

## **Zen Center of Los Angeles, Inc.**

### **MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

May 18, 2014

The Board of Directors of Zen Center of Los Angeles, Inc., a California nonprofit corporation, held a regular meeting at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 18, 2014 at 923 South Normandie Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

The following directors were present: Patricia Muso Giggins (President), Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao (Abbot), Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown (Secretary), Darla Myoho Fjeld, Cliff Shishin Collins, Deborah Faith-Mind Thoresen, Thomas Dharma-Joy Reichert (CFO) and Robert Swan. Absent were: DeWayne Gojitsu Snodgrass and John Plum-Hermit Swanger.

Myoho served as recording secretary of the meeting.

#### **ZCLA Mission Statement**

To know the Self, maintain the precepts and serve others. We provide the teaching, training, and transmission of Zen Buddhism.

#### **Board Mission and Vision Statement**

In the Resource Sphere of All-Enriching Wisdom, the Board of Directors oversees all legal and fiduciary matters. We actively support the Mandala, Mission and Vision, Core Values and Core Practices of the Zen Center of Los Angeles/Great Dragon Mountain – the Buddha Essence Temple. We maintain a place for practice, rooted in our Bodhisattva Lineage, and nurture the widest possible view.

#### **1. Welcome, Zazen, Check-in Round and Teaching**

Muso called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Everyone sat zazen and then did a check-in round. Muso read a teaching from Peter Matthiessen.

## **2. Review of the Agenda**

The Board reviewed and approved of the agenda after adding in “Roshi’s Reflections” as item #3. (Attached)

## **3. Roshi’s Reflections**

Roshi talked about the Zen Peacemaker Order being revived at ZCLA. She is currently working with a core group of long-standing ZPO teachers that are exploring how to refresh the ZPO. She shared some reflections about strategic planning, particularly noting that we could do it superficially or use the opportunity to deeply review and consider the Zen Center’s future. She recommended using resources beyond ZCLA – throwing ourselves wide open. She also emphasized the issue of Abbot succession and the need for many conversations about this topic.

## **4. Approval of Minutes**

The Board approved the minutes from the March 23, 2014 meeting.

## **5. Review of Action Items**

- A. Dharma-Joy – Make revisions to draft ZCLA loan protocol. Submit recommendation to the Board at a future meeting. This is on-going.
- B. Faith-Mind (with others) – Develop plan for Buddha Hall and Dharma Hall street-side yards and driveway areas. She got a bid for fencing off the yard for \$48,000. We talked about tabling this project in the midst of our current budget deficit. We are going to take this off the action list for now.
- C. Enduring-Vow – Compile Zen Center policies for the Board. This is on-going.
- D. Dharma-Joy – Develop a 3-year budget projection. This is done.

## **6. Board Elections**

Plum-Hermit and Gojitsu need to be re-elected to the Board because their terms are up. Muso will e-mail them to be sure that they wish to be re-elected and then we will vote at the July Board meeting.

Via e-mail, Plum-Hermit expressed his wish for us to consider a new recording secretary. After discussion, on motion made and duly seconded, the Board unanimously passed the following resolution:

**IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** that Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown is hereby appointed to the position of recording secretary.

## **7. Financial Report**

Dharma-Joy led us through his financial report, copies of which had been distributed to the Board in advance of the meeting, and a copy of which is attached hereto.

He reported that, based on our current apartment vacancies, we will be experiencing a \$4,000 a month loss in income.

There was a discussion about how to manage the operation of the Dharma Training Fund and whether it should be fully exhausted by year-end each year. There was some discussion about this and the fact that the fundraising appeal only occurs in May, such that closing out the fund at the end of the year would leave no funds available to use until the money arrived mid-year. It was agreed that the Finance Committee would discuss this further with the Temple Co-Directors and Mary Rios with regard to the operation and management of the DTF.

Following up on a request from the Board at the March 2014 meeting, the Finance Committee worked with Mary and the other staff to develop recommendations for reductions in spending against our current budget; the amount as suggested is currently \$16,200, which Mary compiled (a copy is attached). Dharma-Joy cautioned that, while it seems likely that we can achieve cuts of that magnitude, they may not come in the exact categories depending on operational needs as the year progresses.

The Finance Committee will be taking a comprehensive look at our current fee structure and making recommendations to the Board at the July Board meeting.

Endowment Report: Bob reported that there has been little change since the last quarter-end report he circulated.

## **8. Temple Co-Director Report**

Faith-Mind and Myoho provided a report from the Temple Co-Directors that was sent to the Board prior to the meeting. (Attached)

Myoho reported that the Executive Circle held a final council on May 15, 2014 and asked for a vote of the Board to dissolve the Executive Circle.

