

Good afternoon –

As we met earlier to share information in reference to the subject project plan along with a booklet with a picture of the proposed building and some core information about Sikh faith and our outreach programs. We appreciate your kindness to offer us the use of your parking lot once or twice a year for special occasions. We will provide UCC with additional insurance coverage at no cost to UCC for the use of your occasional parking.

**This email is a follow up of my phone call requesting that the leadership of the GTBJF is willing to meet with you and the UCC Council any time convenient to you and the council. Please let us know.** In the meantime, let us share some highlights of the projects as follows:

As you know, Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji Foundation Inc. has submitted a special permit application for a proposed gurudwara at 283 Richards Avenue in Norwalk, CT to the City of Norwalk Department of Planning & Zoning, Zoning Commission and various city departments that may exercise jurisdiction over this proposal. This property is zoned AAA Residence and houses of worship are permitted in this zone by special permit. The application was accompanied by various documents including civil engineering, architectural, landscaping, traffic study and drainage report. These documents were created by licensed professional engineers and are currently under review by various city departments. Further all application documents are available for public inspection.

The Gurudwara – A place of Worship is open seven days a week. It is very similar to other denominations and their houses of worship. The Sikh congregation holds services twice weekly (Sundays generally from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm, and on Fridays from 7:30 to 8:30 pm). These services are followed by a communal meal prepared and served by members of the congregation to all service attendees and guests. Typically, these meals are sponsored by a family within the congregation who purchase supplies and groceries, prepare the meals and serve to attendees.

Every day in the morning and evening, there is a ceremonial opening and closing of Holy Scripture but there is no congregational worship at these times. However, like other religious institutions, congregants may visit the gurudwara daily to offer individual prayers or take a reading from Scripture. Pre-Covid, approximately 150 congregants attended Sunday services, with about 50 in attendance for Friday night worship.

Today, about 60 attend Sunday services; the Friday night service has been suspended due to COVID-19 and there is no plan to resume them as yet. Similar to other religions, the Sikh community celebrates occasional holy days and events such as Vaisakhi (“Sikh Day”) on April 14, as well as the birth and death anniversaries of the Sikh Gurus. Should the need arise to provide additional parking, the Foundation have discussed use of parking spaces at Fox Run School for overflow purposes with city officials and yourself allowing occasional use of its parking spaces for similar overflow needs once or twice a year. The Foundation appreciates your cooperation and generosity.

The Sikh community plans to provide religious education to its young congregants, much like that provided at other religious institutions in the neighborhood such as Temple Shalom, St. Matthew’s Church and United Church of Christ. Religious instruction, which is run by volunteer parents and follows the Norwalk Public School calendar, is offered on Sundays only. Instruction begins at 10 am and concludes at noon. Youngsters and parents may then join the congregation for the post-service meal. As for weddings, the community welcomes its congregants to be married in the faith, but no extraordinary

efforts will be undertaken to “market” this house of worship as a wedding venue. Day care facilities are neither offered nor proposed at this Gurudwara – A Place of Worship.

Information on the status of fundraising efforts or project costs will not be shared as they are not germane to the special permit application process nor the Zoning Commission’s jurisdiction and review of this proposal. Lastly, my client is not inclined to entertain any offers to purchase this property and locate its gurudwara elsewhere.

Should you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,

Mohinder Singh Kalsi  
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