

# THE JEWISH POLITY OF LONG ISLAND — IN SEARCH OF CONTINUITY

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*According to a 1995 population study, there were 76,000 Jewish households in Nassau County and 37,000 in Suffolk, the two political divisions of Long Island. The Jewish polity in both counties is organized in two umbrella organizations: the Conference of Jewish Organizations of Nassau County (COJONC) and the Suffolk Jewish Communal Planning Council (SJCPCC). This article discusses the membership of COJONC and SJCPCC, their goals, and their activities. The detailed structures of both organizations are outlined in the appendices. UJA/Federation has thus far financially supported COJONC and SJCPCC. Future success of these organizations in particular, and of Jewish continuity on Long Island in general, hinges not only on the continuation of this support, but also on attracting a new generation of Jews to its leadership cadre, primarily through innovative educational efforts and programs.*

## Introduction

Long Island, New York, is politically comprised of two counties, Suffolk on the eastern end, and Nassau to its west. The 76,000 Jewish households in Nassau County make up about 18 percent of the county population, while the 37,000 Jewish households of Suffolk

*Jewish Political Studies Review 8:3-4 (Fall 1996)*

County constitute about 9 percent of its population (New York Jewish Population Study, UJA/Federation of New York, 1995).

The Jewish community in both counties is professionally diversified and places of employment range from New York City to the more local neighborhoods. The proximity and accessibility of New York City to Long Island residential areas have direct bearing on the Jewish organizational makeup of both counties. They are usually affiliated with the national networks, many of which are headquartered in New York City. Thus, Long Island local organizational leaders often play a significant role within the national arena. At the same time, the local organizations strive to maintain their individual structural identities and their involvement within the county-wide framework.

### **The Umbrella Organizations: COJONC and SJCPC**

COJONC (Conference of Jewish Organizations of Nassau County) and SJCPC (Suffolk Jewish Communal Planning Council) are both umbrella organizations (see list of participating organizations in Appendix I) that were established to provide a unified voice for the Jewish community and to offer an authoritative liaison with the local governments in the respective counties. However, since many member organizations of COJONC and SJCPC are also local chapters of their own national administrations (such as American Jewish Congress, Hadassah, Jewish War Veterans, Na'amat, Parents of North American Israelis, Women's American ORT, etc.), the issue of representation and official voice is slightly more complex. Endorsements and co-sponsorships may require permission from the parent body or at least a consultation that the intended support does not run contrary to national policy. It would be misleading to assume, however, that national affiliations inhibit or encumber local initiatives and the routine operations of the umbrella councils. COJONC and SJCPC do independently promote a wide variety of programs on behalf of Jewish education or the furtherance of Jewish identity with full confidence that these goals are in the best traditions of their constituent organizations. Moreover, most Jewish issues that require contacts with county governments are shared interests and can be pursued with a unified voice in the political arena.

A frequent obstacle to cooperative activities within the Jewish community is the religious denominational division. That division is both conspicuous and legitimate in American public life. While Orthodox, Chabad Chasidim, Conservative and Reform leaders

would not attempt to jointly resolve *halakhic* differences, shared communal interests often supersede the ideological divisions. Synagogues are, of course, denominationally affiliated, but the Long Island Board of Rabbis does link most of these institutions, and rabbinical leaders sit together on the councils and participate in their activities.

Potentially controversial or divisive topics, like “who is a Jew,” are deliberately avoided. Since traditional authorities cannot accept patrilineal lineage or some of the conversions, the polity evades those issues at all costs. Paradoxically enough, they do cooperate on certain religious concerns that are less conflicting, such as fund raising for the maintenance of a *mikve* or the empowerment of a *kashrut* authority. However, any one of these same projects that serve as a unifying force in one area could become the flash point of discord in another community with a lower level of rabbinical tolerance.

Both COJONC and SJPCPC were founded in the 1970s and underwent several structural changes before arriving at their present configurations (Appendix I). Their Executive Directors are the only paid positions while all of the rest of the standing and ad hoc committees are composed of volunteers, including the officers. Both Executive Directors related in interviews (Spring 1993 and Winter 1995/6) that the most important responsibilities of the umbrella organizations are to coordinate the various functions of Jewish interest, to disseminate relevant information to the Jewish community, and to speak in one voice when representing their constituencies before local, state or federal governments or within national Jewish organizations, such as UJA/Federation (their major source of financial support), JCRC (Jewish Community Relations Council), and others.

The UJA/Federation offices are located in the town of Syosset in eastern Nassau, close to the border with Suffolk County. Although the Long Island offices are an integral part of UJA/Federation of New York, nevertheless the fund raising campaign and the distribution of the budget are careful to recognize the regional requirements. For example, UJA/Federation plays a crucial financial role in both COJONC and SJPCPC. These umbrella organizations would hardly be able to function without the yearly UJA/Federation grants since the grants finance the bulk of their budgets. Moreover, COJONC actually uses the office facilities of UJA/Federation, and SJPCPC headquarters are located in the Suffolk Jewish Community Center which is a major recipient of UJA/Federation finances.

