

Minutes of the Zen Desert Sangha Board of Directors meeting

Saturday January 5, 2008

3226 N. Martin Avenue

(from notes by Martin Munro & Dan Dorsey)

1. ROLES AND PROCEDURES

1.1. ASSIGNMENT OF ROLES FOR THE NEW BOARD

This was the first meeting since the selection of new board members, so their roles had to be assigned or confirmed.

Some people had one year remaining of their two-year term: Joe Montani took on a new role as President; however Mike Bolton remained Member at Large, and Kim Howell continued as Treasurer, although she would attempt to train a successor over the coming year.

Board Member	Role	Term	Contact
Mike Bolton	Member at Large	1 year	(tel. 520 370 5246)
Dan Dorsey	Vice President	2 years	dorsey@dakotacom.net
Kim Howell	Treasurer	1 year	kklager@comcast.net
Patty Kelly	(Alternate)		irimi15@earthlink.net
Joe Montani	President	1 year	j_montani@msn.com
Martin Munro	Secretary	2 years	zen@delegation.org
Sue Weimer	(Alternate)		Seweimer@aol.com

1.2. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

There was some discussion of tightening up the procedures for Board meetings, and consensus that in the recent past these had been too long and inefficient. Some of the revised procedures had still to be defined in detail, but suggestions included the President publishing the meeting agenda well in advance (which the ZDS by-laws required in any case), pre-allocating discussion time to items and postponing discussions that ran over their allocation, the Secretary posting copies of the by-laws for general reference, and distributing copies of the minutes soon after each meeting. Some of the time-consuming discussions would be more appropriate within the various standing committees.

1.3. STANDING COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

1.3.1. Finance Committee

Composition: Kim Howell (as Treasurer).

Purpose: To manage the routine ZDS finances.

Remarks: By implication any trainee or alternate Treasurer would also be part of this committee.

1.3.2. INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Composition: Kim Howell, Dan Dorsey, Joe Montani.

Purpose: A finance sub-committee to guide the Treasurer in the best long-term investment strategy for money currently sitting in a low-interest checking account (currently over \$8000).

Remarks: This newly formed committee will meet during the next month, and will submit its recommendations to the Board.

1.3.3. Home Repair / Minor Improvement Committee

Composition: Mike Boulton, Kim Howell, Dan Dorsey.

Purpose: To maintain the 3226 N. Martin Avenue buildings, dealing with repairs and minor improvements (excluding any major capital projects).

Remarks: In practice some form of this committee has been very active over the past few years.

1.3.4. Grounds Committee

Composition: Kim Howell, Richard Park, Ying Lin.

Purpose: To maintain the 3226 N. Martin Avenue grounds, including any necessary watering, weeding, pruning and planting.

Remarks: At the moment this is not so much a formal committee as simply a description of people doing the work; however some closer communication might cut down on duplicated efforts.

1.3.5. Library Committee

Composition: Josie Ahumada de Savelli, Sue Weimer, Patty Kelley.

Purpose: To supervise loans of books and other materials from the library, and buy new books of interest to ZDS.

Remarks: Josie had just kindly volunteered to act as Librarian, and might need additional help; Sue Weimer & Patty Kelley will act as a library sub-committee with special responsibility for the teisho tape transfer project; the Treasurer handles periodical subscription payments.

1.3.6. Ritual Committee

Composition: (Currently inactive).

Purpose: To maintain the details of the sutra service and other rituals.

Remarks: This committee is needed for tasks such as drafting revised sutra books; it is unclear how much the training of people to fill the service positions (Jiki, Ino, and so on) falls under the system known as officer pools and how much requires this committee.

1.3.7. Sewing Committee

Composition: Patty Kelley, Kim Howell.

Purpose: Maintenance of the zafus and zabutons.

Remarks: Currently inactive, awaiting the next set of repairs.

1.3.8. Supplies Committee

Composition: Martin Munro, Sue Weimer.

Purpose: Replenishing the stores of routine household

supplies such as paper towels, soap, and toilet paper.
Remarks: Other people have been involved in buying supplies when they have run out.

