

SnowFlower Sangha Annual Meeting 1-26-16

Governance Changes

- People met throughout the year to discuss because they were not happy with the three Council system
- Everyone from Sangha was invited to every meeting
- Everyone who attends SnowFlower is a member of SnowFlower
- While the Steering Council makes decisions for the sangha, they will listen to the members, and all members are welcome at Steering Council meetings
- The new governance structure moves from a three council system to a spoke and wheel system. The Steering Council is the hub and all the committees (Schedules, Diversity, etc) are like spokes coming off.
- There will not be a Caretaking Council, but the functions they were doing will become spokes such as mentors

Membership & Legal Obligations

- We found we have some legal obligations that we are not living up to: We have Articles but no Bylaws. The Articles say that structure is laid out in the Bylaws.
- We spent time figuring out how to structure. We are a non-profit corporation. There are two ways to structure
 1. Have a Board of Directors who selects their replacements – self perpetuating
 2. Have a legal membership who selects the Board, and votes on bylaws and other decisions
- Many Sangha members attended the meeting in which our structure was discussed
- If we are going to have a legal membership, we would have to be very clear who is a member and who is not. Would need to decide how to become a members, people would have to apply. While not overwhelming, it would be a lot of administrative work. There was lack of harmony over what qualifications members would need.
- If we have the Board of Directors who run the corporate entity, it is very simple.
- The decision was that the better choice was to have a Board, not legal members.
- The Steering Council decided they would not make decisions until they heard what the group of Sangha members proposed. The group proposed that we have a Board of Directors.
- There was some concern over how decisions were made. It was not clear who had the right to make decisions. This led to bad feelings. This will allow us to define who has the right to make decisions.
- This allows members to know who to talk with about upcoming decisions.
- We will need to change our Articles. And we will need to create Bylaws. Rosebud will work with our Roles & Responsibilities to convert them into Bylaws
- Will announce when the Steering Council will be meeting to make decisions. Put information on the new website.
- There are two parallel organizations, the SnowFlower Sangha Corporation – who has an agreement with Friends, makes decisions, etc. And then there is the Sangha who sit and practice together – that group has no legal decision making.
- The Steering Council is the Board of Directors of SnowFlower Sangha Corporation. The Steering Council in the past did not make decisions about Governance, Diversity or EarthHolders for example. The Steering Council will continue to listen to Sangha members from these and other projects.

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Discussion

- The Roles & Responsibilities do not have any limit to the number of terms that a person can be on the Steering Council. Was a concern that there should be a term limits. This would be in the bylaws, so we will consider this as we develop the bylaws.
 - Concern over whether we can't get people to volunteer
 - What if someone is a wonderful advocate for the organization and great at getting things done, do we want to limit their terms
 - Some want the number of limits to be open ended
 - If someone goes off the Council, will there be a requirement that they are off for a period of time before they can come back on
- The spoke and hub format allows members to have lots of ways to get involved in Sangha without being on a formal council
- Appreciate that the Steering Council has listened to the voices. Would like to have the bylaws indicate that our tradition is that the Steering Council typically listens to or adopts the recommendation of a work group who has studied the issues
- Will we have a community discussion about developing the Bylaws? We have the Roles & Responsibilities already. That is about 85% of what we need for the bylaws. There will be a handful of decisions that need to be made, like term limits. We would have meetings open to Sangha members to discuss the decisions that need to be made for the Bylaws. Steering Council as the Board will have the obligation to make the decision.