## **Important Functions of COJONC and SJCPC**

1. Each publishes a Directory of Jewish Organizations for each county. Both umbrella organizations serve as a referral to the array of Jewish communal organizations (religious, social, cultural, educational, welfare, etc.) which are referenced in their published directories along with brief descriptions of the interests of each group, addresses, telephone numbers, and individuals to contact.

2. Seminars and workshops on Jewish subjects are sponsored, sometimes in coordination with non-Jewish groups, for example, the yearly seminars on Reduction of Prejudice in Suffolk County.

3. Lecture series on Jewish cultural themes are organized, such as the Nassau County yearly series with Hofstra University Cultural Center held on the campus.

4. Israel-related events are celebrated, such as a gala convocation in honor of Jerusalem Day (Yom Yerushalayim), Israel Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut), Jerusalem 3000 celebrations, receptions for Israeli teens visiting the area high schools, etc.

5. Important personalities in the Jewish world and Israeli officials often visit Long Island. Both COJONC and SJCPC organize public forums and receptions to introduce them to the community and to further their missions.

6. Information pamphlets are published on timely Jewish subjects, such as on conversion to Judaism or suggestions of community response to Holocaust deniers.

7. The two coordinate contacts with local, state, and federal governments. For example, recognition of the important roles of COJONC and SJCPC was illustrated when the then Democratic candidate for President, Bill Clinton, sought to address delegations from these organizations on Jewish concerns. (The meeting was organized in cooperation with the Jewish Community Relations Council.)

8. The two bodies lobby for, fund raise for, and cosponsor public monuments, such as The Freedom Plaza in Suffolk County, dedicated to the principles of human rights.

9. They provide potential activists and leaders with the means for Jewish networking with national organizations and sometimes serve as a springboard for national involvement.

10. Both COJONC and SJCPC would like to include all of the Jewish residents in their geographic spheres of influence on their mailing lists. The ultimate goal is that every Jewish family will be involved in at least one affiliated Jewish organization so that it can be reached by the council of the umbrella organization.

## **The Constitutional Documents**

Both COJONC and SJCPC have by-laws that serve as the organizations' constitutions (see Appendix II). They emphasize voluntary activity as part of one's communal duty. Elections of officers and meetings are conducted in accordance with the American tradition of voluntary organizations and rules of order and there are clearly strong influences from American constitutional law.

Most constitutional principles that have been defined in *A Double Bond: Constitutional Documents of American Jewry* (Elazar, Sarna and Monson, eds., University Press of America, 1992) apply to COJONC and SJCPC: voluntary citizenship, associationalism, federalism, governance through trusteeship, shared and divided authority, consensualism, Jewish survivalism, mutual responsibility (*brit arevut*), vital importance of Israel, respect for Jewish tradition without necessarily being traditional, viewing the *edah* as portable and transcending geography, pluralism, and American patriotism perceived as sacred and compatible with Jewish loyalty.

The above constitutional principles indeed define the basic purposes, powers, processes, and limitations of the Jewish polity and its components on Long Island as deduced from the respective by-laws. However, there are clear structural differences between COJONC and SJCPC. COJONC is a larger and more complex organization, incorporating a Board of Directors and an Executive Board, in addition to the officers, while SJCPC has just officers, member organizations, and members at large.

The purposes of the organizations are outlined in both constitutions and they are quite similar. However, SJCPC concentrates on local needs while COJONC defines its concerns in much broader terms. SJCPC by-laws seem to be more aggressive and poignant in defining the function of the umbrella organization. This does not necessarily reflect the strength of SJCPC in comparison to COJONC, but rather the constant need of the smaller Suffolk Jewish community to fight for visibility and financial backing.

Structural differences between the two organizations are also evident. COJONC allows its member organizations to send two delegates to the council while SJCPC provides for only one such representative per member. Both organizations have members at large who play a very important role in the councils. These are accomplished individuals in their communities who were elected by the council in recognition of their potential contributions to Jewish life and concerns on Long Island.

COJONC by-laws specify a cadre of officers, several vice presidents, an executive committee, and other designated committees. Their more complex structure reflects the larger size of the Jewish community in their county. On the other hand, the SJCPC constitution does not provide for any standing committees, and only one president and two vice presidents are designated as officers. Of course, ad hoc committees are formed as needed.

## **Motivation for Involvement in the Jewish Polity**

What are the common denominators of the Jewish community on Long Island? What are the themes that sound a universal chord within the Jewish polity of both counties?

1. Perceptions of Jewish survival: There is a universal dedication to principles of Jewish survival and Jewish continuity. This includes the belief in the mutual responsibility of every Jew for each other and the shared fate of the Jewish people worldwide. Paradoxically, and although it is paid lip service, formalized Jewish education is unfortunately not favored with much attention or funding since the umbrella organizations perceive this activity as the responsibility of others.

2. Support for Israel: Representatives from the right and left of the Jewish political spectrum find common ground in their support of the Jewish state in pronouncements, demonstrations, and celebrations.

