

BRIGHT WAY ZEN BOARD MEETING

Minutes of Meeting of November 10, 2016

PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

Domyo Burk, Ellen Shoketsu Carlin, Bella Jhunjhunwalla, Jim Lewinson, Jeff Young, Lorna Simons, Janna Allgood.

The following are appended to these minutes: 1) Draft of notes on discussion at sangha member meeting of November 8, 2016; 2) Attendance report; 3) Notes from brainstorming on membership committee.

Meeting began with a short council process.

UPDATES

Member Meeting

The first ever general sangha member meeting was held on November 11, 2016 at the zendo after a potluck. Some 12 or 13 members attended. Thomas Bruner of [Bruner Strategies](#), who has been involved in the vision/mission process at Dharma Rain and at other non-profits as well, led a facilitated discussion that was thought-provoking and informative. He was given a \$50 honorarium. Members participated actively in the discussion. In the second half of the meeting, various board members gave reports on the budget, membership, and other topics.

Update on the building and lease agreement

HVAC is currently being installed just in the BWZ central space (zendo); mechanical today, electrical tomorrow, plan is to fire it up on Monday November 14. The lease agreement has been drafted and revised after review by our attorney. However, the owners have said they prefer not to sign it until the HVAC system is in. Domyo will follow up with them. In the end, the lease may need some changes.

The owners are proposing a one year lease and we would prefer two years. The owners have indicated that they are thinking about trying for some more income and renting out the other rooms. We have asked them to give us first refusal if they are looking to rent out more space. BWZ getting 501c3 status might help, since that will provide some tax relief to the owners. There may be some additional remodeling, but the owners have said they have no plans for big use changes or selling.

Domyo sent a letter to the Korean Baptist church next door about possibly using their small gravel lot for overflow parking. She never got a response, but knocked on the door a few weeks later. Turns out they have a new pastor and the letter was addressed to the old one, so no one read the letter. At this point we are parking along Stark street, which is public property, so we

don't need the church's lot. However, Janna suggested the possibility of inviting members of the church to a potluck just to established a connection.

Domyo's Employment Agreement

The final version approved by the board was signed by Domyo and Jim (as board president) on September 20, 2016, and is in Domyo's BWZ files at home.

Insurance

There is now secondary insured coverage for Domyo's home office, and \$500,000 of Directors and Officers insurance has been added.

Dharma Studies Class

The class has been discontinued – low attendance, primarily (2-4 people on average). Domyo noted that it often takes 8 hours to prepare for the class, which seems like too much time given the demand. There was a suggestion that in the future, people interested in studying might divide up topics and research them, and then lead the classes themselves.

Status of 501c3 Application

Ellen has completed the financials that are required. We got a copy of the Hood River application for reference. Bella and Ellen will continue the preparations. This will affect the lease, as mentioned above, so might help in those negotiations. Also, our PayPal expenses will go down.

Attendance Report (handout attached for reference)

Domyo's impression is that Tuesday night is growing steadily, and Sunday is growing a bit. There are now 40 pledging members; since the last Board meeting, we've lost one donor-only member and two members who were with us only for a short time and have let their PayPal donations lapse. We've gained three. Altogether, the three new members are pledging more than the members who left.

Shoketsu handed out an attendance report that provided averages, daily totals, and totals by month.

Financial Report

Domyo wasn't able to prepare the financial report in time for the meeting, but she will work on it and get it out sometime soon.

A question was asked about a budget for 2017. There will probably be a lot of changes, and it will be proposed at the January Board meeting, along with finals for all of 2016. By that time, we should have resolution of the various space issues.

Shoketsu is now able to log in to our Quickbooks account so Domyo isn't the only one aware of finances. A decision was made for Domyo to forward pdf's of our monthly bank statements to Shoketsu to review as Treasurer.

NEW BUSINESS

Setting Up a Google Group Listserv for the whole sangha

Purpose: community-building and promoting communication. It would allow for discussion threads. Need to find out how to opt in or if people can be added manually. We could send an invitation to join based on the e-mail list. Domyo or Jeff will do this.

