

## **MINUTES: BOARD MEETING**

April 15, 2012

11:00am

Attending: Carla Breunig, Sosan Theresa Flynn, Amy Kirkpatrick, Nathan Thompson, Carol Iwata, Angus MacDonald, Rachel Vilsack

Absent: Karin Aguilar-San Juan, Byakuren Judith Ragir, Elizabeth Wroblewski

Nathan called the meeting to order

### **AGENDA**

#### **I. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHECK IN**

Sosan reported that it's been wonderful working with Rachel Sear on the spring appeal. They are printing letters and they will go in the mail tomorrow. Rachel is organizing the mailing. It will be a focused mailing, sent to all members with some activity on their account, and donors in last 3 years. About 400 households. Focus will be on raising money for youth practice.

Donors for the East Hall are still needed. Clouds has a new renter in East Hall, an artist who is paying month by month. She is renting the space 2 days a week at \$166/month.

Regarding the new duties and time with the shift in the Guiding Teacher role: It's going well. Sosan, Byakuren and Kyoku are meeting every week to check in. Hours summary: 28 hours Sosan, 10 hours Byakuren, Kyoku is an "enhanced Ino" with variable hours.

Sosan is practicing with "How do you decide what not to do?" The dharma of being present is also there.

Byakuren might take off a week per month. She may find it's an easier way to take breaks and hold to hours.

Nathan: There have been questions from long-time members about changes in the teacher role. Nathan wants to support the idea of consistency and cuing people into that. He is seeing some confusion on what is going on.

Sosan said that a good way to put it is that this is to help Byakuren – she wants to be able to stay. We are doing this so she can stay. And this will allow her to be able to practice in a deep way. People will see her do the talks and be here on a regular basis, this will alleviate some fears regarding the change.

#### **II. MARRIAGE AMENDMENT UPDATE**

Carol summarized what's happening at an organizational level for the cross-congregational "Greater St. Paul Interfaith for Justice" organization.

Activities at Clouds:

- April 1 talk by Byakuren (on website)
- Resource table after service staffed by Carla, Alan and Carol. April 22, May 6 and 13
- May 3, committee meets at Clouds. Everyone is invited.
  - Panel as service on May 13. Intro by Byakuren, Families will talk about how marriage equality will effect them.
  - Council will happen on June 17.
  - Reminder to vote will be sent in October.

18-20 congregations are represented in the organization.

May have info table at Clouds during the Art Crawl to pass out information and get volunteers.  
May 20: Minnesota United for All Families would like to have 200 house parties all over Minnesota. Carol, Carla and Alan will be planning a house party.

OutFront Website: Rebecca Pavlenko has volunteered to send info to the website on Clouds participation and that we are an affirming congregation. Board gave ok for Rebecca P. to send an email to OutFront.

### **III. SPACE**

Carla: Wanted to thank everyone for replying to the Ranking Space Preferences email.

Sosan: Maybe we need more time to prepare and get our teaching model in place before we engage in a new space campaign. While I'd like to have a different space that is not so limiting, it might be more prudent to sign a 2-3 year lease. And this allows more time for engaging the sangha.

Nathan: I agree with Sosan – we could consider looking at renewing the current lease, to keep us going for another 2-3 years. And if we're looking at moving, a shared space is very appealing. It affords new potential opportunities, and mitigates the funding issue. In that scenario, it would be important to have a designated space solely for the Zendo.

Sosan shared Fish's comment that this really needs to be something the whole sangha gets behind and that might be easier when we know what's happening around the neighborhood.

Nathan: We need to have enough time for people to get invested in the new space choice. The potential for "overwhelm" is pretty high. Making a decision this Sept. feels too quick. We are doing a lot of good work now to lay out the foundation.

Angus: There is something to be said for giving ourselves more time, but it's a thin line between that and kicking the can down the road. Talking about space was central to our annual meeting. We don't want to give the congregation a sense of "spinning our wheels." We need to tell people that there is a plan in place, talk up the process along with "here's how you can get involved."

And on the other side, there are advantages to moving quickly in this real estate market.

Carol: Ranking was interesting. Surprised by Shared Space being high on the list for many.

Carla: Consider sending a request for a "pre-pledge" (straw vote) to Sangha members. Then we could see what the congregation would see themselves giving. Then we could project some numbers.

Nathan: Gathering more info from the larger community might help us work with this more. Heard hesitancy about buying a building in our rankings.

Amy: To give the Sangha the "big picture," consider a visual timeline posted in Great Patience Hall. The timeline would include some details: where we are right now, what we are considering, help we need; plus a greater framework of overall timing. Dates could be organized by quarters of the year without getting too specific.

Carol: We should have a conversation with Compassionate Ocean and learn from their experience.

Sosan: Here's a quick summary: They bought the building and had a 1-year plan. Zoning issues came up which delayed construction for over a year. Renovation found major unexpected problems. A strong desire for high-quality work plays into the extended timeline. With the desire for quality and

little money the only variable is time. Now they are in the final push with another loan and more donations.

Carla: We know of a church with combined use. Don (one of the pastors) offered to meet with us about their model.

Rachel: Would like to see the combined church space.

Carla: is it premature to look at spaces?

Sosan: Might help people decide.

Rachel: Might be good to have a neutral broker acting on our behalf. It's important to have an agent.

Sosan: There is such a thing as a buyer's agent. You pay them by the month. That could make a lot of sense for us. But don't know if that's an option in Minnesota.

Carol: You really can't know what you want until you actually go looking.

Nathan: The July council meeting is about vision – the community vision as a whole. And having a team look at spaces might help people figure out things.

Carol: It would be good to have specific people with expertise looking at the sites.

Carla: In prep for July or Sept., can a team put together some financial models? We would need to pick square footage and mortgage options. And see what's available out there for how much.

Angus: An important goal of the July meeting will be recruitment. I'd suggest 8 people on the space committee: 2 people for each of 4 areas of exploration.

Carol: July meeting is very important but attendance might be low. We could have July's meeting be about how we see ourselves as a sangha -- and how that translates to the space we want. September would include financial scenarios.

Nathan: next step – gather a team to put July meeting together.

Meeting adjourned at 1:15pm

Submitted by: Amy Kirkpatrick

**NEXT MEETING:** May 20, 11:30 – 1:30

**UPCOMING COUNCIL:**

July 15, 10:45 Community on Vision and Space: The future of the sangha

