

## HOLLYWOOD | CHABAD'S MORTGAGE COVERED

# Donor saves synagogue

■ With a major donation, a Hollywood synagogue continues operating as federal authorities probe the city's actions against the house of worship.

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The prayers of the Hollywood Community Synagogue Chabad Lubavitch — which is struggling to stay in a residential neighborhood — may have received an answer.

During a Tuesday after-

noon press conference at the Fort Lauderdale law office of Broad and Cassel, synagogue officials said an anonymous donor has stepped up with the money to bring the mortgages current on the two homes used by the synagogue at 2215 and 2221 N. 46th Ave.

Chabad's properties are in foreclosure because the cash-strapped synagogue stopped paying on them in April. Two mortgage lenders have taken Chabad to court, seeking at least \$240,000.

"Most people can recognize for a small organization like this, it's very difficult for it to operate and pay its bills while it is constantly under attack from the city," said Franklin Zemel, a partner at Broad and Cassel.

Synagogue President Arthur Eckstein said the anonymous donor is not a member of the synagogue.

Tuesday's announcement came a day after the U.S. Department of Justice acknowledged it is investigat-

ing Hollywood's dealings with the synagogue.

Rabbi Joseph I. Korf blamed the financial troubles at the "blue-collar" house of worship on constant harassment from police and code enforcement officers, prompted by neighbors' phone calls.

Federal attorneys will determine whether the city violated any rules that prohibit local governments from adopting or enforcing land-use



J. ALBERT DIAZ / HERALD STAFF

**FIGHT GOES ON:** Rabbi Joseph Korf, front, backed by attorney Franklin Zemel, left, and Arthur Eckstein.

• TURN TO SYNAGOGUE, 2B

### • SYNAGOGUE, FROM 1B

regulations that discriminate against religious institutions.

Zemel, an attorney for Chabad, said the Justice Department contacted the synagogue. Federal investigators apparently learned of the situation through media reports.

Hollywood Hills residents have complained about noise,

garbage, traffic and parking problems for more than two years.

On Tuesday, City Attorney Dan Abbott said the city is gathering the documents requested by the Justice Department.

"As is always the case when somebody alleges a violation of a federal statute, the Department of Justice has initiated a preliminary inquiry,"

Abbott said. "We are confident that when the Department of Justice reviews the relevant documentation, they will conclude, as we have, that the city's actions were in full compliance with federal law."

On Tuesday, Eckstein received a letter from the Justice Department informing him of the investigation.

The Justice Department is also looking for information

from the synagogue "about any burden imposed on its religious exercise" by the city's actions.

Korf said there are other houses of worship operating in Hollywood Hills that do not have a special exception. His synagogue applied for one, which the city eventually denied.

"I don't think we have been treated fairly," Korf said.