3. Antisemitism: Considerable activity is devoted to meeting the challenges implied by antisemitic graffiti or oral invective. An anti-bias task force of SJCPC has regularly met with the Suffolk County District Attorney's office and police commanders in order to maintain pressure on local governments to seriously oppose any antisemitic vandalism and prosecute the offenders accordingly. In Nassau County, a newly established anti-bias task force has undertaken similar activities.

What are the reasons for personal involvement in Jewish organizations?

a. The Jewish population of Long Island mainly concentrates in family-oriented residential neighborhoods. The Island is relatively affluent and until recently husbands were the sole providers. Thus, many wives were free to find fulfillment in organizational work. It is evident that women comprise an overwhelming majority of the officers and rank and file of both COJONC and SJCPC.



b. Many of the activists, while members in local synagogues, are not necessarily religiously oriented and therefore found in this volunteer work meaningful avenues to express their Jewish identity.

c. Volunteerism is a tradition in American society, and particularly in the suburbs. Since Jews cannot be involved in church work, involvement in the Jewish polity for men and women alike serves to enhance their community standing and provide a comfortable social framework. (Of course, many Long Island Jews also participate in non-sectarian projects, such as civic or charity groups.)

d. The promotion of ethnic culture received legitimacy since the 1960s. While Jews in previous decades submerged their religious affiliation to join the American mainstream, they have since become more comfortable, openly identifying their Jewishness, also because of Israel's proud victory in 1967. It is no coincidence that both COJONC and SJCPC were founded shortly after 1967.

e. Lately, incidents of antisemitism provided an added dimension to spur organizational activity. Leaders realized that unified, constructive Jewish responses would have more impact than individual neighborhood initiatives.

## **The Quest for Continuity**

The vibrant Jewish polity on Long Island is indeed manifest by the activities of all its Jewish organizations. However, at almost every forum and at every event, the following question is asked: Can this plethora of activities be maintained and continued? The aging of the officers and of those committed to the work of Jewish organizations is very evident. It is not at all clear from where the new and younger cadre of leadership will emerge.

Participation, activism, and leadership in Jewish organizations may serve to enhance the individual's Jewish identity. But, unlike religious observance and traditional lifestyle, it is not naturally and easily transmittable to a second generation of sons and daughters.

One of the most important factors in "citizenship" within the Jewish polity is consciousness-raising: the development of the sense of necessity of belonging to the Jewish polity. This can only be done by individuals with strong Jewish identity, an attribute of Jewishly well-educated and well-informed women and men. The Jewish organizational world has just begun to fully comprehend and accept this crucial connection, and has only recently started to commit itself to the financial implications for aggressively supporting formal and informal Jewish educational activities. Actually, for Jewish survival,

now and in the future, much more than just support is needed; a massive campaign for Jewish education is sorely lacking. Moreover, the lack of prestige accorded to Jewish educators at all levels, including accomplished specialists, is a deterrent to would-be practitioners. It is imperative to completely revamp the image of Jewish education and its professionals.

Indeed, many of today's (religiously) non-observant Jewish leaders often do not possess a formal Jewish education and some have wide gaps in their knowledge of Jewish scholarship. However, their involvement emanates from a deep emotional sense of belonging transmitted from a traditional upbringing. Their commitments serve them as a link to their past and sometimes allow them to indulge in the nostalgia of their youth. This motivation for involvement in the Jewish polity is not available to the younger generation.

The recent idea of developing Jewish consciousness in teenagers via a few summer weeks in Israel has surfaced and is being implemented by the agencies of UJA/Federation. However, such programs should be perceived as an enticement for further learning and communal involvement and not as the ultimate objective. There is no alternative to in-depth study of Jewish history, culture, and literature that amalgamates, intellectually and emotionally, all the learning into identification with the Jewish people, past, present, and future. The sun, sand, and summer in Israel may provide a few fun weeks with one's peers, a pleasant memory (that may even translate into some financial contribution in later years), but they can hardly have a lasting and meaningful effect towards their Jewish identification in adulthood. A trip to Israel should be the pinnacle of and reward for the intensive study of the Jewish experience, and not a replacement for it. It is not "lip service" that should be paid to Jewish education, but rather financially supported, innovative methods should permeate every corner of Jewish life with new mentors and new forms of instruction.

The demand for excellence in secular education is evident in almost every Jewish household on Long Island, and is certainly characteristic of the community as a whole. A parallel demand for excellence at all levels of Jewish education would create a generation of well-informed young men and women whose Jewish identity is not peripheral to their everyday existence.

UJA/Federation is responding to the dynamics of the American Jewish scene. In New York it has lately embarked on a path of support and encouragement for Jewish educational ventures, on the communal and public levels and on the college campuses. Those Jewish continuity grants have also been awarded to institutions on Long Island. Financial support is indeed most crucial, but more



long-range vision is needed. For example, one of the more serious insufficiencies is a fully trained and Jewishly well-educated teaching cadre. It is imperative that the local and national agencies initiate and support a task force on long-range educational goals that taps resources beyond the current ranks of traditional educators.

