

Santa Cruz Zen Center All Sangha Meeting

Saturday, Nov. 15, 2014

3:00 – 5:00 pm Zendo

(minutes approved, version 6)

Facilitator: Edie Brown, Board President

Intention: Read the Mission Statement

Practice Leaders Update for CY 2015 (Kokyo, Gene & Patrick)

Kokyo: Kokyo will be away for 2.5 months this winter-spring (Feb, March, & half of April), to be with his partner, Shoho Kuebast, who is studying in Nepal (personal time off, with and without pay, per Memorandum of Understanding). He feels it is a good time for him personally to reflect – he has been at SCZC for 5 years this fall. While away, he's planning to practice and start work on a book project that he has thought of for many years (on practice, rooted in Dogen's writings about ritual life). Gene and Patrick will co-lead the winter practice period, and this time away for Kokyo will allow for the temple and sangha to experience more of a shared leadership model.

Gene: Gene and Patrick will do the opening and closing winter practice period sesshins (& accompanying ceremonies); will cover noon and evening zazen, schedule all of the zendo roles & responsibilities, and take care of the newsletter.

Patrick: is retiring from his job at the County (after 23 years) at Christmas time – good time for him to increase his time at Zen Center. The 3 leaders have reviewed the winter schedule carefully, and normal calendar will go on uninterrupted. The 3 leaders did decide, however, not to have a Head Student for the winter practice period.

Kokyo – his stipend will be divided between Gene and Patrick during his time away. Not decided yet how Warming the Hearth will continue – Kokyo might be able to continue via skype. He'll decide with the group.

Gene: Practice theme for 2015 will be the "Middle Way" teachings. The text for the practice period will be "Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma Sutra."

Kokyo: Feels very supported that the Board and leaders have approved his time off. Asks sangha members to help out with any loose ends that might get overlooked. Rick Haymen will be renting 113 School Street while Kokyo is away. Mari Tustin, ZC liaison for rental units, will help arrange rental agreement with Rick. Rick is a zen practitioner that has been traveling and practicing at different temples for a while -- he's come to classes and sesshins here in the last couple of years. We'll find ways to introduce him to the Sangha when he moves in.

Dokusan Building Remodel Update (Nannette, Gene, and Dana)

Speaking as Administrator, Nannette expressed great gratitude for the many seen and unseen efforts to keep the garden and property clean and functioning and zendo open every day.

Dokusan project one year ago: We were presenting a drawing, Rob was working with the Planning Department, our timeline was Spring construction. Different picture today. After turning in plans to the City, we received a letter back with points to address before we could go to the Planning Dept. Letter received from Peter Spellman, architect, on the Planning Commission. 2 big items: property line not clear with neighbor John Mahoney next door, and the remodel roofline was conflicting with property line as presently designated. School Street is a very old neighborhood, and there are not clear survey markers. Dana is handling the conversations with John Mahoney re options in resolving the property line issue. She cannot report definitively yet about the property line issue. She feels it's important to come to clarity on this issue, not only for this remodel, but for future generations at zen center.

Q: Why a new dokusan building? A: 1) It's an old building (>100 years old), with mold and mildew, in disrepair; 2) to honor Katherine Thanas 3) our practice of stewardship for future generations.

Where are we at once property line is resolved? We do have agreement now on building details. The Planning Department informed us that because the structure is a historical building in an official historical district, originally a carriage house – we will need to match the old style. Exterior will need to be wood siding, not the Japanese style stucco previously envisioned. Many people have helped out: Rob initially, Dana and Gene, Sally has recently done drawings of the interior and exterior spaces, and of the walkway to meet ADA guidelines (accessibility). Challenge: make a beautiful building, but keep it practical in line with Katherine's sensibilities and sense of pragmatism.

Much appreciation expressed to Nannette, Dana, and Gene for all of their work. And it continues! Great that we will be taking up the Middle Way next year!

2014 Financial Report (Michael & Edie)

Michael expressed gratitude for all of the sangha donations this year and ongoing.

Long term investment (RBC account) - Edie

- \$502,789 (60% stock, 40% bonds & CD's –earning about 4 to 5% interest) – basically, KT's gift plus ZC assets of a year ago
- RBC investment funds are for long-term planning (>5years)

Capital campaign funds of \$63,000 earmarked for the dokusan building remodel project: 1/3 came from operating (\$25,000), 1/3 came from Katherine's estate (\$25,000), 1/3 was to come from capital campaign – amount actually raised = \$13,000. Total earmarked is \$63,000.

