

NEWS & ANALYSIS

# Hampstead synagogue's 'legalization' on hold

By Joel Goldenberg  
The Suburban

The legalization of a Hampstead synagogue that was operating in a "grey zone" from a home will have to wait until after the election, it was decided at the tumultuous October town council meeting.

Before that six hour council meeting/election debate/political rally officially began, the town held a public consultation, from which a potential register or referendum can be held in the area by residents opposed to the proposal. The next council meeting will be held Nov. 16. The issue regards the Nahar Shalom Synagogue, located on Harrow crescent

Mayor William Steinberg explained that the synagogue has existed for some 20 years, "but in a grey zone. Nobody in any previous council ever did anything. This bylaw will cause it to become a legal synagogue and be subject to a variety of rules for any public building."

Council regular Gertie Shuster objected to the movement of the second draft of the bylaw at this point in time.

"This council feels it is imperative, at this moment, the last council meeting of this team, to have a second vote on a bylaw which is going to legitimize something that has been illegal?" she asked. Steinberg said this was the case.

"You should all be ashamed of yourselves and I urge you to vote it down," Shuster said. "It does not look good for any of you at this point to vote on this bylaw."

Councillor and mayoral candidate David Sternthal said he supports the synagogue, but added that he was "sensitive" to what Shuster said.

"Perhaps, and I don't think the sentiment will change, we should defer this to the new council and maybe that is the right decision to take," he said. "In all fairness to the citizens, we should defer this and I presume there will be no problem when it comes before the new council. I fully understand the point. If I am elected [mayor], I will move the same motion and will support it."

Councillor Leon Elfassy agreed the issue should be deferred, and the council voted to do so. ■



## Japanese councillor visits CSL council

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Masako Awata, a councillor from the small central Japanese town of Toyoyama, sat in on the Sept. 29 Côte St. Luc council meeting and toured city hall. Councillor Steven Erdelyi, who taught English in Japan for two years, officially welcomed Awata in fluent Japanese and she herself greeted the council meeting in English. Councillor Awata was visiting her daughter, who is a Macdonald resident in its Côte St. Luc section. According to a Côte St. Luc release, Toyoyama, which is in central Japan, has a population of about 13,500 and is the home town of Seattle Mariners all-star right fielder Ichiro Suzuki.

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