Research into Hiring a Bookkeeper

Some questions to consider:

How much would they charge? About \$75 per month.

How much work would be involved? Probably about 1.5 hours per month

Bella will check with a friend who might be interested. Lorna will check with a family member who might know someone. Jim also has someone he could ask. We could also put a note in our newsletter, adding a corner for what the sangha needs at the moment.

Holiday Card for 2016

Needs a design, maybe could do on Vistaprint. Ellen can do it in collaboration with Domyo.

Volunteer Skills Survey

Draft sent to Board (attached for reference). Board agreed that it looks good. How to distribute? The survey is a Google form, and we could send a link in a special email; Domyo will work on that.

Report from Membership Committee by Janna

(Draft of discussion attached for reference. Added information from discussion shown below.)

Suggested that the Membership Committee be kept small: Janna, Bella, and 1 more. So moved, seconded and approved. Domyo suggested reviewing the current membership list to see if we could get a male member involved.

Some suggestions for activities to increase membership:

1. Some kind of written statement about membership and response if interested; that could go in the holiday card or letter, Janna could help with the content.

2. Designated individuals could initiate conversation with individuals who have been coming for a while, starting with asking how they like coming, are they getting what they wanted to out of it, mention being a member and what they feel the benefits are. Emphasis on a simple conversation, some time toward the end of the year.
3. The newsletter could also include an article about membership.
4. Suggestions for existing members to consider raising their donations.
5. Updates on Membership Committee activities could be provided on the BWZ Board email group.

Proposed Sangha Harmony Committee

Domyo proposes that we start thinking about forming a committee and a process in order to be proactive about building and maintaining harmony and communication within the sangha. This will be especially important when friction inevitably, eventually, arises. Regular, established council processes would provide a safe and structured way to share without judgment or interruption. Domyo feels it's critical that those in positions of authority (such as her) would need to agree to attend the council process, where the structure would be horizontal for all, so people could speak to authority on equal terms. It would not be solution oriented, it would just be a place to have concerns and issues be heard. It would serve as a place to speak one's truth.

Council circle might need to be regular but optional with all invited to do the process, then special meetings could be scheduled if needed. (Perhaps it could be substituted for dharma studies once a month.) It could also be convened around an event, like an election, could work in some small ways before it tackled larger issues. Marcia and Frankie have expressed interest in helping the sangha out in some creative way and may be willing to help with this.

Add Ability to Elect a Board Member Who Isn't an Invested Member

This concern was raised by a member. The limitation to invested members (people who have taken Jukai) can mean the relationships among Board members are too close and it could lead to insularity. Need to find a way to address this. No motions or decisions were made.

Visioning Process and Board Retreat

Lorna made a brief presentation based on some initial research, which only served to introduce the topic. She was asked to do more detailed research and make a presentation at a Board meeting in January with a view toward doing a half-day retreat on vision/mission in February. Domyo will do a poll for dates for such a half-day session on a Saturday.

The takeaways from this initial information:

1. Domyo's questions:
 - a. Are there times when it's too soon to do a visioning process? Lorna's impression was that there isn't, and the presentation at the sangha meeting seemed to support that. Also, it appears that a vision/mission is a living, changing thing, but is useful for focusing energy and resources.

- b. How far out should we imagine ourselves? Maybe 5-10 years? But need to revisit at least annually to make sure vision/mission is still alive and on-target?
- c. Are there ways to keep it relatively simple? Current information doesn't really address that.
- d. Any pointers/guidelines/potential pitfalls for groups doing this for the first time? Lorna's impression on pitfalls: getting too tied up in details and trying to solve problems. Maybe making the vision too broad?

Discussion:

Janna questioned where we want to go with this process and are we all signed on? She thought the process would focus more on questions like how big we want to be, when will we need a new space, where will the money come from. Others noted that is more strategic planning, which could feed into the vision/mission.

Lorna will do some more detailed research on this; there are also some people she can consult that might know more. If we decide to do a visioning meeting, it would probably be in February and would involve the Board, invested members and also some who are not invested.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorna Simons
Secretary