Operating Budget (one year plan for income/expenses)

- Budgeted net for CY 2014 = \$18,116

- Actual net = \$34,041 (includes an additional \$13,640 received from KT's estate this year when it was officially closed out.)
- Checking at \$6,763
- Dokusan building project account \$16,376 (a portion of the \$63,000 referenced above) immediately available when we are ready to move forward
- Matured CD - \$26,920 (Will be used for dokusan building remodel, or transferred in meantime to RBC)
- Savings \$264

Michael: We tend to hit our targeted net each year primarily because we spend less than we have budgeted, owing to volunteer contributions of time and skill, and very careful spending. Volunteers were thanked for contributing skills/time/efforts with plumbing, fix-it, gardening and landscaping, and the flower arrangements.

Gene expressed gratitude to all the sangha donations over many decades that have added up to a nice financial cushion. Similarly, great gratitude expressed to Katherine and her ancestors for safeguarding financial assets and leaving a large gift to ZC.

We're mostly volunteers here. That allows us to have some financial security and steward the physical spaces.

One sangha member asked if donations would still be accepted to the capital campaign even tho' it officially closed Oct. 2013. Yes, just specify "capital campaign," and the donation will be earmarked accordingly.

2 questions fielded by Edie:

Q: Are RBC investments in oil? (Q is about divesting from oil companies as per climate activist call to action.)

A: Maryanne at RBC has assured us that funds are "green."

Q: Could we start thinking about investment income as an income stream?

A: This would be a good discussion at the Board retreat.

Board Election Results for 2015-2017 (Edie)

75% of ballots were returned!

Many candidates came forward. Great appreciation. Results were close.

Slate of Officers approved: Edie Brown, President; Chuck Overley, Vice President, Michael Bashista, Treasurer, Liz Milazzo, Secretary

At-large members selected:

Sally Aguirre

Chris Davidson

Dana Tagaki

Neti Parekh

Laurie McCann

Mary Knudtson

Candidates not seated who will serve as alternates in the event that an at-large member does not complete the board term:

Yaro Jane Army
Helen Nunberg
Rob Hoogner

Exiting the Board:

Brian Corser, member at large
Lisa Noble, member at large
Rob Hoogner, member at large

Many thanks expressed to the candidates leaving the Board at this time.

Q: How will alternates be chosen? Alternates would serve if there is a vacancy on the Board (not concurrently).

Edie will schedule an orientation for the new Board members, before the next regularly scheduled Board Meeting on Tues. Jan. 27th.

Discussion re election process, and having more candidates to choose from than seats available: A Sangha member was very grateful for **all who ran**, and found it difficult to choose between, rather than endorsing a slate. The current process allows for nominations from the sangha, so that the board doesn't hold all the power. This was the first time that we've had more nominations than spaces. Another suggestion: Board could vet all the nominations, and then randomly choose a slate. Appreciation expressed that the sangha is able to have a difficult conversation such as this, and that people honestly express their feelings/differences. Nominating committee consisted of: Michael, Cathy Toldi, Liz and Chris. Committee did discuss how many candidate could run. Michael was recently on another Board that set a slate, and it wasn't a good process. Thus he was inclined to support more candidates than slots. We were surprised this year to have more candidates than slots.

Please contact Edie or a member of the Board if this topic doesn't feel resolved, and it could be discussed in a Board subcommittee. We'll try and hold an intention to look at process again in 3 years, and at the minimum a very transparent process. Sangha members urged to use the "Community Comments" time at the beginning of Board meetings to raise issues and concerns, or contact the Board President or a Board member directly.

Sangha Input

Discussion regarding transparency: People who come to zazen and events don't have a way to know much about how the property is cared for, what the Administrator does, etc. No hidden agendas, but it's not obvious what is the work of the Board. How can we help educate the community re what goes on in governance and the relationships between teachers and the Board?

