

**Clouds in Water Zen Center
October Board Meeting**

October 28, 2012 at 11:30 AM

Attending: Karin Aguilar-San Juan, Carla Breunig, Kurt Errickson, Sosan Theresa Flynn, Carol Iwata, Angus MacDonald, Nathan Thompson, Rachel Vilsack, Elizabeth Wroblewski

Absent: Byakuren Judith Ragir

Nathan called the meeting to order.

AGENDA

I. Nathan welcomed new Board member, Kurt Errickson.

II. Board Officers Elections

Nathan Thompson, elected Chair

Carol Iwata, elected Vice Chair

Carla Breunig, elected Treasurer

Kurt Errickson and Rachel Vilsack, elected co-Secretaries (with Carla Breunig as back-up)

III. Executive Director Check-In

Sosan acknowledged that she is still grieving and expressed that she feels there is a lot to do this fall with the fall appeal and membership appeal, but is optimistic about the donations and goals.

The goal for both the membership and fall appeals is to raise a total of \$70,000 by December 9. The word "raise" has a specific meaning here and refers to the aggregate of donations and pledges. That total will include fall appeal gifts and "Give to the Max" day donations, as well as membership donations and pledges. Last year, we raised a total of \$63,000 in new pledges and gifts by December 8 (\$6,000 in pledges and \$57,000 in gifts).

The \$70,000 goal for the membership and fall appeals is different from the overall budget goals for membership and appeals. The budget goals express the totals that we plan to actually receive during the year ending December 31, 2012. The budget goals do not include any pledges, but do include payments on prior pledges. Our budget goals are as follows: Membership: \$73,000 (as of Oct. 31, we've received \$43,350); Fall appeal: \$16,000. Last year by year-end we had received \$74,500 for membership and \$17,273 for fall appeal.

Since financial reports at the Annual Meeting were non-reconciled, Sosan provided an update: reconciled amount was \$300 better, and we are currently \$1,000 better than budget.

Sosan explained that membership pledges of \$30 a month or more would get a canvas bag with "Gratitude" calligraphy (by Byakuren), so that we can carry the message of gratitude wherever you go. Everyone who donates any amount will get a set of calligraphy cards, and for \$1,000 or more (in annual donations) will get a framed calligraphy print.

Sosan asked the Board to assist with phone calls to potential members and current members.

IV. Vision

Nathan's intention to help support these vision/space discussion is one of flexibility and non-panic. We are moving in the right direction, even if it doesn't feel that way all the time.

Carol has been working on a draft of a piece that contributes to our vision, in a way that allows us to work through the process to make it clear and understandable. The Board retreat (in January or February 2013) will be used to flesh out the vision.

Carol compiled the statements from the sangha's vision meeting, letters sent to the Board, and two house meetings, Annual Meeting, and 18 emailed responses from the community. Carol (in consultation with a consultant) found that many of the statements were in response to detailed questions and at a detailed level, and not at a higher vision level. Carol extracted some patterns for the draft vision document.

Summary of vision document:

The first page expands on what Nathan discussed at the Annual Meeting, and explains that a vision includes identifying beliefs, functions, and structure/forms (B, F, S). The B, F, S statements need to be flexible, or we get locked into them.

The second page identifies beliefs and values assumed or implied in the responses or are part of how we describe ourselves (website etc.). These are at a basic but high level, and are a statement of our values and beliefs as a community. These may seem obvious, but they might not be, nor are they unanimous.

Page three identifies the functions that come out of each belief. Carol has also raised questions for each function area. These questions make it clear that the values are not simple statements.

Nathan mentioned that the questions are great; they point to things that were somewhat confirmed in the data. They also keep the mission and vision alive as we work through different issues. The questions provide some tension; we can practice with these questions.

Elizabeth commented that she likes the question as they provide a critique of ourselves but they do seem similar to the questions we've already been asking. She would like to see a validation of process.

Nathan said we are getting more clarity, but there is, and should be, fluidity to this process.

Carol said that are some issues where there is not consensus in the sangha. We need to affirm what are our real values. For example, the value is that we see ourselves as a community. Now the question is what does that mean.

Page four identifies some structures that could follow from the functions. Space/location belongs to a more detailed level of structure.

Karin affirmed this process, saying this is a systematic representation of the questions that were asked and illuminate if we are going to affirm something about ourselves. Everyone needs to understand the questions behind the values.

Carla mentioned that reading this vision document reminded her of Fish's letter, and the inquiry into how are we going to carry out our mission in terms of function and structure. For example, when we present ourselves to a new member our mission might seem too big; what does it mean? How do we show how we fulfill the mission? (This stems from an "elevator speech" exercise, which was once discussed at the Board.)

Elizabeth noted that critiques are a roadmap. If these are our values, it supports our agenda as a Board, and helps us deepen and guide our discussions with the sangha. Vision is a focused aspiration; it's how we focus our mission.

The vision statements created during the 2012 Board retreat were mentioned. Carol and Nathan brought some next steps to the Board, but there seemed to be some roadblocks to implementing these steps. The Board had other pressing issues arise during this period, which made it difficult to stay focused at times. In addition, some of the vision statements created during the retreat were long-term in focus, such as the collaborate more with other Twin Cities' sanghas statement. As such, the steps for those statements were moved down on the priority scale as other issues arrived.

Karin mentioned that vision and space need to go together. Perhaps our mission statement of "awakening the heart of great wisdom and compassion" is not the mission statement we want. Does this cause confusion in the sangha? We need to be clear about a specific place/location to be in, because our mission isn't clear about it.

Sosan noted that our mission may instead be a tagline that is easy to understand (or not so easy in our case), but there is still a feeling that this resonates with people.

Angus added that a mission statement only works when it's simple. This process we are undertaking is deepening the mission.

[Nathan asked it to be noted that we pull up any notes/resources on the elevator speech discussion and notes from the 2012 retreat for review.]

Carol requested that we set-up a committee on vision mobilization with an outcome to have a complete draft of B, F, S for Board retreat. Activities will likely include interviewing teachers and using member responses to test the draft of our vision.

Next steps:

1. Action plans to sustain our vision (Spring 2013)
2. Draft two action plans: 1) Resource Plan covering development, volunteers, staff, (Spring/Summer 2013), and 2) Space Plan
3. Proposed Vision Committee members should include: 1) a Board member, as the committee chair, 2) Board chair (not to be committee chair), 3) any other interested Board members, 4) staff members, and 5) other select members of community (like lay training, Youth Practice participants, historical leaders, and those who interact with us in a non-traditional way).

Carol agreed to serve as the Chair of Vision Committee.

Angus mentioned that the committee should have a set number of members. Seven members, including Carol, Nathan and Karin (who expressed interest) were discussed. Carol will work with Nathan to fill committee, including adding a teacher (Ken, Fish or Kyoku) and another sangha member (Matt Edwards or Leonard Madsen were mentioned as possibilities).

V. Space Committee Check-In

Carla updated us on the meetings that Sosan and she participated in around the results of the parking survey or Northern Warehouse non-profits, which estimated that the number of parking spaces needed at any given time range from 65 to 194.

Carla and Sosan met with Dave Thune (Ward 2, St. Paul City Council Member). He was very attuned to the issues of businesses, organizations and others given the changes in Lowertown.

Sosan mentioned that parking on Prince Street will permanently be reduced due to the construction of a sidewalk. The street may be made into a one-way.

Carla and Sosan met with Ramsey County Commissioner Rafael Ortega and aide, Ken Iosso. They indicated that Ramsey County is trying to take a comprehensive view of parking. He didn't want to commit specifically to the needs of the Northern Warehouse tenants, but he felt there should be public parking available on Kellogg which is county-owned land. A study is being done by Tim (affiliated with the Union Depot) on public parking space in Lowertown, particularly south of Kellogg, and will be available in two to three weeks. Commissioner Ortega expressed the idea that there's going to be a new normal for Lowertown; we'll need to change our car commuting behaviors. He did acknowledge that Union Depot/Light Rail/Stadium are big issues for the Lowertown region. There was also discussion of tailgating (space/noise) and the cost of parking.

Sosan concluded that they shared with Commissioner Ortega that we are not against the stadium, but we are not sure if the Clouds in Water's vision supports us staying in Lowertown.

Carol mentioned that the more options the Space Committee can offer is better. The consultant mentioned that if you are clear on your vision with a few options on space then you can determine if space will stand in the way of your vision. If two options are close then the decision will likely be financial.

A question was raised: has there been discussion with Northern Warehouse of buying/renovating/renting our private bathroom space?

Carol said it is also important to question the assumption that we are the sole users of that space. Do the feasibility models change if we are sharing our space with another group(s)?

Sosan will have someone to look into the cost and effectiveness of soundproofing the wall (shared by Black Dog Cafe).

Elizabeth inquired that since we pay over \$5,000 a month in rent, could someone analyze how that could be viewed as monthly mortgage payment if we ever bought our own space.

Angus asked what is the optimum number of members needed for the Space Committee.

Carla estimated that a core group of five people. She mentioned the possibility of writing up a volunteer job description (key qualities: finances/spreadsheet, real estate, architect/scenario design) and announcing it on a Sunday morning or via newsletter.

A Space Committee goal would be to provide a financial feasibility model at the Board retreat in 2013.

VI. Miscellaneous Business

We set the next meeting for November 18. A December meeting may be needed if 2012 finance/budget needs to be reviewed.

A February date would work best for annual Board retreat. Sosan will set up a Doodle poll for Board meeting dates in 2013.

The Ethics and Reconciliation (EAR) committee would like to update the Board on their work.

Nathan called the meeting closed at 1:59 PM.