

# Temple Shalom of Milton

Town Meeting Presentation  
February 2010

# Overview

- ▶ Background
- ▶ Internal Process
- ▶ Community Process
- ▶ The Plan

# Background of Temple Shalom

- ▶ “A congregation that warmly welcomes diversity, spirituality and community. We value Jewish living and the principles of Tzedakah and Tikun Olam”
- ▶ Founded 65 years ago
- ▶ Formerly 600 families - currently 140 families
- ▶ Only remaining synagogue in Milton
- ▶ Center of Jewish life in Milton

# Temple 101

- ▶ Non-profit congregation with elected Board of Directors
- ▶ Funded by annual membership dues - supplemented by Bingo, Campbell School, donations, and fundraisers
- ▶ We hire and pay our Rabbi and a few salaried staff
- ▶ Independent, unaffiliated
- ▶ All proceeds from the sale of this property will only benefit the Temple as an institution

# Temple Finances

- ▶ Operating deficit for years
- ▶ Repeated pleas for additional \$\$
- ▶ During planning process:
  - ▶ Doubled dues through one-time special assessment
  - ▶ 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary fundraiser

# Building is a Financial Albatross

- ▶ Facility built for much larger congregation
- ▶ Building is leaky, inefficient, oversized, with failing systems
- ▶ Congregation cannot manage failure of a major system

# Belt-tightening

- ▶ Part-time Rabbi
- ▶ Deferred maintenance and renovation

The result?

- ▶ We lost young families
- ▶ No growth in membership

# Strategic Planning

- ▶ 2004: Began 3-year strategic planning process with hired outside consultant
- ▶ New Goals:
  - Hire full-time Rabbi
  - Increase congregation size
  - Keep ties with Campbell School
  - Remain in Milton, in the neighborhood

## *What happened?*

- Hired dynamic new full-time Rabbi
- We've turned the corner
- New, young families joining congregation



# What did we explore?

## Do nothing

- Invite the death of our congregation
- Not an option

## Merge with other Temples

- One year spent exploring possibilities
- We chose to stay in Milton

## What do we need to stay in Milton?

- Smaller, energy efficient building
- Resources to replace Bingo
- Support a full-time Rabbi

# Renovate current Temple

- ▶ Considered selling upper parking lot to finance renovations
- ▶ Cost prohibitive to renovate and upgrade to contemporary building code
- ▶ Not financially feasible

# Build New Temple

## Residential Options:

- ▶ Single Family Housing
  - Not enough revenue
- ▶ Elder Housing
  - Little interest, no market
- ▶ High Density Rental Housing
  - Site constraints and insufficient parking

# Build New Temple

- ▶ Nursing Homes/Assisted Living: No interest
- ▶ Banks: Closing, not opening
- ▶ Restaurants: High turnover, liquor, late hours, noise
- ▶ Academic Institutions: No interest
- ▶ Land donations/swaps: None suitable
- ▶ Small business rentals: Landlord role
- ▶ Professional buildings: High vacancy rates
- ▶ Purchase other properties in town: None suitable

# Consulted Real Estate Professionals

- ▶ **Meredith & Grew:**

Options: High density rental housing or Commercial

- ▶ **Two developers expressed interest:**

Single family homes not financially feasible due to high site prep costs (slope and ledge)

Both commercial development & multi-unit rental housing could meet financial needs

Commercial development requires pharmacy as anchor tenant + other tenants needed for economic viability

# Viabile Option #1

## High Density Rental Housing:

- ▶ Temple could not remain on property
  - To achieve needed density, not enough room for Temple and its required parking
- ▶ Glut of new rentals would compete with neighborhood rentals
- ▶ Demand on town services would offset revenues

# Viabile Option #2

## Institutional/Commercial Overlay:

- ▶ Temple and preschool could remain on site
- ▶ New commercial revenue, without burden on town services
- ▶ Control, oversight and Town input - now and in the future - through special permitting
- ▶ Developer's resources for mitigations and improvements

# Public Process

- ▶ Embraced the need for extensive community debate
- ▶ More than 18 months of public process



# Neighborhood Input

- ▶ Input has improved and shaped plan
- ▶ Concerns about traffic, property values, lighting, buffers, and access added to zoning language
- ▶ Second commercial building - at neighbors' suggestion - generated excitement and enthusiasm
- ▶ Strong neighborhood support

# Time is of the Essence

- ▶ Building systems failing
- ▶ Temple cannot sustain additional fundraising
- ▶ Uncertainty prevents progress
- ▶ Arduous 18 month public process
- ▶ If zoning denied or delayed, Temple will put the property back up for sale

# A Choice Must be Made!

Change WILL happen. Doing nothing is NOT an option.

**EITHER**

Current Overlay proposal - with numerous benefits and significant Town control

**OR**

Sale & Redevelopment of property with Uncertainties:  
Future of the property,  
Opportunities for community control,  
Neighborhood mitigations,  
Future of Temple and Campbell School.

# Best Among the Options

- ▶ By-Law gives Control of property to Town - now and in the future - with Resources for Mitigation
- ▶ Plan provides Amenities and a Social Gathering Place for the neighborhood, including Jobs for Youth
- ▶ Design provides Uplift to property and surrounds
- ▶ Commercial taxes bring Revenue to Town coffers and little burden on town services
- ▶ Development assures Temple a future in Town and Preschool in neighborhood

*THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING...*

# Recommended

- ▶ Temple **Recommended**
- ▶ Planning Board **Recommended**
- ▶ Warrant Committee **Recommended**
- ▶ Many Neighbors and Citizens Town-wide **Recommended**

*Please Vote **“YES”** on Article 2*

THANK YOU

FOR YOUR

SUPPORT!

Temple Shalom  
of Milton





