

THE NORTH CAROLINA ZEN CENTER

Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the Membership

Wednesday

May 27, 2015

7:00 pm - 9:00pm

NC Zen Center

NOTICE

Attendance:

Jason Dowdle	Judith Ferster	Tim Holmes
Leigh Hall	Dan Mackinnon	Ken Simon
Scott Durso	Frank Apodaca	Jim Cameron
Nora Haenn	Luis Melodelgado	Kim Young
Brad Paige	Matt Young	Barbara Gordon

Opening:

Jason Dowdle called the meeting to order at 7:08.

The agenda for the meeting was passed out, and reviewed.

Opening remarks from Jason included;

- Reiteration of a sense of a sense of loss as a result of the events of 2014-2015
- Appreciation for the people who have demonstrated their dedication to the center and its well being
- Observed that, despite the challenges of the last year, we (NCZC) are a wealthy group (no debt, beautiful center, and spacious property) with a lot of potential.
- Issued a challenge to the group to look to the future with hope, and envision what the center may become.
- Informed the membership that the Board was present primarily to listen and answer questions. He indicated that although it was unlikely that decisions would be made at this meeting, it would set the tone for carrying the center forward.

Business:

Question and answer session:

- Kim Young:
 - Q: Does the board have a plan for dealing with outlying discontent in the membership with regard to Sandy Stewart's resignation/termination
 - A (Jason): This has been an ongoing discussion within the board. The board wants to help the membership understand the events, actions, and words up to and including the decision to end the center's relationship with Sandy, but not at the expense of damaging his, or others reputations. To date, the board has worked to provide an accounting of these events in as non-judgmental and transparent fashion as possible. This document is available on the website, but will be made more easily accessible (recommendation from Nora). Additionally, members' emails are being personally answered.
 - There was a suggestion that this be a topic for the next Kaihan.
 - Jason empowered the group to answer any question directed at them from the membership.
- Kim Young:
 - Q: Should we have a person dedicated to rebuilding membership relationships
 - A: (Jason) The board will be forming a number of committees; each will include a board member. One such committee, focused on the membership, could take on this task. In addition, the board wishes to make enough information available for people to make up their own minds.
- Luis Melodelgado
 - "This is a new center now. We will lose people; we will gain new people. This is an opportunity for growth".
- Luis Melodelgado
 - Q: How will the center look and act with new membership
 - A: (Jason): Jason said that this is one of the agenda items - "What will the center look like in the future?"
 - A discussion took place regarding the means by which, and timing of bringing in new and guest speakers/teachers.
 - General agreement that we not rush to into seeking another teacher; rather, the center needs to build and nurture the Sangha, and it will attract teachers. Similar sentiments were voiced regarding an Executive Director.

- Nora felt that we need to build the organizational structure and resources to help expand the Sangha in an active fashion

Mission of the Center

- Nora introduced the first agenda topic - the mission of the NCZC
- Jason reminded the meeting attendees that the Center's Articles of Incorporation list the center as being Rinzai-ji, and asked the group if they wished to remain so aligned.
 - The group discussed the pros and cons of being a Rinzai center more generally (as opposed to the specific lineage associated with Rinzai-ji); salient points are:
 1. Ken: promoting the Center as strictly Rinzai limits potential for growth
 2. Kim: we are a group of practiced laypeople who come from a Rinzai tradition
 3. General concerns that moving away from Rinzai will dilute the Center's purpose and uniqueness.
 4. General agreement that the practices offered at the center be accessible to a wider community, not esoteric.
- The group discussed the purpose of the Center
 - There was extensive discussion, and general agreement was reached on two points
 5. The Center should be a place for laypersons to practice zen, rather than a place that concentrated on training specialists
 6. The center should offer its accommodations to monks and other practitioners who wish to carry out a more intensive practice through residence
- Financial discussion
 - Q: how are we going to attract donations
 - A: continue to build the practice and Sangha; conduct outreach and fundraising activities; hold retreats
- Ken Simon:
 - Offered that if the Center becomes compatible with the desires of the Downtown Dharma group in Pittsboro, he could propose that they rejoin the Center.

Closing:

Jason Dowdle made a motion to close the meeting; Scott Durso seconded the motion; the motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Scott Durso, Secretary



ACTION ITEMS

- (J. Dowdle): Increase the visibility of the historical accounting by Jason Dowdle
- (S. Durso) Include a link to the above historical accounting in these minutes.