

BRIGHT WAY ZEN BOARD

Minutes of Meeting of April 7, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

Present at the meeting:

Domyo Burk, Janna Allgood, Jim Lewinson, Jeff Young, Lorna Simons

Absent:

Ellen Shoketsu Carlin, Bella Jhunhunwalla

Board election update:

Domyo invited the three eligible Bright Way members to run for the board, explaining that essentially we have one open spot right now. These were Janna Allgood, Sean Graham, and Gathel Weston (people who are still active members, live in the area, have taken Jukai, and have not already served as long as they want to on the board). All three people were willing, but Sean and Gathel were happy to let Janna take the seat this time and serve later. Admittedly, Domyo didn't consider gender balance on the board before making this decision, so this should be considered in the future.

Domyo will send our slate of two board candidates (Jeff, who is running again, and Janna) to active Bright Way members to vote on. At this meeting (4/7/16) Jeff and Janna were present but technically aren't members of the board right now, so this should be taken into account re: voting.

Financial Report 2015

Financial Report for 2015 and Budget for 2016 and Beyond (conservative & using membership spreadsheet) (all attached for reference)

A couple of items noted for information: The "classes" category of income includes the Ecosattva and Dharma Studies courses. The software expense under "Online Membership Software" for 2015 was a tad high because it was more economical to pay for two years rather than one.

The proposed budget also includes a gradual increase in the priest's housing allowance, starting at \$400/mo from January 1, 2016 and then going up \$100/mo. each year thereafter. The increase to be effective January 1, 2016 was discussed and basically okayed at the meeting in November 2015. It was moved and seconded that the increase to \$400 for 2016 be formally approved; motion carried.

Domyo prepared two budgets for 2016, a more conservative one and a more expansive one based on more reasonable/realistic estimates of new membership. It was moved and seconded that the conservative budget be approved; motion carried. (The second budget was provided for informational purposes.)

Rent will be increasing to \$1.50 a square foot regardless of our plans for expansion (current space would be about \$1050/mo, up from \$700).

With expansion (addition of adjacent 11x13 office) rent will be \$1240/mo.

Projections in the Conservative Budget projections are very conservative. They assume our growth rate slows compared to previous years despite increased space, Domyo dedicating herself to developing the sangha full time; it also assumes no significant increase in income from retreats, workshops, etc.

According to conservative projections, we may operate in the red for a couple years if we expand and take on a \$1240/mo rent, but have the money in the bank to cover that.

On the other hand, projections using the reasonable membership spreadsheet of 6 new members a year (spread through the donation levels) suggests we will be able to afford \$1500 a month rent as of 2018, and can start to substantially increase Domyo's income in 2020.

Proposed Expansion (floorplans attached), update on parking

Domyo presented two possible floor plans for an expansion of the space.

1. Add the floor space from one room by taking out the wall between the zendo and the office that is located next to the existing Sanzen/Library/Storage room. That would require additional insulation for the sanzen room for privacy.
2. Add the floor space from two rooms by taking out the wall between both spaces (the present sanzen room and the office located next to it) and between the zendo and the two spaces. The plan then would be to continue to use the small room outside the rest room for sanzen.

Discussion of Plans with Building Owner

Domyo has discussed a number of issues with the wife; she will discuss with her husband and they will need to look into the costs. There is the possibility that other tenants might be offered use of some of the space, so we need to proceed with due speed to avoid that.

1. Taking down the walls. They may be willing in both scenarios, depending on cost. Plan would be to do it "on the cheap" for now and not take out any existing

windows or doors. That would also mean that the carpet wouldn't be replaced at this time. We agreed that mismatching carpet doesn't seem to be an issue.

2. The possibility of using the large space between what would be the zendo and additional offices on the other side of the building for our tea cart and tea and cookie time. Owner's wife seemed okay with that.

The new owners have a number of plans for the building, all to make it more attractive to possible renters:

1. New heating system. Janna expressed concern about how long that is taking; Domyo responded that now the owners are waiting to hear our plan, as the details of the heating system depend on that. The system will be both heat and air conditioning.
2. Remodel the bathroom and furnace room area, which may yield an extra room where the existing furnace room is.
3. Their priority (planning to do a shelter of some kind) is to create a place to keep their trucks and equipment out of the rain.
4. They are highly likely to use the counter and offices behind it for their business.

Some discussion and questions ensued:

1. Janna asked if we have any control over how and when they will carry out the plans. Domyo said part of the issue is that they are waiting to hear from us. There is some concern about dirt and dust during the remodeling and how it might affect our activities. The landlord is planning for about a mid-April start.
2. Concerning the increased rent: there will be no rent increase until the heating system is in. And then, no rent increase for the larger space until we actually start using it.
3. Has the owner mentioned the value of the building, is there any idea of the wisdom of remodeling vs. demolishing the building and doing new construction. Domyo's guess is that since it's a small lot, new construction is probably not on the table. It's zoned as a commercial space. Bella did some looking around and thought the value was around \$375,000.
4. We will have a one-year lease, but they are willing to sign a longer lease.
5. The idea of lockers for personal belongings was floated, maybe in the tea alcove.

It was moved and seconded that we proceed with the larger, 2-room expansion. Domyo will proceed and provide updates.

A couple of other ideas were also brought up:

1. Jim wondered about setting up another New Home Fund. Domyo responded that it's her preference to do that as little as possible, and that it's not really needed yet.
2. Janna wondered about a larger sign and repositioning it. Domyo agreed we could use a new one, but it's not certain where it would be put. That can be discussed with the owners later.

Strategic Planning

Salary for Domyo long term: if all goes well, Domyo's husband John will work several more years, until age 70, before he retires. (This will increase his Social Security income.) Domyo estimates she will need to make \$35,000 a year once he retires. If Bright Way can pay a \$1000 a month housing allowance by then (\$12,000 a year), Domyo needs to make an additional \$23,000 somehow. Just for fun Domyo ran a spreadsheet to see how much income and how many members BWZ would need to give Domyo a \$12,000 a month housing allowance, \$23,000 salary, and \$500/month toward health insurance (also assuming a larger space for the Zen Center). The result: 110 members pledging an average of \$600/year (\$50/month) or 92 members pledging an average of \$720/year (\$60/month), for a total income around \$77,770. That's also assuming events would bring in 50-60 people, and projects actual membership of 60 by 2020. Increasing the number of sponsored activities is one possible way to increase income.

Respectfully Submitted

Lorna Simons
Secretary