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Chabad of Greater Orlando is on the way to its 'forever home'

Christine DeSouza | Aug 14, 2026



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A rendering of Chabad of Greater Orlando's new synagogue in Winter Park.

The Winter Park Planning & Zoning Board members voted unanimously (5-0) to approve Winter Park's first permanent synagogue, despite many complaints about traffic and parking.

The new synagogue would provide a "forever home" for Chabad of Greater Orlando, said Rabbi Dovid Dubov, and would be the only synagogue currently operating in Winter Park.

Rabbi Sholom Dubov told Heritage, "I was very pleased to be present when the unanimous approval was given to us by the Planning & Zoning Board of Winter Park. I believe this will be the

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Planning & Zoning Board of Winter Park. Dubov said this will be the beginning of a new stage and development in the growth of Chabad in general and particularly in Winter Park.

"My wife and I are entering 42 years of community service to Orlando's Jewish community, and we are thrilled with the opportunity for progress, growth and expansion for Chabad in our area."

As many may remember, Chabad of Greater Orlando's synagogue in Maitland suffered a horrible fire in 2024. There was no room for expansion on that property, so they moved to a temporary space on North Park Avenue.

Since December a year ago, the synagogue has been looking for a place to build again. They found a property in Winter Park on the corner of Knowles Avenue and Morse Blvd., where the El Cortez apartments now stand. These apartments were built in the 1920s and are within the Interlachen Avenue Historic District.

The synagogue had to get approval from the Historic Preservation Board. According to Rabbi Dovid Dubov, the synagogue presented a rendering of the synagogue to the Historic Preservation Board, which approved the demolition and required an historic marker be to the site and that the demolition not occur until a building permit was issued for the new development.

The next step was to appear before the Planning & Zoning Board. The board reviewed the synagogue's plans for a synagogue, a daycare center that would be run by the synagogue, a rooftop patio, and five townhomes on the .6-acre site.

The Board's conditions were that child drop-off and pick-up at the daycare take place in the underground parking area planned for the synagogue. Other conditions included prohibiting speakers or amplified music on the rooftop patio.

Dubov said he doesn't anticipate frequent events on the rooftop terrace and sees it like a backyard for the organization because Jewish tradition calls for some events or meals to take place outside.

Concerning the daycare, Dubov said at the board meeting that it is the synagogue's responsibility to make Jewish education

available where Jewish families live.

"And today, ladies and gentlemen," Dubov state, "there is no Jewish daycare in Winter Park. We have also worked diligently to be respectful of our neighbors. We voluntarily limited our daycare to just 60 children ... and our traffic study demonstrates that that impact will be extremely minimal."

P&Z Chairman Jason Johnson addressing attorney Becky Wilson of the Lowndes Law Firm who is representing Chabad, asked her if Chabad would agree to the condition that the daycare pick-up and drop-off must be done in the underground parking area, and she said they would agree.

Further addressing the traffic situation, several Chabad members at the meeting stated that only 12 to 15 people typically are at Friday evening services. The proposal also stated that seating is capped at 80 seats in the synagogue. Rabbi Dubov further pointed out that many people who attend services or use the daycare will walk rather than drive, which also helps alleviate traffic concerns.

He said the location at Morse Boulevard and Knowles Avenue will provide a central meeting spot that people can reach on foot from across Winter Park, which is known for its walkability.

"We felt like this was the most convenient location for everyone ... a middle ground for everyone to give people the convenience to walk from any point," Dubov said.

The proposal has been before two Boards, and the next step is a hearing in front of the City Commission.

"It's not over yet," said Dubov. "we have a long way to go, but we are on track!"