rabbi worked on it, then asked for questions and concerns. Any typos will be cleared up. In point #5 it was suggested to revise the sentence: “...will meet with the Rabbi at least twice either individually or as part of a class to discuss the contents of the d’vor torah. In point #4 a suggestion was made to add “at least three verses from the Torah scroll to chant them at a Shabbat service”. It was suggested to add at the beginning of the guidelines, “When an adult or group of adults desire to become B’nai Mitzvah the community has cause to celebrate”. The cost issue should be left open, with classes sharing expenses. It was proposed to adopt the guidelines in principle, sending them out with amendments and voting on a final version at the next community meeting. However a motion was made and subsequently passed to table.

Pictures of the children in JCEP were taken. There was an individual and personalized recognition of what each child brought to his/her class. Each child received a gift of an apple for his/her specific talent and special qualities. The JCEP teachers were also recognized, thanked and given gift cards.

The 2012/2013 budget proposal was presented by the treasurer. It assumed no change in dues structure, 32 family memberships and 22 individual memberships. The proposal includes the total amount budgeted, that proposed and the actual 2011/2012 income and expenses, broken down into different categories. Elizabeth L-B highlighted an actual increase in memberships, the greater number of dues wavers, greater High Holy Day income and JCEP funds. She also mentioned more classes and B’nai Mitzvahs, less dues reductions. Other income includes the Weisenbloom fund and an ark fund. A motion was made and passed to adopt the budget as presented.

Recognition was given to those members who have served the Kol Ami community, including Lance F., David L., Mike L., Elizabeth and Tony L-B, Brit R., Susan F. The new slate of

officers and Steering Committee members was presented. The position of Vice-President was contested, with both Herb Cooper-Levy and Jim North running. A vote was held and Jim North was elected. In all else, the slate proposed by the Nominating Committee was adopted by unanimous consent. At the conclusion of the meeting an announcement was made about the importance of quickly clearing the closet, since it will be moved to the chapel to store what is required for Shabbat. Someone from the ritual committee and from JCEP are needed to help Peggy go through the other items in the closet to determine what to keep and store.

Prepared by Susan Freiband, Secretary

6/21/2012