After discussion, on motion made and duly seconded, the Board unanimously passed the following resolution:

**IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** that the Board dissolves the Executive Circle.

## **9. Development Circle Report**

Myoho and Muso reported that the Development Circle had decided to send out the Dharma Training Fund appeal electronically through Constant Contact this year to save on the cost of a paper mailing.

There are also items that are development related in the attached Temple Co-Directors Report.

## **10. Council Practice.**

The Board next practiced in council format to follow up on the all-day retreat and explore issues surrounding sustainability, deficits, change and the role of the Board.

## **11. Next Steps of the ZCLA Strategic Plan**

Muso posed the question: How are we going to organize ourselves to move forward? The Board then engaged in an extensive discussion regarding how to move forward from our all-day retreat and to continue to develop and implement the strategic planning goals and objectives identified during that process.

Roshi talked about the need for outside resources. She had some suggestions: Don Rossmore, a friend of Perry Oretsky. Don is a management consultant and coach with an interest in Leadership and Spirituality. He offered to help pro bono. Grant Couch is a banker and supporter of Roshi Bernie. Mujin is a possible resource through her uncle's foundation, The Douglas Campbell Foundation. Mujin has introduced Roshi by e-mail to Craig Burger of Covington Capital Management, the DCF financial advisor. Judy Ashbury ([www.smithasbury.com/about-us/meet-judy](http://www.smithasbury.com/about-us/meet-judy)), a member of the Board of the Center of Collective Wisdom, is an expert on branding.

Muso suggested that we form a Strategic Planning Committee and a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary The Strategic Planning Committee with Myoho as its Steward will be responsible for moving our Strategic Plan forward and will also set up a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.

The Board also discussed the importance of revising the Zen Center's Mission Statement and how that could drive the rest of the process. "Who are we?" and "Do we know our brand?" were questions that arose.

After discussion, on motion made and duly seconded, the Board unanimously passed the following resolution:

**IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED** that the Board hereby authorizes the creation of a Strategic Planning Subcommittee of the Board, that its initial members will include Myoho, Muso, Shishin and Enduring-Vow, and that Myoho will act as its Steward.

The Board discussed and agreed that the Strategic Planning Committee will act as a central "hub" for identifying matters that need to be handled and will be responsible for initiating such actions or creating groups to do so; examples included communication to the Sangha regarding the strategic planning process, establishing a group to address revising the mission statement, etc.

## **12. Closing**

The Board then had a check-out round, and concluded by chanting the Four Vows.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Darla Myoho Fjeld, Acting Recording Secretary.

Attachments to the minutes, which were submitted to the Board: 1) Agenda, 2) Financial Report, 3) P& L, 4) Balance Sheet, 5) Cash Statement, 6) List of Recommended Budget Cuts, 7) Endowment Report 8) Temple Co-Director's Report 9) Roshi's Report, 10) Wisdom Circle Report

### **2014 Board Meeting dates:**

Saturday, January 25, All Day Retreat, 8:00 – 5:00

Sunday, January 26, Lunch with Residents

Sunday, March 23, 1:30 – 4:30

Saturday, May 10, 9:00-5:00

Sunday, May 18, 1:30 – 4:30

Sunday, July 13, 1:30 – 4:30

Sunday, September 21, 1:30 – 4:30

Sunday, November 16, 1:30 – 4:30

**Approved**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2014

\_\_\_\_\_

Patricia Muso Giggans (President)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2014

\_\_\_\_\_

Thomas Dharma-Joy Reichert (CFO)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2014

\_\_\_\_\_

Betsy Enduring-Vow Brown (Secretary)

## May 2014 – ACTION ITEMS

### **General Procedures**

Current Board reports and signed minutes from the previous meeting will be given to Mary Rios/Business Manager as soon after the meeting as possible.

Myoho/EC Steward will report Board decisions and other necessary information to Mary/Business Manager as soon after the meeting as possible.

Notification of decisions and information will be given to those effected (i.e. Residents, Teachers, Circles, Staff, etc.) prior to posting Board minutes.

Recording Secretary will forward the approved minutes to the Program Steward for posting on the Board section of ZCLA website.

Decisions and votes of the Board will be stated and recorded as resolutions and will be maintained in an annual list by the Recording Secretary.

### **Action Items:**

1. Dharma-Joy – Revise draft ZCLA loan protocol per input from Board. Submit recommendation to Board at a future meeting.
2. Enduring-Vow – Compile Zen Center policies for the Board.
3. Muso – e-mail Plum-Hermit and Gojitsu about whether they want to continue serving on the Board so that we can vote for their re-election at the July Board meeting.
4. Strategic Planning Committee - Form a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee.
5. Form a ZCLA Mission Statement Committee.

### **Someday Items:**

1. Dharma-Joy – Recommendations regarding financial support for Abbots in retirement
2. Faith-Mind (with others) – Develop plan for Buddha Hall & Dharma Hall street side yards and driveway areas.