

CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM RODFE ZEDEK
Rabbi Search Committee Debriefing
August 10, 2006

Speaker: Rabbi Arnold Sher, Director of Rabbinic Placement, CCAR

He is familiar with our congregation from past contacts through the years.

Search was not a failed search – the search continues.

We should seek a rabbi we want the congregation to be.

We did not choose a rabbi because we were not ready to do so.

We had good communication with applicants – made them feel good.

We attracted more candidates than larger congregations.

Chair of another search committee asked that he send them someone who knows Reform rabbinate in 2006.

Committee has to reflect the whole congregation – should then recommend one or two candidates.

Good committee has to appreciate and respect each other – one standard: what is in the best interest of the congregation.

No full-time professional employee of congregation should be part of the committee – lay members should take custody of search.

Why didn't one candidate stand out? Right person may not have been there.

Blessing in our search was no one said we have to get a rabbi – if we had selected a person and it failed, Rabbi Sher would have been back in two years – we re-begin.

It is important to talk with people who know applicants, e.g., time management, short fuse.

Committee chair needs to touch base with him.

Every congregation is unique – different DNA.

Rabbi Crystal's report on our congregation was glowing – people, sense of community.

This is a very special place – visit to restaurant showed how important is the congregation.

Need for confidentiality in search.

Do some visioning of what is important.

Question on what happens when certain segment of congregation cannot get behind the candidate selected.

Have joint meeting of new and old committees.

Should have some members from old committee on new committee.

Critical importance of Rabbi Transition Committee, e.g., one from committee, Board, etc 3 or 4 – report back to Rabbi on what they hear.

Select a person who can do the job – and not look at whether person will be divisive – importance of knowing the congregation.

Involving congregation and maintaining confidentiality – first visit should be just the committee and a few persons from the Board.

He will give Search Committee best advice on who will succeed.

We should put a positive spin on why we did not select a rabbi – it was the right decision

He will be happy to meet with new committee.

In a merged congregation, we need to find the right language.

15-20 people should be on the committee.

The Chair cannot be too kind but needs to look at who will be best for the congregation.

We asked each candidate “are you for this, are you for that?”

Too many people from outside the committee came into the process.

Member felt process was doomed to fail – confidentiality breached – some people outside the committee had a larger voice.

Each candidate has to be treated the same – rules of the road.

People from outside the committee and on the Board really want to know how the committee is moving along

Question of empowerment of committee – making it work from the beginning.

He will come to the first meeting of the former and new committees.

Opening the process to the congregation was a mistake – too open and honest.

Look for charisma and special spark.

We kept bringing new candidates into the process instead of coming to closure.

The successful candidate has to embrace both ends of liberal and tradition.

Notes by Arthur Meyers