

## **Caretaking Council Meeting Minutes: June 12, 2011**

*Members present: Don Katz (facilitator), Celeste Robins, Rachel Murray, Michelle Bowman (Recorder)*

*Absent: Tom Loomis, Steve Fleck*

*Visitors: None*

### **Topic 1: Update on Conflict Resolution and Annual Business Meeting committees**

- Don, a CTC representative in the Conflict Resolution Proposal group, reported the group has met once thus far. The question being addressed: do we as a Sangha need guidelines for conflict resolution, or is the issue more one of interpersonal conflict? The group felt yes, guidelines are necessary. Don has volunteered to draft the initial proposal. Conflict Resolution has been highlighted as one of the topics of discussion for the Annual Business Meeting committee. Additionally, the Annual Business Meeting committee felt that the decision-making process should be moved back to committee level, instead of doing so at the Annual Business Meeting.

### **Topic 2: Sangha Cancellation Policy**

- Prior to today's meeting, Steve reported via email that Schedulers decided not to alter their current statement of the Cancellation Policy, but to include the policy with each Sangha schedule as it is posted on the website and in the newsletter.
- Don reported that both the STC and Schedulers have a cancellation proposal in place. CTC's involvement may add redundancy to the existing policy.

### **Topic 3: Update on Introductory Sessions**

- Celeste reported on Introductory Session Overview and leader comments (see Composite Overview of a Session, attached).
- Michelle reported finding the session she attended as somewhat helpful, but the looseness of the session made it difficult to know what to discuss. She found out about the session via the newsletter and an announcement from a previous Sangha sit.
- Rachel expressed concern that these sessions are not frequently announced at Sangha sits, and are not publicized enough for newcomers.
- Don asked whether we should consider a different night, different location or longer than a half an hour to allow for flexibility.
- Rachel thought 6:30 sessions as currently followed were acceptable, but suggested a second, more in-depth session for interested people.
- Celeste requested that we ask Schedulers to be sure that Introductory sessions are announced at least the week before.

### **Topic 4: Update on Newcomer's Contact List & Newcomer's Study Group Organizing**

- Rachel reported a concern that while she and Steve Fleck are collecting information from new attendees at Tuesday and Friday Sangha, there is no protocol in place

- to contact these individuals and pass along relevant information.
- Don suggested some sort of boilerplate email to be sent out upon receipt of newcomer information. A draft will be completed by Rachel to include:
    - o Information on joining the listerv
    - o Information on 6:30 introductory meetings
    - o Information on mentor program and contact information
    - o Location of website and what can be found there
    - o Survey interest in a newcomer's support group
  - Don reporting: Both Steve Spiro and Don were point people on this. Steve is willing to write a protocol for the newcomer Study Group/K group, but does not want to participate in the group. There are currently 2 approaches being considered:
    - o 4-6 sessions, 1 session per month. Sessions would be specific to Thay's teachings, foundational elements, history, etc. – topics not typically covered in a dharma talk.
    - o Schedulers suggested a more open-ended group, similar to a Kalyana Mitta group.
  - Celeste noted that some of the foundational and historical topics could be incorporated into dharma talks. CTC agreed to contact schedulers to cycle in more of these topics Don will contact the schedulers.

#### **Topic 5: Feedback on Ceremonial Questions Relating to Separation of Men and Women and Memorial Service Ceremonies**

- Don explained that the reasoning behind separating men and women during transmission ceremonies was to copy the tradition of separating monks and nuns.
- Michelle commented that this practice may be confusing to some, seems to go against Snowflower's sense of community, and may create an artificial tension.
- Prior to today's meeting, Steve reported via email that both Dharma teachers (Jack and Cheri) advised that the Sangha, as a whole, is free to decide how men and women are seated at ceremonies.
- CTC recommends to Cheri to end separation practice. Don will email Cheri the CTC's recommendation.
- Memorial Service Ceremonies discussion tabled.

#### **Topic 6: Listserv Issues Concerning Being Engaged in Social Action While Being Politically "Neutral"**

- Don reported that the STC is working on guidelines for listserve use, specifically addressing the political theme of many of the emails in question. The listserv is not moderated, but guidelines regularly sent out may act as a moderator. CTC will review STC's proposed guidelines.

#### **Topic 7: Members in Crisis**

- Celeste was contacted regarding a Snowflower member in crisis. Guidelines are unclear as to how to handle these types of situation. Don said that Jane P. is the

- point person to coordinate efforts to help members in times of need. Celeste will forward the member's information onto Jane.
- Celeste expressed concern about expectations that sometimes occur because her role is not as it is for other Councils – her being just a point person to communicate to the CTC; not the Coordinator as are others who are Council point persons. Councils do not rotate the point person since others in sangha need to have a steady person to contact.

**Topic 8: Kalyana Mitta group portion of the Mentoring and KM Group Document**

- Tabled until next meeting.