Membership in Jewish organizations truly encourages a sense of "citizenship" in the Jewish polity. But these same Jewish men and women are very careful not to create any conflict with their American citizenship. Therefore, the phrase "citizenship in the Jewish polity" is often intimidating and psychologically unacceptable to many. They prefer a more neutral terminology: being part of a mailing list, fulfilling their ethnic cultural identity, connecting with co-religionists for charitable purposes, etc.

It is indeed the old fear of "dual loyalty" that surfaces once more. Two hundred years of emancipation in the modern world and a century of battling against notions such as "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" have taken their toll. American Jews are extremely careful not to jeopardize their reputation of primary loyalty to the U.S. Consequently, they cling to the philosophy that what is good for the Jewish world and Israel must be compatible with their social and political goals in the U.S.

A newly introduced activity that crosses most of the Jewish organizational boundaries is the establishment of forums for shared interests. The *raison d'être* for those forums is the desire to enhance inter-organizational collaboration. But a distinct and primary goal is also to attract unaffiliated Jews. (UJA often initiates and co-sponsors such events because of their potential to widen their fund raising opportunities.) Two recent examples on Long Island were the Jewish Arts Festivals and the Long Island Jewish Women's Forum. However, it is not at all clear that these forums can sustain their activities for many years, or that they can provide unity or enhance Jewish identity beyond a one-time event.

In an effort to attract the unaffiliated to be part of the Jewish polity, various organizations attempt to establish professional networks. Membership in these newly created groups is perceived as very desirable by young professionals who are new to their chosen fields. Thus, with the lure of networking, the organizations widen their mailing lists, and consequently some participation in the Jewish polity occurs.

Observant Jews (*shomrei mitzvot*, usually termed Orthodox) are a minority on Long Island. There are several synagogue-centered communities and a few Chabad centers. Although they possess a very strong Jewish identity and perceive themselves and act as part of the Jewish polity every day and in every way, they are not

conspicuous in the Long Island organizational world. They mostly operate within their own national organizations. In Nassau and Suffolk Counties, their contribution is more visible when ad hoc emergency issues arise and they acquiesce to harness themselves for the task at hand.

## **Conclusion**

The two coordinating organizations of Long Island, COJONC and SJCPC, embody in their existence and their activities the Jewish polity in the area. The necessity for these umbrella groups and the importance of their activities are self-evident to the affiliated Jews and have been thus far supported by UJA/Federation. Making the Jewish polity the most viable force in communal life necessitates the incorporation of all (or most) of the Jewish community within it. Future success will hinge on attracting a new generation of Jews, primarily through innovative educational programs. In order to promote this vision, a strong financial commitment must be secured. In addition, an attitude encompassing pluralism and tolerance should permeate decision-making processes and all activities and functions. Thus, Jewish awareness will be enhanced among the widest possible spectrum of Jews, encouraging extensive participation in the Jewish polity.

## **Appendix I**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS**

#### **Conference of Jewish Organizations of Nassau County March 1996**

##### *Member Organizations*

American Jewish Committee — LI  
American Jewish Congress — LI  
American Jewish League for Israel  
American Red Magen David — Israel  
AMIT Women  
Baldwin/Freeport JCC  
B'nai Brith/Nassau — Suffolk  
B'nai Brith Women — Greater NY Region  
B'nai Zion — LI  
Committee For Furtherance of Jewish Education/Nassau Co.  
Doar Avir  
East Meadow JCRC  
Five Towns Jewish Council  
Hadassah-Nassau Region  
Jewish Genealogy Society — LI  
Jewish Lawyers Association — Nassau  
Jewish National Fund — LI  
Jewish War Veterans — USA  
Jewish War Veterans/Ladies. Aux.  
Labor Zionist Alliance  
LI Board of Rabbis  
LI Cantors Association  
LI Committee for Soviet Jewry  
Long Beach JCC  
Manhasset JCC  
Merrick-Bellmore-Wantagh JCC  
Mid-Nassau JCC  
Na'Amat — LI  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods  
North Nassau JCC  
Oceanside JCC  
Parents of North American Israelis  
Rabbinic Assembly — LI  
Shomrim Society/Police Depts. Nassau Co.  
United Jewish Community Centers of LI  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, NY Metro Region

Women's American ORT — LI  
 Womens League/Conservative Judaism — LI  
 Workman's Circle — Branches 1040/1075

### **Suffolk Jewish Communal Planning Council March 1996**

#### *Member Organizations*

American Israel Public Affairs Committee  
 American Jewish Congress  
 American Jewish League for Israel  
 American Red Magen David  
 Anti-Defamation League  
 Bi-County Political Action Committee  
 Hillel Foundation for Jewish Life, SUNY at Stony Brook  
 F.E.G.S./JCSLI Division  
 Gurwin Jewish Geriatric Center  
 Hadassah — Suffolk Region  
 Jewish Association for Services for the Aged  
 Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services  
 Jewish Genealogy Society of Long Island  
 Jewish War Veterans  
 L.I. Center for Jewish Studies  
 L.I. Committee for Soviet Jewry  
 Lubavitch of Long Island  
 Parents of North American Israelis  
 Shomrim Society  
 Suffolk Association of Jewish Schools  
 Suffolk Board of Rabbis  
 Suffolk Congregational Coordinating Council  
 Suffolk Professors for Israel  
 Suffolk Y-JCC  
 Touro Law Center  
 UJA-Federation  
 United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism — METNY Region  
 Women's American ORT — Suffolk Region  
 Women's League for Conservative Judaism  
 Young Judaea Clubs

#### *Affiliations*

Jewish Community Relations Council of New York  
 Suffolk Community Council

## **Appendix II**

### **CONSTITUTIONS OF COJONC AND SJCP**

#### **Constitution and By-laws of Conference of Jewish Organizations of Nassau County, Inc. June 1992**

##### **ARTICLE I — NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the Conference of Jewish Organizations of Nassau County, Inc.

