

Sangha Annual Business Meeting committee

2011-06-14

Present: Micha Namenwirth, Karuna Namenwirth, Jim Roseberry, Don Katz, Janet Zimmerman

Unable to attend: Ed Jacobson, Cheri Maples

At the next annual meeting, we will be discussing and deciding on whether to delegate more decision-making authority to the councils and convert future annual meetings to be more focused on community building and recruiting members to councils.

How should we structure that next meeting?

Facilitator should be intimately familiar with the Sangha, ideally be the President or someone chosen by them. Someone who is resilient and can field issues out of left field

A bell master who could invite bell to allow group to settle if discussion becomes contentious, “vibes watcher”, ideally also someone from steering council or caretaking council.

A timekeeper to make sure no one speaker dominates the discussion

The meeting to decide on the governance changes could be a special meeting, so that we can try out the new annual meeting structure sooner. It would also allow us to spend the entire evening on these governance issues.

Make sure to have information distributed before the meeting to explain why we are making these proposals. That it is because councils meet more often, and therefore we can meet community needs better by delegating decisions there. Remind community members that council members volunteer at the annual meeting and that membership is open, and there are many ways for people to participate in community governance.

Make sure proposal includes some provision for people not on the councils to contribute ideas/make comments on agenda items at council meetings; by asking in advance and being part of agenda

Use gradients of agreement as straw poll, avoid voting if possible.

In new annual meeting structure, should we approve budget or just report it?

We should approve budget; it's a formality but one that makes people feel good.

But we should send out budget beforehand with detailed explanation and contact person for questions before the meeting, so we can find out if there is an issue

Conflict in the Sangha - we discussed Karuna and Micha's idea (in italics below)

The following is a suggestion for conflict resolution, one of the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Council.

- 1. Form a stand-alone committee of the Steering Council whose job is conflict resolution. Call it "Present Moment".*
- 2. Form a list of a dozen or more persons with at least 20 years practice experience. Such a list is readily identifiable. (It is not necessary to have a background in therapy.) From this list three people volunteer to form the stand-alone committee.*
- 3. A sangha member who requests support because of a difficulty they are having with another sangha member(s) can then meet one-on-one OR with all three committee members OR with any of the other names on the list. In the spirit that conflict can be resolved or anticipated, such a meeting can take the form of a talk over coffee. It is useful that the person with the difficulty takes up contact with someone who is there to help, notwithstanding the person they believe to be the cause of their difficulty. Having the chance to speak with a neutral person(s) in a neutral setting may help the person with the difficulty differentiate between the issue and the emotions around it.*
- 4. Strict confidentiality would be observed. The STC would be informed of the activity of the committee but without names, the same way the scholarship program works.*
- 5. The availability of "Present Moment" would be made known through a carefully-worded notice in the Newsletter and to the listserv.*
- 6. Try it for 6 months or a year.*

Comments by other committee members:

- it is possible to have many years of practice and lots of book knowledge, and yet still have sufficient baggage that they may not be effective in this situation.
- Conflicts occur because people don't feel heard, this would allow them to put their story out there so that the intense emotions can dissipate and they can see more clearly.

Reporting to the Steering Council

Some members of ABM committee asked that they be allowed to be present at next Steering Council meeting when their proposals are discussed. Don agreed to send a request to the STC to allow this. We noted that this is an example of someone not on a council being present with information/thoughts, that we are moving towards, so we hoped that would be OK with the STC.