

Bylaw Change Proposal- Leslie Norinsky

At the board meeting of June 14, 2020 the congregation voted to allow the extension of a board member's service to the board. Currently, it is noted in the bylaws that a board term is two years and upon re-election by the congregation, may serve up to two consecutive terms. However, in extenuating circumstances, such as a crisis like a pandemic lockdown, as we've just had, the board realized that it would not want to let go of the expertise and experience of the then current President. This change read as follows:

“However, in the event that the Board is unable to elect a Board Officer from its continuing membership for the current or following fiscal year, the term of the Trustee serving as a Board Officer may be extended beyond the second two-year term limit to serve in that office until a replacement officer is elected, or a third two-year term is completed, whichever comes first. Any exercise of this provision must be confirmed by a two-thirds vote of the members at the next Congregational Meeting. After an interim period of two (2) years, a former Trustee may stand again for election to the Board. No person shall be elected or appointed a Trustee unless such person has been a voting Congregation member for at least two (2) years. This measure would come into play only if a Board Officer position could not be filled by new or continuing Board members”.

Although this provision was made for the good of the congregation, it also releases the board and the congregation of its responsibility to find capable volunteers willing to step into the role of leadership. We need to encourage a culture of volunteerism that requires all of us who are willing and capable of taking responsibility and ownership of this community. The issue is not whether a capable, knowledgeable, and dedicated person can provide continuity. The issue is whether it is desirable to encourage us all to be actively contributing members of a community we love and also whether it might be too easy to step back, let ourselves off the hook, and allow the status quo when things get tough. To be a vibrant, ever-changing, ever-growing community, we should insist that we commit to creating such an environment. Board term limits allow for fresh ideas to tackle new or old problems in an ever-changing congregation and world. A pandemic is a major crisis, and a minister leaving is a major crisis. We will probably continue to experience major crises. People have stepped up and will continue to step up, if that is the expectation.

I am asking for a vote to rescind the change made to the bylaws on June 14, 2020, as noted above.