

Clouds in Water  
Board Meeting Minutes  
October 11, 2015

Present:

Carol Iwata, Chair  
Rachel Vilsack, Vice Chair  
Sam Murphy, Treasurer  
Roger Watts, Secretary  
Sosan Teresa Flynn, Guiding Teacher  
Katheleen Avila  
Jay Benson  
Wally Waranka  
Carla Breunig

- I. Teacher Ryo Report
  - a. There is activity involving youth and families every Sunday
  - b. Appendix A: “2016 Draft Program Plan” below
    - i. Sosan notes the plan is open to change
    - ii. Sosan reviews each of the items in the plan and there is general discussion.
- II. Reflection – Roger on “The Wisdom of Solitude” by Bo Yon
- III. Election of new members:
  - a. Nominations for Chair
    - i. Carol is nominated (Sosan 1<sup>st</sup>/Rachel 2<sup>nd</sup>) and accepts
    - ii. Vote: Unanimously approved
  - b. Nominations for Vice Chair
    - i. Rachel is nominated and accepts
    - . Vote: Unanimously approved
      1. Discussion: The idea has been brought up in the past that the Vice Chair might automatically move up to become Chair as a matter of policy. The general consensus is that this should not be adopted and the matter is discarded.
  - c. Nominations for Treasurer
    - i. Discussion: Carla talks about her term as treasurer.
    - ii. Sam is nominated (Sosan 1<sup>st</sup>/Jay 2<sup>nd</sup>)
      1. Discussion: Members discuss having Sam take the position on now even though he is new. Sam has extensive experience with both CIW and with financial matters, and has served as a financial advisor before. There is a discussion of the budget and the finances and how important it is at this point in time for CIW to

have someone understand it well. Members are satisfied with the approach.

2. Vote: Unanimously approved

iii. Carla agrees to work with Sam on the finances to provide transition and consultation when needed

d. Nomination for Secretary

i. Roger nominated (Katheleen 1<sup>st</sup>/Rachel 2<sup>nd</sup>) and accepts

ii. Vote: Unanimously approved

1. Discussion: Board thinks that minutes ought to be posted by Liliane in newsletter after they are approved. Secretary is to send her the August 2015 minutes as a document and ask her to make it a pdf and put on the CIW website (a place that will be worked out among Sosan, Will and Liliane).

IV. Engagement with Sangha - Rachel

a. Appendix B: "Connecting with the Sangha" below

b. Link to Google Docs will be sent to me by Sosan

c. Discussion:

i. Carol - We ought to have a board member as a greeter once or twice each month. It is great opportunity to meet new members and encourage their involvement with CIW.

1. Members who want to do this can contact Carla who will put the names on the greeter schedule.

2. Jay - There might be a door greeter and also another greeter to take care of the details of the greeting.

3. Wally - it is important that the greeter hand off the new person to another board member right away to deepen the experience of the welcoming to CIW

ii. Rachel - will work on board announcements in weekly Sangha news

iii. Carla - We can put minutes on CIW website at "Board of Directors" page under "About Us"

iv. Jay - We need to develop a specific way to talk about dana and have prioritized list of things the dana would be used for. This needs to be linked to Sunday service. Jay and Carla will work on the language of this and ensure it is coordinated with the work Will does on finances. They will also work on what specific things people will provide when they contribute dana to at CIW.

V. Feedback from annual meeting (Rachel)

a. Appendix C: "Comments from Community Conversations at Annual Meeting" below

b. Discussion: (Carol - "What do we do next?")

i. Carol - There were important conversations at the annual meeting and people valued the meeting

- ii. Rachel - These conversations were how community comes together. Comments were specific about actions community feels are board's responsibilities.
- iii. Carla - General feeling of saying goodbye to Prince St, getting used to new space, some expressions of grief for what was left behind, and some discussion that board is being tested with classes, programming, attendance. Community wants to know if CIW will work well in the new space.
- iv. Katheleen - Each person has his or her own view about specific concerns.
- v. Carol - Want to find a way to communicate to community that there are important things to provide, and that we need contributions and resources to make them work.
- vi. Wally - He heard at his table that people sometimes offer to volunteer but no one gets back to them. Do we need a volunteer coordinator?
- vii. Sosan - The discussion was energizing and there were many people who were engaged in conversation.
- viii. Rachel - Karin should share in some of the comments about racial and social justice.
- ix. Carol - More information ought to be available about costs, budgets and plans for CIW Sangha community to know about.
- x. Carla - We need to better communicate why we are choosing to put programming on line so that the case is better laid out why we want to do it.
- xi. Sosan - We ought to complete the feedback loop by letting the CIW Sangha community know that we heard them and we have a plan to address these items.
- c. Rachel and Carol will come up with some response to the CIW Sangha community to be placed in the newsletter.

