

TEMPLE ISRAEL, GREENFIELD

SECURITY TASK FORCE (STF)

Following the tragic 2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooting, members of Temple Israel started a Security Task Force. Among the founders: Peter Kramer, Ira Mitchel, Michael Gralenski, and Gary and Lena Newcomb. Sara Cohen, concerned about emergency evacuation guidelines for children, joined the following year. Susan Hollins joined STF in 2020.

“It was formed because of the risk to Jews in this community,” says Peter Kramer, a founder and leader. “Our goal has been to prepare and keep a secure environment.”

The group is reorganizing in June 2022, with three long-time members stepping down, and Josh Platt joining. There is a need to repopulate Temple Israel’s Security Task Force and to invite new membership to sustain a core group of six (6) and create an additional dedicated group of 4-5 interested in children’s services and children’s emergency evacuation. The current STF will welcome new members with support and orientation.

WHAT DOES THE SECURITY TASK FORCE (STF) DO?

STF has two types of focus:

- 1) STF actively engages with the Rabbi and Congregation before and during Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services in the synagogue building—recruits and schedules inside and outside monitors, monitors security cameras, provides training and outreach related to building security, and
- 2) STF spends the rest of the year addressing next-step building priorities, preparing for the next year’s holidays, and considering programs and trainings for congregation members.

STF PARTICIPATION: TIME COMMITMENT

STF meets together approximately four (4) times a year. There are occasional conference calls and email exchanges with a guideline that everyone on STF is included in all emails.

PAST AND FUTURE PROJECTS

Each year, STF looks at ways the synagogue building could be more secure and each year the STF takes on a next-step concrete project(s). To date, accomplishments are cameras around the building including doorbells with cameras as well as wall-mounted cameras and a monitoring set-up inside, setting up hot lines that connect with police for emergency situations, window covers, fundraising to pay for building security projects, establishing emergency evacuation routes and safe rally point away from the building, and coordinating interior and exterior monitoring.

Our projects through June 2022 includes: adapting office windows with bullet-proof or shatterproof glass, clarify responsibilities and communication guidelines, and recommending our budget include a line item for Security, for identified needs.

QUALIFICATIONS: WHAT BACKGROUND DO YOU NEED FOR STF?

- interest in Temple Israel facility projects that increase security
- sincere appreciation and recognition of the risks to Jews
- good listener, hearing what other people are saying
- willingness to negotiate concerns and solutions, understanding that individuals have different ideas about risk and safety requirements
- having ideas but also the oomph to get a project done, and follow up
- willing to undertake the lead in gathering information and costs for a project of their choice or priority
- confidential—security issues are treated confidentially by STF outside of security task force meetings.

WHAT ARE THE TOPICS OF STF DISCUSSIONS?

1. Security Inside and Outside the Building
2. Emergency Evacuation Planning and Training
3. Planning for Children in the building
4. Monitor Program for Holiday Services, setting up

5. Technical Setup for Cameras, year-round
6. [Communication and Outreach—Police, Neighbors, Jewish Organizations](#)
7. Specialized [Informational Programs, including](#) in first aid

MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT

To keep a Security Task Force in place, new member recruitment is high priority. The time commitment is not onerous; discussions are interesting.

Please consider participating. Contact [Office Director Kate Lee](#), Rabbi [Andrea](#), or any member of the Security Task Force, or Ira Mitchel. [We hope to welcome new members in April.](#)