##### **ARTICLE II — PURPOSES**

1. The purposes of this organization shall be those set forth in Corporate Charter, namely:

- a. to concern itself with all matters relating to the Nassau County Jewish community and the survival of the State of Israel;
- b. to concern itself with the well-being of Jews throughout the world;
- c. to be an instrument for seeking effective cooperation among its members and the Jewish organizations in Nassau County;
- d. to operate as a coordinating body;
- e. to combat anti-semitism and every other form of racism or group prejudice;
- f. to encourage amicable relationships and mutual understanding and respect among the various groups in Nassau County;
- g. to create and maintain conditions in Nassau County that are conducive to upholding and encouraging the continuity and vitality of living in our society;
- h. to develop an intelligent and effective public opinion within and outside the Jewish community on Jewish community relations, issues, problems, concerns and commitments.

2. In the event that any conflict arises between these By-laws and the Corporate Charter, the latter shall prevail. This Constitution is intended to be consistent with the Not-for-Profit-Corporation law of the State of New York.

##### **ARTICLE III — MEMBERSHIP**

1. Any religious, fraternal, charitable or service organization of Jewish orientation in Nassau County, and any Jewish Community Council in Nassau County shall be eligible to apply for membership. Written notice of an application for membership must be sent to the delegates of member

organizations at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting at which the application is acted upon.

2. Organizations may be elected to membership by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the delegates of member organizations present at a regular or special meeting of the Conference.

#### ARTICLE IV — DELEGATES

1. Each member organization shall be entitled to two delegates to the Conference, one of whom may be the chief executive officer of the member organization (eg., President, Chairman, Commander, etc.) or another officer of the member organization who is so designated by the chief executive officer. The second delegate may be selected in any manner decided upon by the member organization.

2. Each member organization shall be entitled to two (2) alternate delegates who shall serve in the absence of the delegates and may vote in their place.

3. Each delegate shall be entitled to one vote.

#### ARTICLE V — MEETINGS

1. Regular meetings of the Conference shall be held no less than three (3) times a year. Special meetings of the Conference may be called by the President or at the request of delegates from a minimum of five (5) member organizations.

2. Notice of the time and place of every meeting of the Conference shall be sent to each delegate at least five (5) days prior to the meeting date. Notices of special meetings shall state the agenda for the meeting, and only those matters set forth on the agenda may be acted upon at special meetings.

3. A quorum of the Conference shall be at least one (1) delegate from at least one-fourth (1/4) of the member organizations.

4. Roberts Rules of Order, revised, shall govern in all cases which are not otherwise specified in the Constitution and By-laws of the Conference.

#### ARTICLE VI — OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

1. The officers of the Conference shall be: President, at least two (2) Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary.

2. President. It shall be the duty of the President to preside at meetings of the Conference and the Executive Board. The President shall appoint the chairman of a standing committee, and of special committees as shall be established by the President or the Conference, and may require annual



written reports from them. The President shall co-sign checks with the Treasurer and shall sign all contracts, agreements and legal documents. The President shall delegate a Vice President to co-sign checks with the Treasurer or instead of the Treasurer.

3. Vice President. It shall be the duty of a Vice President to perform the duties of the President in the absence of the President, or whenever otherwise necessary. The Vice Presidents shall be ex-officio members of committees, and the President shall designate which Vice President shall have primary responsibility with respect to each committee.

4. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of all the funds and assets of the Conference. The Treasurer shall disburse funds only upon presentation of duly authorized vouchers, or as directed by the Conference. The Executive Director may be authorized to sign checks. The Treasurer shall submit a written Financial Report at the last meeting of the fiscal year, and reports at all Executive Board meetings. The Treasurer shall serve as a member of the Budget and Finance and audit Committees.

5. Recording Secretary. It shall be the duty of the Recording Secretary to record the proceedings of all regular and special meetings of the Conference and of the meetings of the Executive Board. The Recording Secretary shall be the custodian of all records and documents other than those for which the Treasurer bears responsibility, and shall secure from each committee chairman an annual report of the committee's activities. The Recording Secretary shall be the custodian of the Conference's seal, if any, and shall affix the seal of such documents as required.

6. Corresponding Secretary. It shall be the duty of the Corresponding Secretary to issue notices of all meetings, to attend to any other required correspondence, and to maintain an accurate list of member organizations and delegates including addresses and telephone numbers.