VI. Close

### **Appendix A: 2016 Draft Program Plan for Clouds in Water Zen Center**

January:

- New Year's Family Night. (Fish)
- Intention & Vow Workshop (Byakuren)
- Intro to sesshin/one day sesshin (Sosan)
- Four Foundations of Mindfulness Class (Sosan or Ken?)
- Mindful Parenting (esp. re: technology) four sessions once per month  
Jan April? (Diane Benjamin?)
- Weekly Study group ongoing (Byakuren)

February:

- LovingKindness Sesshin (Sosan)
- Winter Class: Nonviolent Communication ( Kyoku)
- Mindful Morning
- Sunday talk + council on Aging (Byakuren)

March:

- 12Step & Buddhism retreat. (Byakuren) Will to check about online
- Intro to Sesshin/One day sesshin (Sosan)
- Practice Period (include centerbased)
- Spring Class: (Kyoku's idea: Shantideva, Genjokoan or koan study?)
- Calligraphy workshop with Val S.

April

- Larry Ward & Peggy Rowe: April 8 10.
- Mindful Morning
- ChiSing as Sunday speaker + something with kids?
- weekend sesshin

May

- Rita Gross as guest speaker? How Clinging to Gender Identity Subverts Enlightenment

June

- Hokyoji Sesshin one week (Byakuren)

July

- Intro to Sesshin/one day sesshin
- Summer Class: \_\_\_\_\_

August

- Halfday sesshin? or one day?
- Summer rest period September
- Practice Period
- Tonglen and Lojong workshop (Byakuren)
- Intro to Sesshin as part of weekend sesshin OR Hokyoji sesshin?
- 4 Noble Truths class
- Dharma Action/Engaged Buddhism class with GD

October:

- 12Step & Buddhism workshop (Byakuren)
- Repentance class (for jukai prep)
- Longer sesshin, if we don't do Hokyoji in Sept?
- Mindful Morning

November

- Preparing for death workshop our own and others (Sosan)
- Intro to Sesshin + one day sesshin
- Bearing Witness retreat or maybe this takes the place of sesshin in November
- Shuso ceremony for GD December
- Rohatsu Sesshin do we want to continue to co-lead sesshins with CODC?
- Intro to Sesshin/one day sesshin • winter rest period

## **Appendix B: Connecting with the Sangha**

Recognizing board service as a spiritual practice and the importance of our contributions to the life of the sangha, we adopt the intention to actively sustain and grow our relationships with the community, including participating in greeting, one-on-one conversations, Sunday announcements, and other opportunities that may arise.

The Board is currently engaged in...

- Identifying Board members with a different color name tag
- Board announcements in the monthly Sunday bulletin
- Some Board members are signing up as Sunday greeters
- One-on-one conversations (as they arise)

The Board could also consider...

- Announcements on Sunday (i.e. general Board updates, messaging on dana)
- Select one or more Sundays a month for Board member to serve as greeter (i.e. first Sunday of month)
- “Meet a Board member” after Sunday service
- Board announcements in the weekly Sangha News email
- Targeted follow-up conversations with capital campaign donors

## **Appendix C: Comments from Community Conversations at Annual Meeting**

### **Finances**

- Question: Is there reason to be concerned about deficit status? General discussion of deficit reported by Executive Director. Emphasis placed on the cyclical nature of funds arriving at Clouds in Water from members annually. Impact of capital campaign also addressed.
- Why not offer a flat fee to access all programs/services in given month/year? I observe other organizations (yoga centers, as example) that do this.

### **Youth Practice**

- Question about finances and the building: this member expressed a fear about whether our new building would be conducive for youth practice. At Prince Street, there was a feeling of calm. Now sometimes a crazy feel. It will take time to overcome this fear. Some adults complain of noise: will it remain an issue? This individual heard that others expressed concern that the children were singing too loud, were they welcome in the building, take the children outside to play further away from the building, etc. Another individual commented that there needs to be education to the broader sangha about Youth Practice: they are children and can be noisy! It is a conversation that needs to be had. Perhaps it was clumsily handled initially. One individual feels that we will be able to work this out eventually. We have “growing pains” and things are settling in now.
- The group agreed that Clouds family practice is astounding! Similar to good Youth Practices like Berkeley and Ann Arbor. So happy that Clouds emphasizes family practice. We discussed how in Japan, Temple life can be cuckoo: wild and crazy with kids. Not always the quiet, solemn place that we Westerners think. This group is glad that when young people (mid 20's and 30's) get married/partnered, form a family and begin having children, they don't have to “disappear: adults and children are all welcome. We had a big group today in YP: 19 children in the junior high group, and about 45 children total (not including teens).

