

Minutes of the SnowFlower Sangha Steering Council
Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Present: Lisa Glueck, Walt Keough, Suzanne Kilkus, Efrat Livny, Cheri Maples, Karuna Namenwirth, Karen Plum, Carol Rubin, Savitri Tsering, and invited guest David Haskin

The meeting of the Steering Council (STC) was convened at approximately 7 p.m. at Efrat's home. The meeting began with a brief meditation.

1. Check-in for tasks from last meeting

All tasks had been completed except that Efrat and Lisa, after reviewing the Tuesday and Friday night leader instructions, decided they could not be streamlined any more; the respective Scheduler needs to be sure that the instructions are provided to each leader. They will add welcome comments for new attendees. Karuna distributed her revised Guide to Sanskrit Pronunciation.

2. Annual SnowFlower Retreat

David Haskin joined in discussion of the annual retreat. At his request, to increase transparency, David and Walt, co-chairs for the retreat, will work with the Sangha Treasurer and one other officer (Karen and Suzanne this year) to decide any significant financial decisions. Either David or Walt will report retreat activity to the STC at its summer meeting and the winter meeting after the retreat. The retreat will be removed from Caretaking Council Responsibilities to the STC since all caretaking decisions are made by Jack Lawlor. There was discussion of the fee and expenses for the retreat; the consensus was to generally follow past practices of conservative budgeting and low fees at this time.

3. Treasurer's Report & Discussion of Responding to Scholarship Requests

Karen distributed the Sangha Budget Review document from 1/1/2008 to April 15, 2009. The Sangha is in excellent shape financially. After discussion about donation bags, it was decided that Efrat and Lisa will put a basket or bowl near the exits along with a sign to facilitate contributions toward expenses and that Karen will collect the donations at least once a month. We affirmed our prior decision that requested donations should be at least \$2, not \$1, and the leader should announce only the \$2 amount.

There was a lengthy discussion about how to handle scholarship, including what criteria should be applied, whether to offer partial or whole scholarships, whether SnowFlower participation should be required, whether scholarships should be available only for our annual retreat or regional or national retreats, whether the retreat should be a fundraiser, etc. The STC decided we needed a subgroup to consider these issues, make a recommendation to the STC about scholarship policies and procedures, and then bring the STC recommendation to the Annual Business Meeting. Walt, Lisa, Karuna, and Carol volunteered; Carol will call the group together. [ABM agenda item]

4. Should Friday Sangha Have a Buddha statue?

Tuesday Sangha has a statute. There was a consensus to obtain an inexpensive Buddha statute for Friday. Ed and Mary Celnicker had once spoken of contributing one so they will be asked. If not, then Karuna will purchase one.

5. Recruitment of a Newsletter Editor

Erin Hanusa will resign after July. It was decided this is too important to leave for sign up at the Annual Business Meeting, so Cheri will ask Erin to send a Sangha wide email seeking a volunteer who can work with Erin before she leaves.

6. Brief Reports

Caretaking Council: Carol reported that the Caretaking Council solicited input from participants about needing more support for families with children but got very little response. (Savitri noted that she is coordinating a children's activity with Deer Park and will report back to SnowFlower on it.) The Caretaking Council recommended having a dharma talk on Sharing the Merit and introducing it gradually. [ABM agenda topic] The Council also supported more exploration of Vipassana and Shamatha forms of meditation.

Tuesday Sangha: Lisa reported it continues to grow and is doing well.

Scheduling Council: Lisa reported that co-ordination between dharma talks for Tuesday and Friday is going well and will be continued.

Friday Sangha: Karuna reported that Friday Sangha continues to grow, including a recent influx of new participants. It was agreed we need more room for cushion sitters in the middle, and early arrivers will help ensure we have room for more than two rows of cushions.

Love & Understanding: David reported that work continues on this project.

Coming Home Project: Carol reported that two rewarding training sessions were held on March 14 and 28th, with about 25-30 attendees from SnowFlower, Madison Insight Meditation, and the Alliance for Compassionate Justice. We are setting up the specifics of the volunteer opportunities now. Carol will write up a brief summary for the newsletter. [ABM agenda topic]

7. Discussion of Annual Business Meeting Format & Agenda

Cheri will collect the various ABM agenda items noted in recent minutes and send the list to STC members to review and add to. This will be top of our agenda for June meeting.

8. Action Items

Cheri will send out list of ABM issues for review, and send out email for new newsletter editor.

Karuna will arrange for Tuesday contributions to be sent to Karen once a month, and will handle obtaining a Buddha statute.

Suzanne will work with David, Walt, and Karen re retreat expenses.

Karen will work with David on retreat finances, and get Tuesday donations once a month.

Efrat will supply a basket and sign for Friday donations, and add info re donations to Leader Responsibilities.

Savitri will let Sangha know of Dear Park Sundays for children.

Lisa will get basket and sign for Tuesday night contributions; and will work with Walt, Carol, and Karuna on scholarship policy and procedures.

Walt will work on scholarship policy and procedure.

Carol will write brief report on Coming Home for newsletter and convene group for scholarship policy and procedure.

The next meeting of the STC is Wednesday, June 10^h from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Karuna's home.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Rubin, Secretary