7. Parliamentarian. It shall be the duty of the Parliamentarian at all Executive Committee meetings, to ensure that *Roberts Rules of Order* are followed, should a question arise as to form or procedure.

8. Each member shall, upon the expiration of the term of office, deliver to the successor, all Conference records and properties acquired during the term of office.

## ARTICLE VII — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. The Executive Committee of the Conference shall consist of the elected officers, chairpersons of all standing committees, and all past presidents.

2. The officers of the Executive Committee shall be elected for a term of one year.

3. The Executive Committee shall meet a minimum of four (4) times each year, at such times and places and under such rules as the Executive Committee shall determine. The President shall preside as Chairman of the executive Committee.

4. The Executive Committee shall implement the policies of the Conference between meetings of the Conference. Its actions shall be subject to review by the Conference and may be over-ruled by the Conference by majority vote of the delegates of member organizations at any regular or special meeting.

#### ARTICLE VIII — BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1. The Board of Directors shall consist of all members of the Executive Committee and Members-at-Large whose activities, knowledge or experience, or whose positions in the Jewish community or the community at large qualify them to act as directors of the Conference.

2. With the exception of the elected officers, the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the President with the approval of the Executive Committee.

3. The Board of Directors shall have such duties, structure and meeting schedule as the membership of the Conference may so determine and shall consist of such number persons as the members of the Conference may from time to time decide.

4. The Board of Directors shall act in a consultative or advisory capacity to the members of the Conference. It shall not, without the prior approval of the Conference, issue any public statements or communications.

#### ARTICLE IX — NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

1. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five (5) delegates designated by the President and approved by the Executive Committee. The members of the Nominating Committee shall be delegates from not less than four (4) different member organizations. The selection of the Nominating Committee shall be made no later than the month of February preceding the election meeting. The Nominating Committee shall elect one of its members as its chairperson.

2. The Nominating Committee shall present a slate of candidates at a meeting of the conference during the months of March or April, immediately preceding the election meeting.

3. Additional nominations for each position should be made by written petition. The petition must be signed by a least six (6) members who shall notify the Secretary, in writing, thirty (30) days in advance of the annual elections. Each petition shall be accompanied by a written statement of

acceptance by the nominee. The Secretary shall thereupon notify the members of such additional nominations.

4. The officers shall be elected by the delegates at a Conference meeting in May or June. They shall be elected from among the delegates or members of the Conference. At least five (5) different member organizations of the Conference shall be represented. NO officer may serve in the same position for more than three (3) consecutive years/terms.

5. Vacancies in any office shall be filled for the unexpired term by nomination by the President and the approval of the Executive Board.

#### ARTICLE X — FINANCE AND DUES

1. The fiscal year of the Conference shall commence on the first day of July in each year, and shall end on the last day of June.

2. The annual dues for all members shall be established by the Conference. Any change in dues shall require at least thirty (30) days prior written notice of the meeting at which the proposal is to be acted upon, and the notice shall specify the purpose of the meeting.

3. Each member organization shall pay its annual dues in order to be considered in good standing, and to enable its delegates to vote.

4. Special assessments may be adopted by a two-thirds vote of the delegates of member organizations voting at a regular or special meeting.

#### ARTICLE XI — COMMITTEES

1. The standing committees of the Conference shall include, but not be limited to the following: Executive Committee, Action Alert, Budget and Finance, Cults and Missionaries, Holocaust Studies, Israeli Students, Jewish Heritage, Media, and Membership.

2. There shall be such ad hoc committees of the Conference as the President or the Executive Committee may determine. The President, with the approval of the Executive Committee, may establish additional committees for specific purposes.

3. Members of all committees shall be appointed by the President, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

#### ARTICLE XII — AMENDMENTS

1. This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended in the following manner: An amendment may be proposed by any officer, or by delegates of not less than three (3) different member organizations of the Conference. The amendment shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Committee

and it shall be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Executive Committee.

2. The proposal shall then be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Conference occurring not less than thirty (30) days after the meeting of the Executive Committee. Notice of meetings of the Conference, at which the proposal is to be considered, shall describe the proposed amendment and shall state that it will be considered at such meetings.

3. Adoption of the amendment shall require the approval of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the delegates of member organizations, present and voting, at such meetings of the Conference.

#### ARTICLE XIII — PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND ACTIVITIES (Autonomy of Member Organizations)

1. Public statements or action in the name of the Conference shall only be made or taken upon unanimous agreement of member organizations.

2. In the event that there is not unanimous agreement on a proposed statement or action, the majority position may be made public in the names of those member organizations subscribing thereto.

3. The Conference shall not infringe upon the autonomy of its member organizations or upon their principles or practices. Each member organization shall be governed by its own policies and principles.

4. In the event the President deems it necessary for a public statement or public action to be made or taken by the Conference without adequate time to convene a meeting of the Conference, the Executive Committee may take such action.

5. If, in the opinion of the President and a Vice President, inadequate time exists for the subject to be considered and acted upon by the Executive Committee, the President may poll the member [sic] of the Executive Committee by telephone or other means and may issue a statement or take action based on such poll.

