

Bright Way Zen, Second Annual Members Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2017, 7:45-9pm

There were 21 people present, including six board members who included Domyo, Jana, Jim, Jeff, Shoketsu and Zack.

Janna opened the meeting, stating that each board member would talk about a different topic and there would be time for questions and/or discussion at the end.

Jeff began with an organizational summary which included an outline Domyo's lineage and a history of Bright Way. Domyo began her studies at Dharma Rain in 1996 and was ordained in 2001. She spent seven years in monastic training and received Transmission in October 2010. Bright Way Zen was started in 2008 as Westside Zen. In 2011 it was incorporated as Bright Way Zen. The first retreat was held in February 2012, the first Jukai ceremony was held in May 2012 and the first Board meeting was in October 2012. Bright Way moved to the present location in February 2013. This space was enlarged in 2016. In 2017, Bright Way was approved for 501C3 status and held its first sesshin.

Shoketsu gave a summary of the history of the membership at Bright Way. She started with outlining the benefits of becoming a member, which include: belonging to a sangha (the third treasure), the opportunity to have visibility and voice, the opportunity to provide financial and organization support to an organization and to Domyo and to participate in growth and planning. The history of membership growth at Bright Way is as follows:

2012 – first started formal membership with 15 members

Late fall of 2015 – membership was 21

Late fall of 2017 – membership is currently 50

Jim shared information about the history of attendance at Bright Way.

2012 – Tuesday night – 8-12 attendees, avg. of 10

2015 – Tuesday night – avg. 16 attendees, Sunday – avg. 12 (in smaller space)

2017 – Tuesday night – avg. 16-17, Sunday – avg. 16, Saturday – avg. 6 (space enlarged)

There was some discussion at the end regarding whether or not the facility size limited the number of attendees.

Zack shared the highlights of the results of the recent survey. He presented a summary of responses from 40 people, all of whom were participants but not necessarily members. (Total responses on the survey was 54, including some people who follow BWZ from afar.)

The things that were most valuable and created the most engagement were: Domyo (our teacher), Zazen, discussion groups, a welcoming place of safety, Dharma talks and friendship.

The things that prevented more participation included: other commitments, rituals and the fact that Bright Way is not very diverse.

Suggestions for change in the future included: more social events, a more welcoming newcomer experience and gender awareness. Of note was the item with the highest interest, which was long-term stability. This also received the most interest of people indicating a willingness to help make this happen.

Domyo shared further thoughts and information gleaned from the survey, in particular looking to the future. The things Bright Way should keep are: zazen, blog posts, sesshin, guest master position and a culture of welcoming people. In defining priorities for change, these are the areas she identified as possibilities: planning for long term stability, more dharma talks, more guest teachers, more variety in discussion, an intro class for beginners. Sangha members other than Domyo may also want to organize things like mindful movement classes, offering a refuge recovery group, and more opportunities to connect socially.

Domyo also shared financial information. The current bank balance is \$9,500. Rent is \$1,375 per month, increasing to \$1,500 in 2018. Historically:

2012 - \$6,000 came in, \$3,800 was spent

2015 - \$19,000 came in, \$15,000 was spent

2017 - \$27,000 came in, \$27,000 was spent

2017 - \$31,000 came in, \$31,000 was spent

Expenses include rent, Domyo's stipend, advertising, website, supplies, online programs and paypal fees.

Janna wrapped up the presentations by talking about the strategic planning that the Board has done and tying that in with promoting stability. The Board held their first all-day strategic planning session in 2017 with the goals of creating a vision for the future, drafting a Mission Statement and drafting a Vision Statement. She shared the Mission Statement that was drafted,

explaining that it has not been formally adopted at this point. Jana talked about two issues with regard to long term planning, which included the facility and our teacher. She focused mainly on the idea of having a succession plan for Domyo. One of the things she mentioned was giving Domyo a livable salary and possibly medical benefits. We are lucky to have Domyo and we should be planning to support her in this way. At the same time, if something happened to Domyo, this would put us in a position to choose a new teacher, rather than have to settle for someone who did not need full financial support.

With our current membership, a budget of \$31,000 and 50 members, that averages \$47 per month for members. One (very rough) estimate is that, in order to give Domyo a livable salary, we would need about 100 members giving an average of \$50/month.

At this point, there was general discussion and on brainstorming about how to achieve these goals.