

THE UNITED SYNAGOGUE
ERUV COMMITTEE



To: Dayan Ch. Ehrentreu
Mr. Jonathan Lew
Mr. Elkan Levy
All Committee Members

From: David Schreiber

CONFIDENTIAL
Update as at 27th Sep 1993

*Rabbinic Panel
Jonathan Kestenbaum*

As I am travelling today to Jerusalem PG for Succot and there have been a number of developments since the last general memo in July, I write to update you on the situation.

Planning - Modified Application

The modified application has been time-tabled for the Barnet Public Works Committee on the 5th October and the Town Planning & Research (Planning) Committee on the 27th - both meetings open to the public at the Town Hall.

There has been some publicity given to the fact that Don Goodman, Chairman of Public Works and Vice-Chairman of Planning, who has supported us so wholeheartedly, has expressed surprise that we are pursuing the modified application despite the Officer's recommendation against. In fact it was with Don's positive encouragement that Application 'B' was formulated. Barnet officers have come under 'some pressure' to find reasons to oppose the Eruv and this is a further example of the hardening of their position. In a recent meeting, Don explained that he would be embarrassed if the application came before his committee (Public Works) as he would expect it to be rejected and he would personally be in some difficulty. He is fully aware that we have been advised, very firmly, to continue with the modified application, not in the expectation of approval, particularly with a negative Officer's report, but as an essential tactic for the appeal. We must be able to demonstrate that we have explored all reasonable alternative schemes for dealing with the Conservation Area in Wildwood Rd.

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Committee

Laurence Begner, Brian Berenblut, Edward Black, Joe Bloomberg, David Cohen, Daniel Drukarz, Alfie Frei, Jeremy Hershkov, Michael Goldblatt, David Marriott, Graham S Morris, Mark Moss, Michael Posen, David Schreiber, Syma Weinberg

Rabbinic Panel

Rabbi Isaac Bernstein (Finchley), Dayan Ivan Binstock (Golders Green), Rabbi Edward Jackson (Hampstead Garden Suburb), Rabbi Alan Kimche (Ner Yisrael), Rabbi Sidney Silberg (Hendon)

Supervisory Authority

Chief Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Sacks, Dayan Chanoch Ehrentreu, Head of the London Beth Din

United Synagogue Liaison

Elkan Levy (Honorary Officer)

Technical Officer Alan Perrin B.Sc.

Even though the press will undoubtedly construe this situation in a negative light, the facts are very clear and I would like to refresh everyone's memory so that when answering questions, from our own people let alone cynics, we do not need to feel in the slightest bit defensive. The Barnet Planning Committee rejected the original application in February citing two planning objections - the general loss of visual amenity caused by the poles and wire and specifically the Wildwood Road stretch within the Conservation Area. In setting conditions for their positive recommendation, the officers insisted on 3mm telegraph wire in the misguided belief that the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds preferred it to thinner wire. In the event, the treatment of Wildwood Road was referred to by several councillors in justifying their opposition.

The modified application addresses the planning concerns raised by Barnet by reducing the number of poles required and eliminating them in the 'meadow' area of Wildwood Road and it also replaces the 3mm wire with innocuous fishing line - which was our original preference and to which the RSPB has no objection. This was with the encouragement of Barnet officers. Our stance is, therefore, that we have listened carefully to the planning objections and modified our application accordingly, resulting in an environmentally more friendly solution.

Of course it would be embarrassing for a number of Councillors on the Planning Committee to have to consider this modified application as they would now be hard pressed to justify their vote against. So we are not surprised at Barnet's tactics, including an attempt to delay consideration of the application until after our appeal (which we have successfully resisted).

We therefore can and do expect a majority against at Public Works and Planning but we must remember that the aim is to win the appeal.

Pre-Inquiry Meeting

A number of people have asked about the notice which appeared in the Hendon Times inviting people to attend this meeting tomorrow.

The Inspector decided to call this meeting, which is of itself not unusual, in order to discuss the management, time-table and logistics of the Inquiry with the main parties. We will be represented by our planning specialists and legal team of Laurence Begner and Graham Morris.

Objectors

There is now a Barnet Eruv Objectors Group and I enclose a copy of their briefing to the press. According to their calculations there are less than 250

people who will benefit from the Eruv!

The Appeal

The preparation for the appeal commences in earnest after the Chag. I will keep you updated following a detailed preparatory meeting after my return on the 11th October.

The Department of Transport have indicated that there may not be a requirement for a follow-on inquiry. This is now being studied in detail.

Fund-raising

The first phase of the appeal fund-raising has been very successful with the result of nearly £10,000 in small donations being at the very top end of our expectations. Graham Morris and Alfie Frei have now launched the second phase of securing guarantors and I would ask everybody to lend a hand to this essential activity.

Please contact Graham (O: 071-433 3434 H: 081-455 9158) or Alfie (O: 071-637 8891 H: 081-455 0977) with the names of people who you can approach on a personal basis. As guarantors, they will share equally in the shortfall with a ceiling of £2,500 each.

Publicity

Our policy is to maintain a low public profile through the October hearings in Barnet. Within our own community, we have briefed the JC fully and can expect news and editorial coverage that will explain the present situation and restate their editorial stand in favour of the Eruv.

The Chief Rabbi will also be writing a comprehensive article, to dispense with the various calls upon him for everything ranging from a dispensation to an order making the UK into one big Eruv!

A clear statement from Chief Rabbi Sacks regarding the Eruv under his authority, will help to clear the doubts being voiced by fellow Jews through the columns of the local press.

We remain confident about the outcome of the appeal but the period between now and then will be trying. I do respectfully ask the community Rabbis to explain the situation in broad terms - that we anticipate a rejection of the 2nd application in October but are pursuing it, on advice, in order to secure success on appeal which starts on the 30th November.

Best wishes and **חג שמח**