1.3.9. Membership Committee

Composition: Bob Wallin, Jim D'Elia, Mary Adde, Martin Munro.

Purpose: To provide instruction and information to new and prospective ZDS members.

Remarks: The comprehensive orientations for newcomers Bob Wallin has been giving after some Saturday sittings are good examples of the kind of activity covered by this newly formed committee. It could also consider topics such as longer introductory classes and an improved information packet for beginners.

1.4. OTHER COORDINATORS

Some other functions involved only a single individual. Jim D'Elia would continue to be newsletter editor, and hoped to produce a new issue before too long. The Retreat Coordinator position was still vacant, and Martin (who had held it last) said that if there were no responses to the request for volunteers within the next few days it would pass to Bob Wallin by default; there was still no retreat schedule for 2008. Helen Amerongen was currently covering the Service and Work Coordinator position.

2. COMMITTEE REPORTS

2.1. FINANCE

2.1.1. Treasurer's Report

In her capacity as Treasurer, Kim distributed two financial summaries: a profit and loss comparison between the calendar years 2006 and 2007, and an annual balance summary at the end of 2007. The figures were skewed by paying off the mortgage in 2006, which made 2007 look bad by comparison, but when this was taken into account membership dues payments had increased from 2006 to 2007. The net income for 2007 was \$8357.35. There was a question about the item labelled "Special Projects", and Kim explained that the accounting software made it easy to track various distinct funds, including the Building and Education funds, but that some extra effort was involved each time a new fund was defined. So it was easier to set up a general-purpose special fund for one-off projects rather than defining a new fund for each project; the most recent use had been for the kitchen appliance purchases. Money in any of the funds counts as a liability---ZDS owes the money to itself---until it spent, and is then considered income. There is currently a substantial sum in the Education fund, but this reflects the generous donations from Larry Levine that support the Steve Hagen classes, and some of this may shortly be needed for buying class textbooks. Someone asked about asset tracking through the software (e.g., following the new stove from the time it was purchased), but Kim considered there were too few items to justify doing this.

2.1.2. Payment for Bike Racks

The purchase of bike racks was progressing, with a simple design approved and to be made shortly by BICAS. This was a good example of committee work: the Board had only to approve proposals that a sub-committee had already discussed.

2.1.3. Payments for Advertising

There was a brief discussion on how cost-effective the paid advertising was for bringing in new members. ZDS was running a short ad in the Daily Wildcat (the University of Arizona student paper), and paying \$220 per year to be listed in the directory sections of Shambhala Sun and BuddhaDharma as well as receiving the publications. A motion to pull the Daily Wildcat item entirely, and pay only the periodical subscriptions for Shambhala Sun and BuddhaDharma (without the directory listing) passed unanimously. Low-cost and free advertising (such as the Tucson Weekly's community pages) would continue.

2.1.4. Spending Budgets for Committees.

There was discussion of budgets allowing the various committees to buy things without waiting for Board approval, so they could respond rapidly to circumstances. This was close to the de facto arrangement, and might be mentioned in older minutes. There was consensus that the following limits were reasonable:

Library Committee (new materials): \$200

Home Improvement Committee: \$500

Grounds Committee: \$200

The Ritual Committee was not buying anything at present, and the current arrangements for rapid reimbursement of expenses receipts covered the others, such as the Supplies Committee.

3. NEW BUSINESS

3.1. YOGA CLASS

Joe proposed giving a yoga class lasting between one and two hours at some time before the Spring, preferably after the regular Saturday sit. The Board approved this unanimously, and asked Joe to propose a particular time (the initial suggestion was a Saturday early in February, subject to confirmation).

3.2. REGULAR TALKS

Dan suggested that some experienced sangha members could give talks after the sittings, for example after the Saturday sit, with the understanding that they were not acting as a teacher; discussions could follow the talks. The consensus was that this was a potentially useful idea, and that Dan should submit a more detailed proposal to a later meeting.

3.3. NEXT BOARD MEETING

Apart from the discussions involved in formalizing the sub-committee structure (see 1.3 above) there was no other business: the next board meeting was set for February 23 at the same time and place (the earliest date in February that everyone was available).