

Minutes of the MZMC Board Meeting

August 20, 2017

Board members present: Janet Brown, Wayne Moskowitz, Jim Niland, Mark Turbak, Randy Wedin

Board members absent: Rebekah Anderson, Janet Brown, Paul Gillsdorf

Staff members and priests present: Ann Baukele, Tim Burkett, Wanda Isle, Kimberly Johnson, Susan Nelson, Ted O’Toole, and Darla Rehorst

Other MZMC members present: Jim Foley, Pat Stahl

1. July Minutes

It was moved (Wayne) and seconded (Jim) that the minutes be approved. The minutes were amended and then approved unanimously. One change: Blank Friday will be in November 2017.

2. Disclose any Conflicts of Interest

None.

3. Building Discussion

The Board continued its discussion, begun at the last meeting, of Option 4 (Renovate current space, including porch and garage, with no change to footprint) and Option 5 (Consider/explore satellite locations).

The group discussed the issue of how to improve the existing sound system to provide better audibility for those with hearing difficulties and impairments, including those with profound hearing impairment. Jim Foley discussed several different approaches for improving access for the hearing impaired, including a “listening station” (radio transmitter with individual receivers) and a “looping” system (telecoils). The Board received a specific proposal for a looping system and discussed some of the pros and cons of the two approaches.

During the discussion, it was pointed out that audibility in the zendo is currently a significant problem; it can be spotty even for those who are not hearing impaired. There are also grounding issues with the building’s electrical system that will need further investigation, although there is not a safety issue at the present time. The issue of audibility should be considered as part of the renovation process, and it should take into account the need for improved microphone/speaker/video as the Zen Center explores the possibility of expanding use of podcasting and video.

Wayne proposed two next steps: reviving the Building Committee and hiring a building professional who would serve as general contractor and project manager. After discussion, it was moved (Wayne) and seconded (Mark) that the Building Committee be re-established. The motion passed unanimously. Several individuals expressed an interest in serving on the committee—Wayne, Ann, and Kim. Some individuals who were not present at the meeting, including Dave Walter, Paul Gilsdorf, and Janet Brown, will also be approached about their interest in serving on the committee.

Three individuals/organizations were mentioned as possibilities for the general contractor work—Firm Ground, Ron Forslin, and Dan Mulroonen (spelling?). The Board asked the Building Committee to meet with these potential general contractors and report back to the Board at its next meeting.

Karen Davis reported that a small group (herself, Tim, and Pat) had met with Cotty Lowry, a well-known local realtor, to discuss the value of the Zen Center building and property. He agreed to do some investigation and will consult with a colleague who has more relevant expertise. The Board of Directors and other meeting attendees then had a lengthy discussion regarding the establishment of a limit on how far we would proceed with any investigation of other properties. It was moved (Karen) and seconded (Randy) that Cotty Lowry be asked to finish (by the time of the next Board meeting) the work that had been discussed with him and to provide an estimate of current value of the property, which may include a market review of comparable properties.

Ted reported that the Leadership Group had discussed the satellite option, as outlined in the six-page vision document. He reported that the priests are open and excited, but cautious. In their discussion, the following points were expressed:

- This activity might “spread us too thin” and create more work for the administrative staff.
- Our current building should be fixed first.
- A satellite could result in an increase in sangha diversity (seen as a good thing).
- This activity should start small and grow organically.

At the present time, Bussho is exploring the idea of starting a sitting group in the southwest suburbs. Ted reported that he and Mark had spoken to a group in Buffalo, Minnesota, who may start a sitting group (not necessarily a “satellite” activity).

4. **Friend-making** – 20 minutes

The Membership Committee has lost two members who have taken on additional roles at MZMC. Randy will be inviting new volunteers to fill those spots, and Ted provided some recommendations on sangha members who might be good additions for the committee.

Pat reported that planning for the two Tea Ceremony events, to be held on September 17, is going well. He suggested that additional promotion would be helpful. Kim and Pat will send out a PDF flyer publicizing the event.

Tim and Wayne reported on planning for the Speaker Series. Plymouth Congregational Church is very interested in the idea, which will probably be a series of three events. They would like to

include the perspective of Islam, and Pat volunteered to reach out to the Bloomington mosque that recently experienced a bombing.

Kimberly reported on plans for involving Board members to serve as media contacts, thereby establishing more long-term relationships with members of the media. The first event for this promotion effort will be the October 20 full-day event, "Mindfulness at Work." Kimberly will send out emails that match up media contacts with Board members, and she will also send out a script to guide Board members in their outreach efforts.

5. Next Sangha Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for September 17.

6. Teacher Report

No report today.

7. Administrative Report

Kimberly distributed a budget update, showing year-to-date results through July. Overall, we are in very good shape so far this year. Three specific items were mentioned.

Fundraising revenue has significantly exceeded budget, because the June fundraising campaign exceeded budget (\$15,000), which was then matched by a \$15,000 matching contribution by an anonymous donor.

Retreat revenue is running behind budget. The biggest retreat, the Rohatsu Sesshin, will be held in December.

Advertising expenses are expected to exceed budget by several thousand dollars, because we have increased the distribution of the mailed newsletter.

8. New Business

No new business.

9. Adjourn

It was moved (Randy) and seconded (Wayne) to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed