

March 22, 2016
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**CHABAD JEWISH CENTER OF TOMS RIVER FILES FEDERAL LAWSUIT AGAINST
TOWNSHIP OF TOMS RIVER AND ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

On March 22, 2016, Storzer & Greene clients Chabad Jewish Center of Toms River and Rabbi Moshe Gourarie filed suit against the Township of Toms River, N.J. and its Zoning Board of Adjustment, challenging the Township's zoning regulations and Board's denial of the Chabad's request for an interpretation to let it remain open as a clergy residence with small weekly prayer services of approximately 15 people and other religious activities. State law specifically protects the right of clergy to engage in religious exercise with limited participants in their own homes. The Complaint was filed in federal district court and alleges violations of the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act ("RLUIPA") and the Fair Housing Act. The Chabad is also represented by New Jersey attorney Christopher K. Costa of Kenny Chase & Costa.

The Chabad is located at 2001 Church Road in Toms River, and is adjacent to an American Legion Post, a church, and the Ocean County College with approximately 10,000 students. Despite its negligible land use effect on the local community and its existence at this location and another residential home in Toms River for twelve years without any negative impacts, substantial community opposition to both the Chabad's use and to the ultra-Orthodox Jewish population in general, has targeted the Chabad. More than 1,200 residents attended the Board's hearing on the Chabad's application, which had to be moved to a local high school to accommodate the objectors. The Complaint describes the recent statement of Mayor Thomas Kelaher regarding ultra-Orthodox Jews moving into the Township as an "invasion" and the recent carving of the words "Burn the Jews" into equipment at a local Township playground. The Complaint recites various statements regarding the Chabad and ultra-Orthodox Jews describing them as "cockroaches," "trash," a "cult," "he-breeds and she-breeds," a "Jewish conspiracy," "disgusting phonies," a "joo school," "damn jews," "dirty," and a "disease." The Complaint further describes the collaborative effort between Township officials and residents with respect to various efforts to prevent ultra-Orthodox Jews from adjacent Lakewood Township from moving into Toms River.

"This cancerous movement targeting a specific religious minority has spread into Toms River," said Roman P. Storzer, attorney for the Chabad. "The use of local ordinances and land use regulation to build a wall around Lakewood should not be tolerated."

Religious land uses are protected from undue burdens, discrimination and arbitrary treatment under RLUIPA, which was passed by Congress sixteen years ago to prevent discrimination against religious institutions in land use regulation. The attorneys of Storzer and Greene, P.L.L.C. have represented scores of churches, temples, mosques and synagogues in land use conflicts from Hawaii to Florida. Storzer has been described by the Religion Newswriters Association as "one of the country's most experienced litigators" in religious land use law, and has successfully represented Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Native American, Sikh and other religious organizations in RLUIPA and First Amendment cases throughout the nation.

Mr. Costa is a New Jersey land use and real estate attorney who represents numerous church denominations and other religious organizations in their land use and other legal needs. The focus of his land use practice is on clients whose uses are inherently beneficial to the public.

The Complaint is available at <http://tinyurl.com/hqd7guw>.