

3/2/2021

To the University Heights Community, and my neighbors on Miramar.

I, Danny Grand, am looking to have an informal prayer group for services in my home on the Jewish Sabbath and High Holidays. Though I wasn't viewing this informal prayer group as a formal synagogue, the city informed me that zoning ordinances allowed for a 'synagogue' or 'shul' (same word in Yiddish) with a "Special Use Permit". Upon being notified, I immediately abided – I have never had anyone come over to my house to pray.

I send this letter with the hope that it might clear up any ambiguity my actions may have caused based on feedback that some of my Miramar neighbors gave me, and from the letter sent to me by Councilman Ertel. Please allow me this opportunity to do so:

We pray 3-4 times daily, every day, all year round. On most of these days, my family and I are able to drive to the closest formal synagogue, which is about a mile away. That may not seem like much, but on the Jewish Sabbath and High Holidays, when driving is not permitted, my family and I must walk back and forth 4-6 times over a 24 hour period. That's a lot of walking, especially with 3 young kids, none over the age of 5, or severe weather. I know there are also a number of Jewish families in my area who are in the same boat as me.

A bonafide shul is a community facility that is always open to the public, where people can come and go as they please, and host their own private religious events like bar mitzvahs and weddings. My home is not a formal synagogue in that sense of the word. Not at all. People cannot come and go as they please, it really is just invite-only for guests, to come pray in my home for a few hours or less on the Jewish Sabbath and High Holidays. Nothing more.

A few quick points:

- 1) My house on 2343 Miramar Blvd. is not being turned into a shul or a synagogue or a Torah study center. That is not what I am looking for at all, just an informal prayer group on the Jewish Sabbath and High Holidays when we Jews can't drive cars.
- 2) We will be preserving the quiet and peaceful character of the block and neighborhood, the very character that my family has appreciated since before even moving into our home. This is the "city of beautiful homes" and it's important for that to be true outside as well as inside the home.
- 3) We will not be making any discernible noise, not putting up any signs, not changing the place one bit – in fact, the room where I intend the prayer group to be was soundproofed during construction because I used it as a music room!
- 4) We have no thoughts of making a claim of property tax exemption on religious grounds. We moved to University Heights because we love the neighborhood and will continue to support the city with our tax dollars for our entire property.
- 5) We are not proposing a "Shul", though we are seeking permission from the city to have a prayer group in our home, in one room, it's still 100% my house, and anyone on the block who has been to it, which I encourage anyone to come by to observe, can attest to that.
- 6) There will not be excessive vehicular traffic caused by this at all, as we can't drive on Sabbath and Holidays. No one besides my family will be parking in my driveway or in front of my house on the street. It's just not our intention to clutter the street with visiting cars.

7) There won't be any noticeable pedestrian traffic. People will be arriving at various times within a few small windows during the day.

8) There will not be any special or excessive lighting.

9) There are no 'hours of operation', this is not a public facility, it's my house, to get in you've got to get past my wife...

10) As far as land coverage requirements, we are not changing the shape or appearance of our fully built home, at the end of the day this our house, we're just living in it.

11) A Special Use Permit is not something that can be transferred, or that lasts after the building is sold to someone else, or does not 'rezone' the area so that now anyone else can open up 'synagogues' wherever they want.

12) On the topic of potential declining property values, I am happy to state that our next door neighbor Carol Nueman's house has broken a record for the highest priced sale on Miramar, at over \$350,000 on a single lot, I think that's great for her and for our block.

13) We respect everyone's right to privacy and quiet enjoyment on and of their property.

14) If, after receiving a Special Use Permit, any issues or concerns arise, I pledge to address and work with each of you to remedy any problem, I which I do not foresee happening, we'll be real quiet and respectful.

In all earnestness, we never intended to cause our neighbors to be concerned that we were aiming to change our block. We have no desire to operate a bonafide Synagogue (English) Shul (in Yiddish) or Beit Hakeneset (Hebrew) out of our home. I used the word loosely, in a private email to a handful of friends. One of the people's wives thought they were being helpful and shared the message to a WhatsApp group...

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to talk about this, please feel free to call me at [REDACTED] or email me at [REDACTED], or come on by the house and talk.

Thank you and God Bless,

R' Daniel J. Grand & Rachel Grand