Cathy suggested bringing back the "Sangha Wheel" poster with practice, property, governance, community engagement, etc. all on one page. The poster helped communicate goings on at SCZC. Another thought was to hold a mid-year all-

sangha meeting to bring together Board and sangha. Other suggestions: Bulletin board with photos of people in coordinating roles, with requests for help. Utilize Facebook to request volunteer involvement. Possibly, post a list of “who does what” on the bulletin board (basically, the info on the “admin” tab of the SCZC webpage.)

Comment: SCZC Board has a more serious role now that we have funds from Craig’s gift, and Katherine’s gift. It’s possible to have a long view now, because of funds available.

Question from the Practice Committee: How is sesshin practice for those who don’t sign up? (to give the Practice Committee input re any impediments to participating in sesshin). We have a lot of sesshins here. Generally, a very open style, where people can drop in. Formal vs. informal? Strict style? Teaching sesshins with long periods of zazen – too much talking? No toys sesshins?

Feedback:

- Monastic practice and everyday practice are worlds apart. Doesn’t get enough sleep to attend sesshin. Requests 8 am to 5 pm sesshin. 5 to 9 too much.
- Taking care of young children, earliest start time is 9 am. Needs to be home at 5 for children’s needs. Appreciates short dharma talks, not the teaching sesshin’s.
- Challenge has been sesshin sitting. Would like scheduled chi’gong or yoga class on the schedule. Would appreciate movement practice on the regular schedule.
- Requests keeping oryoki, but add regular movement practice (yoga).
- Requests schedule more like day-sits.
- Single parent cannot do sesshin.
- Add a walking period for relief to the body? Doesn’t engage the mind as much as yoga or guided exercise. Fast walking around zendo and park, walking in posture/shashu mudra.
- Requests fewer teaching sesshins.
- Requests 6 am start time, and earlier sit in the evening.
- Have more 3 day sesshins (and fewer long sesshins.)
- Add half-hour periods in addition to 40 minute sits.
- Tenzo training was great.
- Hard for servers to eat during the oryoki meal. Prefers to have the server’s meal after the oryoki meal.
- Likes yoga or tai chi for older people.
- Requests slow walking and then fast walking (like at Green Gulch).
- Suggestion for a weekend sesshin: Evening sitting Friday eve. with short talk to set the tone, 8:30 to 5 Saturday; ½ day sit on Sunday, with a closing ceremony.
- Suggestion to schedule yoga instead of the work period during sesshin; meet kitchen prep needs usually done during work period with a volunteer sign-up. Then would need soji in am to clean bathrooms and zendo.
- Doesn’t come to sesshins, but appreciates that others “hold the space.”
- Loves the teaching sesshins, but can’t attend due to body issues.

Wrap up: Practice Committee will continue to discuss the sesshin forms. May consider dropping the teaching sesshins (Genzo-e) or reducing to a single vs. 2 per year. Day sits always offer a lot of flexibility because so many teachers lead them. A sangha member expressed deep appreciation for the various forms of practice offered since Kokyo has been here as head teacher. Practice leaders acknowledged the number of comments from people with aging bodies, and reiterated that it is always really ok to ask for modifications to the sesshin schedule.

Sangha Input, contin.

- Given that a lot of people sit regularly in a chair, could we consider making room for more chairs by taking out one of the small tans, or some other arrangement?
- Concern expressed regarding the sangha demographic being dominated by people 50 and over. Where are the young people? 17,000 students at UCSC – don't seem to be coming. More young people come in the evening than at 5:45 am. Add some structured support or engagement particularly for younger practitioners?
- Suggestion for an intensive that might appeal to college-age students , a sit-a-thon combined with a fundraiser for a social cause.
- 3-day “no toys” sesshin would appeal to college students.
- Childcare for families with young children? May be hard to offer, and also hard for parents to receive.
- Kids program? On the wish list last year, but maybe not enough families and energy to keep it going?
- Suggestion to invite the SC High School meditation club to come to the Zen Center.

Zen and the Arts announcements:

Z&A: Practicing zen through art. Upcoming classes/workshops:

- Kaz Tanahashi calligraphy class in January
- Sumi-e painting with Michael Hoffman in Feb.
- Day sit with tea ceremony - March (led by Gerow Reece and Patrick)

Note: 26 people in attendance, including the 3 Leaders & the Board
Meeting adjourned at 5 pm.

Notes respectfully submitted by Liz Milazzo.