### **Online Programming**

- One person asked: why online programming? What was the board thinking there? This person asked: is it about asking for money? Was concerned that we NOT try to strive to be like SF Zen Center (putting lots of money into developing online programming).
- Another person said that she listens to media on dharmaseed.com. This always starts with: will you donate? She likes Clouds because it is small. Another person commented, yes, we like small, but to have staff and paid teachers and a building, one needs a certain size to support these.
- Another comment: we can be small, medium or large – the goal is to be attentive to the sangha and sangha needs.
- One individual likes to listen to Clouds dharma talks online: while she is doing dishes, while she is driving to work, etc. This is especially great if she cannot get to Sunday morning program.
- One person would definitely pay for an online class (such as the 6 ancestor class): she works full-time and simply cannot get there after working her job. Needs to get home and take care of her child.
- Excited about the addition of on-line programming idea.
- Offered the idea of Clouds trying to use some community access TV studio for our online classes. She described that we could set up a ‘fake Zendo’ and record the classes there. (Recorders note: I felt the value was that Clouds would not have to buy video and audio recording equipment.)

- Members would like to see on-line programming support them, and others like them, the six months of the year they are not in the Twin Cities.
- Member thinks the ideas of on-line programming, community and classes are great. He emphasized that it is also very important to be a 'real physical community.'
- Member comment that it is important for us to know what our intent is when we put something online. Meaning – the content is about acquainting non-Buddhists with language or practices, offering specific teachings, or trying to generate revenue.
- Appreciate online class options; for people who travel for work this is helpful.

### **Buddhists for Racial Justice Efforts**

- Member expressed concern about the 'non-inclusive' language in the Buddhists for Racial Justice literature. She said she had the intention to volunteer for the group we are organizing. Now because of the language she is holding back.
- Subject Buddhists for Racial Justice. Member expressed that this area is of vital concern to him and he wants Clouds to be conducting conversations and education in this area. He has participated in some (2 or more) education/lectures at Common Ground. He thought these events were very well done. He wants to see Clouds be a leader in education. He wants to see the teachers and other leaders at Clouds support and promote racial justice.
- There was some back and forth discussion about working with Common Ground on coordinating efforts in this area. Sosan outlined Clouds' spring event with Larry Ward. Member commented that we should let SPIN know about the Larry Ward event.
- When ask who we should be educating about racial justice, a member replied primarily teaching our community to benefit us; we are then more aware and sensitive in 'the world'.
- Member said we should ask community members to recommend book or film that is potent on the subject of racial justice and read/view together as a touchstone for racial justice conversations.

### **Board of Directors**

- Members want to have access to Board Minutes; members want there to be a Board Minutes link in newsletter for access to Google Docs.

### **Staff/Teacher Ryo**

- There was a statement about the continuity of leadership available on Sunday; it is easier to build relationships (and warmth created) by seeing the same teachers on Sunday, not necessarily as speakers, but their presence at the Sunday service.
- Do we need a volunteer coordinator? General discussion that a Volunteer Director would help to consolidate volunteer activities. Mention made that

this function now taken care of by existing part-time staff. Agreement that question will be raised at next Board meeting.

### **General Comments about Clouds**

- The weekly sangha newsletter is great; it helps me stay connected to the community.
- Our Buddhist practice is reflected in the larger society. As a sangha member, this person is already doing community work in her own life: work life, social life, in her neighborhood. She hopes that our sangha can support us in carrying our practice into our own work and neighborhood life. Because many of us do not live in this neighborhood, we need to practice it in the geographic areas where we already are. We recognize collectively what we bring to our own communities (not us vs. them – our practice stresses interrelationship).
- On the subject of bringing in new people or making it easier when they come in our front door: “In our Sunday Morning service (and other times) we should ‘de-code’ the ‘Buddhist language’ to include new comers. This was partially directed at something Sosan had said during the service. Sosan said she is practicing translating these words for people when she speaks. Sosan invited others to call out ‘and what does that word mean...’ if she does not translate.
- Could we be more environmentally friendly and not use plastic bottles for water at Clouds in Water events?
- I miss the couches/seating area at Prince Street; for people who travel a further distance to get to Clouds and arrive early/or stay later there is no comfortable place to sit/rest.
- I miss some of the neighborhood features of the Prince Street location, like coffee shop and farmer's market.