

BRIGHT WAY ZEN BOARD

Minutes of Meeting of February 2, 2017

Called to order at 6:29 p.m.

PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

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

Absent: Bella Jhunhunwalla

The following are appended to these minutes: 1) Updated financial report, actual 2016 and projected for 2017; 2) Information on strategic planning and vision prepared by Lorna.

The meeting began with 5 minutes of zazen and a brief council process.

OLD BUSINESS

The meeting minutes from the Board meeting of November 10, 2016 were approved as amended.

Building Lease

A 2-year lease agreement was signed on January 1, 2017, and the HVAC in the zendo has been installed. The rent amount is higher than originally planned, largely because of the larger space and use of the extra room. It will be \$1,375/month in 2017 and increase to \$1,500/month in 2018. Rent covers utilities at this point, although the lease agreement gives the owners an option to charge for that if costs get prohibitive.

Volunteer Bookkeeper

Bella introduced a friend who is a tax accountant, Shubha Joshi. Domyo met with her in January, and she will begin starting with January 2017 financials. Domyo will annotate a bank statement for Shubha and send her all necessary information on transactions; Shubha will have access to Quickbooks but not to our bank account or paypal account. Domyo will cc the annotated bank statement to Shoketsu for review as treasurer.

Holiday Card

This was sent to 65 people, and included a suggestion about increasing their level of membership support. Four or five people did so, and there was also \$1,370 in year-end donations.

Membership Committee

No new activity to report. There are only a few people currently on the committee, it was suggested it would be ideal to keep the group small. There was some discussion as to how we want to do membership-focused activities.

- Better to depend on attraction, not promotion, on doing the right thing for BWZ. How one donates is very personal.

- Should mention membership in the sangha from time to time.
- Add a “guest master” position to the regular task roster? They could note new members and serve as a greeter, check in during tea time by circulating and talking to people, and offer to serve as a specific contact point for questions. They might ask how the process went – kinhin, meditation, and tell them about the email list. They could also follow up with people who have been attending for a while.
- A revised brochure could be designed to give them that mentioned information about membership.
- Income and contributions could also be mentioned in the newsletter, perhaps quarterly.
- If someone doesn’t come in for a while – they could be emailed, ask how it’s going, are they thinking of membership – we could reach out to a few specific people.
- Also, everybody in the sangha could make a real effort to talk to new people.

Strategic Planning/Mission and Vision Report

Presented by Lorna

(Notes on research attached as part of these minutes.)

I suggest that we base our Strategic Planning (SP) retreat in March on the method outlined by Mr. Brick. It seems both comprehensive (the “thinking questions”) and focused (3 goals and associated strategies).

1. If we try to cover too much ground in our first-ever SP, we risk our ability to focus our efforts and could decrease our effectiveness.

It may be sort of “putting the cart before the horse” to devote most of our March retreat to the issue of a new space. Thinking of what Thomas Bruner said about keeping the mission/purpose at the forefront and making our SP subservient to that vision.

Also thinking of my discussion with Mr. Brick, where it seemed to me that there our main issues certainly include space, along with finances and the spiritual services we provide. In this approach, we could define those after the “thinking questions,” which would help us get a clearer vision of where we see the organization being in 5 years (3 years after the end of our current lease); what we see as aiding (strengths/opportunities) and hindering (weaknesses/obstructions); and what ideas will define our organization in 5 years.

We could also keep in mind a sort of “feedback loop”—once we come up with goals and strategies (capstone technique), doing a re-check to make sure they lead to us doing that or something else.

We could also discuss the important concept of buy-in from the sangha as a whole into the SP/mission/vision, I’m not sure how that would look.

Some discussion ensued.

- May need to also envision longer-term mission; in a sense, the SP/vision needs to transcend any timelines.

- Who will meet to consider it? Initially, the Board, to draft it, then maybe get the sangha involved somehow.

It was suggested that Lorna plan the agenda for the retreat, including lunch – we'll meet at the zendo and use Mr. Brick's framework. She agreed to send out a draft agenda by March 1.

Domyo also noted that Lorna should refer to the organization purposes discussed in the membership meeting, as well as the front page of the website and the BWZ mission that's in the bylaws.

Starting a Political Action Group in the Sangha

Domyo noted that the idea of starting such a group was brought up at the Tuesday meeting and there was interest. Lively discussion followed. Topics:

- Forming such a group might be tricky, since there are differing views within the Sangha on appropriateness of political action being discussed actively in this venue.
- Importance of practice as a tool for communication and relationship with those who have different views.
- Most people on the board said they preferred not to include politics in the Zendo, but also want to see as a place where people can bring their burdens and help them learn how to deal with them.
- Yet, also don't want to be isolated from reality.
- Specific issues can polarize, but Trump may be an exception?
- Many people want this place to be a sanctuary. On the other hand, there are people being targeted, people want to act, it makes them not want to come here.

We ran out of time and agreed that this might be worth further discussion at a later date.

Inclusion of Board Members Who Are Not Members of the Sangha

This discussion was tabled due to lack of time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorna Simons
Secretary