

“Building our Future” Committee Members

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The members of this committee have put together some frequently asked questions that we have heard from congregants. If you have any questions and or concerns that are not addressed here, please reach out to one of us. This FAQ is an evolving document and will be updated regularly.

Is BHBE closing?

No! Absolutely not. BHBE is a vibrant, committed, and multi-generational community of wonderful people who remain engaged congregants. We continue to attract young families to our “Littles” events and we have sustained an increase in new members over the past few years. Many younger people are joining our Board of Directors to help lead us into our future. We have been active and engaged for over six decades and we plan to be here for at least that many more. We are simply looking for an appropriately-sized building that is accessible for our multi-generational community. Our current building is approximately 54,000 square feet. Our research shows that we need a building of approximately 12,000-15,000 square feet. We need to match our facility with the needs of our congregation.

Why now? This seems so sudden.

Our total membership is now approximately 300 family units. The building we occupy was designed to hold 1,000 units. As the building ages, we have spent a great deal of time and money maintaining and repairing our facility. Over the past twenty years, many discussions have been held about our building by our lay leadership. Most recently, we completed our second major strategic plan. The strategic plan yielded the “Future of the Building Committee,” which met over the course of a year to produce a detailed study about the range of options available to us as we seek to right-size our physical space. In short, this process has not occurred suddenly. Our decision to put the building on the market is the result of a decade’s worth of research, analysis, and discussion between all of our community members including congregants, staff, board members, and clergy.

What will we gain?

We would like to put our resources of time and money into the rituals, programs and events that are meaningful to our members. As a result of this process, we would have the funds available to envision new sacred spaces and places for communal gatherings. We also would be able to employ staff members dedicated to programming, marketing, and administration.

Where do my High Holiday Appeal dollars go?

The fundraising we do each year at the holidays is to supplement the current year's budget. Our membership dollars only cover about half of our expenses.

What about considering a merger?

We have actively been looking for and discussing options in the area. Unfortunately there are no viable options at this time. This continues to be an area of interest and something we would consider should an opportunity arise.

What process have we followed to get to the decisions we're facing now?

In 2020, BHBE embarked on a strategic planning process led by the USCJ which helped us to identify issues we need to confront to continue to be a strong, vibrant synagogue for generations to come. One of these areas focused on the building. We created a "Future of the Building" committee, which provided the BHBE board of directors with guidance on selecting a path to follow. In 2023, the board gave the go-ahead to select a real estate broker to list our building so that we could make informed decisions.

How did we choose SVN as our broker?

BHBE engaged in a detailed, carefully planned process to secure the best possible broker to represent us. BHBE put out an "RFP" (Request for Proposals) from which a committee reviewed the responses and made a decision to hire SVN.

Where will we move?

Our broker is watching for properties that we can consider. Through guidance from organizations such as the USCJ, we understand we need a facility of approximately 12,000 square feet (compared with our current facility which is 54,000 square feet). We are looking to remain within approximately 3 miles of our current location. We are considering all options, including locations to purchase as well as locations to rent.

Are there interim plans should we need a temporary home for BHBE?

We have started discussions with alternate locations in the event that we should need a temporary home.

What will become of our current facility?

This will depend on who might purchase the building and land. One of two scenarios is most likely: either another religious organization or compatible-use nonprofit could move into and use the existing building, or a developer may want to take down the building and build housing.

What about the option to sell part of the building instead of the entire property?

The realtors who replied to our Request for Proposals believed that this is not a feasible idea; selling part of the building and/or part of the land is not really a viable money-making option.

What about my life-cycle event?

Please rest assured that your life-cycle event will occur as planned, with the full support of our clergy and administrative staff and the participation of as many community members who would like to participate. We are at the beginning stages of this process, and we will ensure that all eventualities are taken care of as we go.

Where can I go for the most current information about the building and where we are in the process?

Please feel free to approach any board member with questions, or to refer to this document. We will be updating regularly as we continue this process.

How can I be part of this conversation? How can I help?

BHBE Board meetings are open - feel free to join each month. Email any member of our clergy, staff or lay leadership. You can also reach out to members of this committee.

What fundraising plans do we have?

FAQ: The BHBE Building



We are focused on two areas of fundraising: (1) to support our current financial situation, which we aim to do with our annual High Holiday Appeal and (2) as our plans progress, we will look ahead to fund the exciting changes on the horizon for our congregation.

What will happen to our most treasured parts of our building, such as the stained glass windows and the memorial plaques?

We recognize that there are many physical objects in the building that are personally meaningful to us. As we approach the appropriate time to make these decisions, we will have a dedicated committee to review the conservation and display of these treasured items.

What is the valuation of the property?

The valuation depends on several factors, including the buyer's proposed use. We expect that the proceeds of sale would allow us to pay off our debt and move into a structure better suited to our congregation's needs.

What are some of the major anticipated expenses on our current building?

We expect to face the following challenges in the near future:

- Roof replacement
- HVAC replacement
- Sound system replacement
- Flooring replacement
- Other interior updates
- Unexpected emergency expenses - TBD (e.g., recent sanctuary ceiling work)

What about the parsonage?

We need to convene a group to discuss the many issues surrounding the parsonage:

- Proximity to where we reside
- The current loan
- Upkeep

What is the timeline we can expect to follow?

There are many variables that will affect the timeline we face. Most significant of these is the intended end use of the building and property. While we acknowledge that many of these variables are outside of our control, we intend to keep every one of our stakeholders apprised of our progress as we begin this process.

Will the naming of particular spaces continue in a new facility?

Wherever we go, we will find the space to honor our congregation's heritage.

What will we do with proceeds from the sale of the building?

We will invest in a facility that is "right-sized" for us. In addition, we will dedicate additional resources to programming and staff that will help us achieve our mission.

Why can't we raise money to modernize our current building?

Historical fund-raising efforts have shown we cannot raise enough money to make the improvements we would need to sustain the building. Even if we were able to accomplish the necessary fund-raising, our building would still be too large for us to maintain in a sustainable manner.

What is required of the Congregation in order to sell our property?

Please log into your BHBE account and navigate to the Board page (<https://bhbe.shulcloud.com/bhbe-board.html>) where you'll find a link to view our congregation's Constitution. The sale of the building requires a congregational vote.