Diversity project

- The Diversity Committee put together a very good report. The footnotes tied to some great articles.
- Diversity is a huge issue with Western Sanghas.
- The Steering Council adopted the report from the Diversity Council.
- The big issue is how do we really make ourselves welcoming. We need to do some groundwork (training, coming together). Nationally this is described as White Awake.
- Four Major efforts
 - February Dharma talks are around Larry Yang's 8 mindfulness training on diversity.
 - Will do training on White Awake
 - Reach out to other Sanghas to see what they are doing
 - Have Sanghas in area create a people of color affinity group which the Sanghas would support
- Microaggression – people are committing these without even knowing it

Website

- Needs for the Website are listed on the last page of the agenda.
- Last year we attempted to have volunteers work on the website redesign. Due to lack of time, it never got done. So if we can afford professional help, this is what is needed to get the website redesigned.
- GreenLeaf Media quoted \$4000, with \$2000 paid by the non-profit and \$2000 from grants that GreenLeaf gets
- Will review proposals from website developers, will choose the three best proposals to forward to Steering Council with a recommendation
- Proposed spending the \$2000 on the website as it is such an important communication vehicle – supported unanimously
- The budget right now is for the re-design, with the hope that we can get members to update
- If we need an ongoing budget for maintenance, we can request it.

Budget

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- Handed out Balance Sheet, Income Statement and Budget
- Balance Sheet – we have over \$10,000 in cash
- Income Statement –
 - shows revenue generated from each of the four sittings
 - Friday attendance has come back and is paying the rent
 - our major expense is for rent, we also pay \$600 for Moses dues
 - Also shows the revenue generated from our Dodgeville retreat and the day of mindfulness
 - The Day of mindfulness covered expenses by requesting dana
 - Made two donations, for Thay's care and for the new carpeting at Friends Meeting House
- Budget
 - projections both revenue and expenses are based on last year
 - are assuming that both retreats will break even
 - Will not charge for the day of mindfulness, but will ask for dana
 - As we are a non-profit we give away when we have more than \$5500
 - That leave us with \$4500 discretionary funds
 - No scholarships were given in 2015 (scholarships for the Dodgeville retreat are revenue reductions)
 - Kudos to Pat and Janet as this is the clearest financial statements shared at an annual meeting
 - Budget Approved Unanimously

Schedulers Council

- Met once over the year, the biggest action was to shorten the length of the Friday meeting, after polling the attendees of Friday Sangha
- Schedulers are not focused on scheduling
- Karuna sends reminders and instructions to the people who are leading
- There are three slots open that need to be filled
- We have teamed up the schedulers for Tuesday and Friday making it easier to schedule
- Looking for scheduler to work with Karuna in May/June
- Also looking for two volunteers for November/December

Coming Home

- Started 5-6 years ago as there was an interest in Sangha in doing prison work
- Coming Home group has not met in 2 years as they are out doing their thing
- We have people going into the prisons teaching mindfulness
- Some who started doing Circles of Support through Mum (4-6 people who met with prisoners when they get out to navigate post prison into the community), have started to work on public policy with Moses
- Ban the box was instituted in the city and now for contractors working for the city
- It has been awhile since we did recruitment for Circle of Support, may want to put some thought into low key recruitment – write up a one page sheet about the opportunities – put on website and announce at meetings
- Free app called iChill that walks people through trauma
- Another free app called Breathe – a mindfulness meditation app
- Would be good if we had people who were signed up to be a chaperone for attending Sangha
- Carol will be the Coming Home Criminal Justice Coordinator
- Would be good to have an article in the newsletter on all the activities under this

Mentoring

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- Karuna will coordinate mentors
- Have her add the availability of mentors to the list of announcements we would like leaders to make, let them know to contact Karuna if they wish a mentor
- Mentorship is informal, but gives permission to contact someone about questions about the practice, tips, etc.
- The Welcome brochure lists that mentors exist, but does not give contact information

Earth Holders

- Are looking for another ambassador for this project
- Since Heather Mann left the project has not been active

Volunteers

- Due to the low Attendance, will recruit at each of the meetings
 - Jim will recruit on Friday
 - Todd on Sunday
 - Gloria on Tuesday
 - Amy on Wednesday
- Steven will be the Meeting House Liaison
- Karuna will be the coordinator of Mentors
- Sangha wants to attend to the needs of its member, that is a very important role
- Proposed having an ad hoc committee who would put together a ceremony for members who pass away
- We can take care of each other in an ad hoc manner as we learn about the needs of Sangha members with health issues
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