

June 4, 2018

Dear Mayor Schewel,

Ziva Raney and I are grateful that you were able to make the time to meet with us last Tuesday, May 29th. We both thought the meeting was productive and an important step toward building a stronger partnership between Judea Reform Congregation and the City Council. In that spirit, I am writing on behalf of the Board of Trustees at Judea Reform Congregation who unanimously approved this letter.

We, the Board of Judea Reform Congregation, support the Durham City Council's April 16th statement, "rejecting the militarization of our police force." However, we reject the implied linkage in the Durham City Council April 16th statement banning police exchanges with Israel. We recognize there was a lot of discussion that went into making this Durham City Council statement about the importance of determining appropriate training for the Durham Police Department. You assured us in our discussion that there was no intention in the City Council statement to invalidate Israel's right to exist and that this statement was not motivated by anti-Semitism. We take you at your word. However, this reference to Israel in the statement appears out of context and is unsubstantiated in its unique identification of Israel. This reference has caused harmful speculation of its intent and has led to pain and anger for many of our Judea Reform members. There is a need to heal that wound.

Building on the good will in our first meeting, we would like to propose these next steps:

- We are deeply grateful that you have accepted our invitation to come to Judea Reform, along with interested members of the Durham City Council, to meet with our congregation to have an open discussion. During our meeting with you, Ziva and I learned that relatively few from Judea Reform spoke at this Durham City Council meeting. Those from our community who addressed the City Council were from opposing ends of the political spectrum. As the Board of Judea Reform, we recognize that we represent a membership with a wide range of perspectives on these issues. For this reason, we believe it will be productive for you to hear all voices.
- We would like to see the Durham City Council take an affirmative and visible stand against anti-Semitism or any form of racism or discrimination whenever it occurs. Judea Reform recognizes with appreciation the responsiveness of the City of Durham involved in removing the white nationalist stickers and anti-Semitic posters from downtown Durham after being notified on April 30th.
- We would like to see the City of Durham stand against boycotts of Israel. The Reform Jewish Movement, deeply rooted in its love for Israel and desire to see the Jewish state live in peace and security with its neighbors, opposes the movement to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel. These efforts are more likely to hinder rather than advance the peace process.

Again, we very much appreciate your time and offer to come meet with our congregation. Judea is proud to be part of Durham and believe the city is moving in the right direction with your leadership. We are looking forward to strengthening our partnership together.

Sincerely,



Steve Simon
President of Judea Reform

cc: Durham City Council