

PROCLAMATION

CITY HALL: August 21, 2008

WHEREAS, Congregation Beth Israel was founded in 1904 and continues to serve today a vital role as a Modern Orthodox Synagogue in Greater New Orleans, service a diverse and growing community; and

WHEREAS, on August 29, 2005, nearly 10 feet of water poured in from the breach of the 17th Street Canal, destroying Beth Israel Synagogue -- the only synagogue to lose everything and scattering our community far and wide; and

WHEREAS, in one of the more poignant images of Hurricane Katrina, a Zaka volunteer was captured on film carrying the Torah scrolls out of the flooded synagogue; and

WHEREAS, although those scrolls could not be salvaged -- and all seven of them, along with more than 3000 holy books were later buried in our cemetery here in New Orleans -- the congregation is reviving and has dedicated new Torah scrolls, bought new books, has a growing younger membership and, has hired a new young rabbinic family and, is currently renting space from a different Temple; and

WHEREAS, while Beth Israel is in the process of exploring rebuilding options, it continues to serve as a critical resource for the orthodox population in New Orleans, as well as for the many visitors and conference-goers that require the services of a traditional community when in town; and

WHEREAS, the under the leadership of its Board and Rabbi Uri Topolosky, the Beth Israel congregation continues to exemplify the spirit and dedication of the post-Katrina New Orleans; now, therefore

BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, that it commends the Board of Beth Israel Synagogue, Rabbi Uri Topolosky and its congregation for its fortitude of faith and steadfast commitment to New Orleans.

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED, that the Council extends its most sincere best wishes to Beth Israel Synagogue in the building their new synagogue.

ON THE MOTION OF COUNCILMEMBER ARNIE D. FIELKOW

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