



Rabbinic Search Committee: Scope of Work

June 6, 2021 – January 16, 2022

Search Committee Members

Janice Schwartz- Donahue, co-chair

Karen Sirota, co-chair

Andrew Altman

Andrew Eimer

Marc Furman

Joe Gordon

Elyse Herman

Arlene Holtz

Liz Kaufman-Taylor

Isaak Kruger

Norma Meshkov

Ryan Perlman

Carey Roseman

William Saltzburg

Lise Schwartz

Dick Weiss

Initial Committee Conversations

Created a process for the search, and set standards of confidentiality and honest, respectful conversation. It was emphasized that the charge of the Committee was to review the candidacy of each rabbi with an emphasis on what was best for our congregation and not committee members' personal reasons.

Self-Reflection Process

Development, distribution and analysis of congregation survey to clarify our members' priorities and hopes for our new rabbi. Results remained a constant presence in Committee's deliberations

Created a model for Focus Groups, small group meetings of members to discuss their most meaningful, defining connections to KI, hopes for the new rabbi and their vision for KI's future.

Developed guide for Focus Groups and trained member facilitators to ask thought questions to elicit responses relevant to the search. Notes were taken without attribution and submitted as part of the self-reflection process

Job Posting Application

Created and submitted the required CCAR (Central Conference of American Rabbis) application for the KI job posting, with detailed description of our congregation and our

aspirations for our next rabbi, using the analyses of the survey and focus groups as a guide for that attribute list.

Resume-Reading and Interview Skills

Held how-to training sessions for Committee members re: how to evaluate resumes and conduct interviews

Implicit Bias Training

Developed and presented an Implicit Bias Training session – required for all Search Committee members

Creation of Rubrics

Created rubrics as a method to evaluate resumes and interviews

Candidate Review Process

Reviewed 20 applications received

Using rubrics to evaluate the applications, 11 rabbinic candidates were invited for initial Zoom interviews

Created interview questions to be asked to each candidate – both standard for all applicants and several that were candidate-specific

First Round Interviews

Held 45-minute interviews with each of the 11 candidates; Post-interview, Committee discussed candidate and voted using the created rubrics to determine which would move on to the next round of interviews; the field then narrowed to 6 applicants

Second Round Interviews

Developed questions for 90-minute Zoom interview #2 with same model as in Interview #1; The field then narrowed to 4 applicants.

Reference Checking

Requested reference list from each of the remaining candidates as committee members connected to those people and then submitted findings for our due diligence

Third Round Interviews

Invited the remaining candidates to visit KI. First candidate spent the day touring the building, meeting privately with each member of the Senior Staff including:

Rabbi Sussman

Deborah Rosen

Cantor Levy

Liz Sussman

Brian Rissinger

Jaimie Shmelzer

Hazzan Tilman

Rita Poley

Candidate also met with the administrative staff, toured the local community, offered a sermon and led a Torah Study. The candidate then interviewed with the Search Committee. The remaining candidates replicated the schedule, but given the CCAR restrictions due to COVID, those same meetings were held virtually.

A small group cross-section of KI members were invited to attend candidates' sermons and Torah Study sessions, and those who attended were invited to submit their reflections as part of the due diligence.

Final Committee Meeting/Decision

After reviewing the remaining 2 candidates' resumes, the sermons, Torah Study sessions and exhaustive due diligence reports, the Search Committee met to discuss their conclusions. The final vote was anonymous and the results were an overwhelming majority to recommend the candidacy of Rabbi Benjamin David as KI's next rabbi.

We would like to express our gratitude and admiration for the dedication that the Search Committee members offered to accomplish this sacred work – a task none of us ever took for granted. The aggregate amount of time this committee spent was a measure of them individually and of their devotion and understanding of the importance of this work to ensure KI's future. It was our sincere honor to partner with each of them.

*Janice Schwartz-Donahue
Karen Sirota
KI Rabbinic Search Committee Co-chairs*