#### ARTICLE XIV — EXPULSION, SUSPENSION OF MEMBERS AND REMOVAL OF OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

1. Member organizations may be suspended or expelled from membership by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the delegates of member organizations voting at a regular or special meeting of the Conference. At least thirty (30) days written notice of such proposed action must be given to the delegates prior to the meeting at which the proposal is acted upon.

2. The President may recommend to the Board the removal of a member of the Executive Committee who fails to attend three (3) unexcused, consecutive meetings.

3. An elected officer may be removed from office by a vote of two-thirds of the delegates of member organizations present and voting at a special meeting. Prior to the meeting, written notice of the grounds for such proposed action must be given to the delegates and the officer involved.

### **MISSION STATEMENT SUFFOLK JEWISH COMMUNAL PLANNING COUNCIL (Adopted 10/24/95)**

The SUFFOLK JEWISH COMMUNAL PLANNING COUNCIL is a representative body of Jewish organizations and Jewish communal leaders. The mission of the Council is to ensure the continuity of the Jewish people by:

- \* \* \* Identifying the needs of the Jewish community and advocating for them
- \* \* \* Enhancing the cultural, education, social, communal and religious welfare of the Suffolk Jewish community
- \* \* \* Working in concert with all Jewish organizations that act on behalf of Jewish interests locally, nationally, and globally
- \* \* \* Providing a gateway to the Jewish resources of Suffolk County
- \* \* \* Forging coalitions with agencies and organizations to improve the quality of life in Suffolk County

(Approved by SJCPC — 10/24/95)

### **SUFFOLK JEWISH COMMUNAL PLANNING COUNCIL BY-LAWS (Revised: December 1992)**

#### **ARTICLE 1 NAME AND OBJECTIVES**

##### **SECTION I: NAME**

This organization shall be known as the Suffolk Jewish Communal Planning Council.

##### **SECTION II: PURPOSES**

The purposes for which this organization is formed are:

1. To identify the Jewish community and its needs.
2. To establish an order of priority of such needs.
3. To unify the Jewish community in Suffolk County.
4. To apprise Federation agencies of the needs of the Suffolk Jewish Community.
5. To review Federation agencies' programs and services in Suffolk County and advise the Federation Distribution Committee on annual budgetary allocations to same.
6. To insure that all possible resources are being utilized to fill the needs of the Suffolk Jewish population.
7. To improve the cultural, educational, social, communal and religious welfare of the Suffolk Jewish community.
8. To cooperate with governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations for improvements in community services, Jewish educational services, religious needs, health and social services and similar areas of concern.
9. To serve as advocates for the communal needs of the Suffolk Jewish Community.
10. To work in concert with all Jewish organizations that act on behalf of Jewish interests locally, state-wide, nationally, and world-wide.

## ARTICLE II MEMBERSHIP

### SECTION I: ELIGIBILITY FOR COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

All Jewish residents of Suffolk County shall be eligible for membership on the Council.

### SECTION II: COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

The Council shall consist of the following groups of members:

- a . MEMBERS-AT-LARGE
- b. ORGANIZATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES
- c. PAST PRESIDENTS OF THE COUNCIL
- d. HONORARY MEMBERS

1. The Council shall be composed of eighteen (18) elected Members-at-Large, one (1) Organizational Representative from each member organization, and those Past Presidents and Honorary members as are desirous of serving.
2. In the nomination of Members-at-Large, the Council shall endeavor to include lay leaders of synagogues, Rabbis, and others holding leadership positions within the Suffolk Jewish community.



3. Each Organizational Representative shall sit on the Council as an appointee of a Jewish organization active within Suffolk County which has been approved for membership on the Council. Said approval shall be by a majority of the votes cast at a meeting of the Council.
4. Honorary Members shall be those who have served on the Council for a minimum of ten (10) years. They may still be considered for nomination and election as members-at-large.

### SECTION III: RIGHTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. All members of the Council shall have equal rights in every respect, except for Honorary Members, who shall have voice but no vote.
2. Each Council member with vote shall have one (1) vote. No member shall vote by proxy.

### ARTICLE III DUES

#### SECTION I: STRUCTURE

1. Dues for Members-at-Large and Past Presidents shall be Twenty- five Dollars (\$25.00) per year.
2. Dues for Organizations shall be Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) per year.
3. Honorary Members are not required to pay dues.

#### SECTION II: PAYMENT

Monies shall be due and payable on an annual basis at or before the September Council meeting.

### ARTICLE IV GOVERNMENT

#### SECTION I: MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL

The general management of the affairs of the Council shall be vested in the Council members as provided in these By-Laws.

#### SECTION II: OFFICERS

The officers of the Council shall be a President, a First Vice-President, and a Second Vice-President.

#### SECTION III: EMPLOYEES

The Council shall employ at its discretion a salaried Executive Director and other such employees as the Council deems necessary, whose

responsibilities shall be contained in a written contract with the Council.

## ARTICLE V MEETINGS

### SECTION I: MONTHLY MEETINGS

The Council shall hold regular meetings at least once each month, except at the discretion of the Council. Regular meetings shall not be held in July and August. Notice of the time and place of a regular Council meeting shall be mailed to each Council member at least five (5) days prior thereto.

### SECTION II: SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings of the Council may be called at any time on the President's own initiative, or upon written request of any four (4) members of the Council. Notice of the time, place and agenda of a special meeting shall be mailed to each Council member at least five (5) days prior to the meeting. In the event a matter of urgency requires the calling of a special meeting, the President may waive the aforementioned time requirement and utilize telegrams and/or telephone calls to notify the membership.

### SECTION III: QUORUM

One-third (1/3) of its voting membership shall constitute a quorum of the Council.

### SECTION IV: MINUTES

Minutes of all Council meetings shall be sent to each member within a reasonable time after the date on which the meeting was held.

## ARTICLE VI ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

### SECTION I: OFFICERS

The Council shall elect one of its members President; one of its members First Vice-President; and one of its members Second Vice-President.

### SECTION II: TERMS OF OFFICE

The officers shall be elected at the June meeting of the Council and serve for a one (1) year term commencing the first day of July following

their election. The officers shall be eligible for re-election to the same office. No officer shall serve in the same office more than two (2) terms consecutively.

### SECTION III: TERMS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. One-third (1/3) of the members-at-Large shall be elected each year at the June meeting of the Council for a term of three (3) years, commencing the first day of July following their election.
2. The names of Organizational Representatives who are appointed by their organizations to serve during the upcoming year shall be submitted at the June meeting. They shall serve for a period of one year commencing the first day of July following their appointment.

### SECTION IV: NOMINATIONS

1. Nominations of Council Members-at-Large and of officers shall be made by a nominating committee of three (3) Council members appointed by the President at, or prior to, the regular March Council meeting. The nominating committee shall meet in April and submit the list of nominees at the regular May meeting.
2. The nominating committee shall recommend for election as Council Members-at-Large at least as many persons as are needed to maintain the number of Members-at-Large at eighteen (18).
3. If there are any terms of less than three (3) years to be filled, due to one or more vacancies in the ranks of the members-at-Large whose terms of office have not expired, the nominating committee shall specify the term of office for which each nominee is being recommended.
4. Additional nominations may be made by written petition of not less than four (4) members of the Council submitted to the President at least fifteen (15) days prior to the regular June meeting. Notice of said petition shall be mailed to each member of the Council not less than five (5) days prior to the regular June meeting.

### SECTION V: ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

1. Voting shall be by written secret ballot except when seats are uncontested.
2. Officers shall be voted upon separately and officers shall be elected by a majority of the votes cast.
3. When there are more candidates for seats on the Council than available three (3) year terms, those receiving the highest number of votes shall

be elected. The same procedure shall apply when filling terms of less than three (3) years.

#### SECTION VI: VACANCY

Any vacancy on the Council or among the officers arising in the course of the year shall be filled by the Council upon recommendation of the President at a regular or special meeting of the Council, provided that the meeting notice includes this as an agenda item. Such person shall serve through the last day of June of the year in which the vacancy occurs.

#### ARTICLE VII ATTENDANCE

##### SECTION I: RESPONSIBILITIES

All Council members assume the responsibility of regular attendance at meetings.

##### SECTION II: EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

1. Any Council Members-at-Large who are absent from two (2) consecutive meetings, or are absent from three (3) meetings in one year, will be notified that their Council seat is at risk. If a Member-at-Large is absent from an additional meeting, their seat will be declared "vacated."
2. Any Organizational Representatives who are absent from two (2) consecutive meetings, or are absent from three (3) meetings in one year, will have their organizations apprised of such delinquency. If a Representative is absent from an additional meeting, the organization will be requested to appoint a new Representative.
3. Provisions (1) and (2) above may be waived by a vote of a majority of the officers of the Council.

#### ARTICLE VIII DUTIES OF OFFICERS

##### SECTION I: PRESIDENT

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Council and shall appoint committees and chairmen as necessary.

## SECTION II: FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

The First Vice-President shall perform such duties as assigned by the President. In the absence of the President, the First Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President.

## SECTION III: SECOND VICE-PRESIDENT

The Second Vice-President shall perform such duties as assigned by the President. In the absence of the President and the First Vice-President, the Second Vice-President shall perform the duties of the President.

## ARTICLE IX NOTICES

### SECTION I: NOTICES

All notices to members of the Council shall be mailed to their addresses as given on the books of the Council and such mailing shall constitute presumptive evidence of service thereof.

## ARTICLE X PUBLIC POSITIONS

### SECTION I: AUTHORIZATION

The right to publicly state an official position of the Council on its behalf shall rest with the President. The President may delegate this authority to any Council member with the approval of the First and Second Vice-Presidents.

## ARTICLE XI AMENDMENTS

### SECTION I

These By-Laws may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at a regular or special meeting of the Council provided notice of the proposed amendment has been given in the call to the meeting.

## ARTICLE XII PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

### SECTION I: PROCEDURE

Meetings shall be conducted according to these By-Laws and, where these By-Laws are silent, according to Robert's Rules of Order.