

Residents' Council
Minutes from Friday 1-30-2008 meeting

Facilitated by Radiant-Vow Stephenson and Gemmon Ketterer.

We organized the room with 4 tables and 6 seats per table to facilitate in the World Café format.

Absentees:

Gessho, Trent, Dokai, Heather, Elena and Bodhi-Song

Introductory Round

Hillary and Gemmon introduced the World Café method, then presented the first question for the tables to discuss: If you were a member of the EC and were responsible for the wholeness of the Center, what policies would you set in place in regard to the cat issue?

The tables discussed the question for 25 minutes. Then each table presented the contents of what was said.

We introduced the second question: After you heard what was said, what in your personal actions and attitudes would you change to take care for the cat issue?

The tables had another 25 minutes to discuss this question, then each table reported about their discussion.

- The answers to both questions were not significantly different. People were very involved in the discussions. Here is a summary of what came up (including statements written down on the table cloth).
- The arguments for versus against cats ranged from removing them altogether to, it is our responsibility to save their lives and care for them.
- There was general sympathy for cats now living on campus.
- Non-cat owners wanted the cat owners to understand that taking care of the smell and sanitation is their task.
- There was agreement, that 17 cats on campus is too many.
- Is there a city law limiting the maximum number of cats per household?
- Does feline urine and excrement cause any hygienic problems to the residents or damage to the buildings.
For information about the health risks go to: <http://petdoc.com/story/health-risks-a-dirty-cat-litter-box> or http://www.fda.gov/Fdac/features/2004/104_pets.html
- What landscape changes can support the maintenance of cat care, e.g. having part of the pool as a sand litter box, planting certain plants?
- We clarified the old policy of pet approval.
- There is no general desire for a no-pet policy at the Center. Indoor cats and well taken care for dogs are welcomed by residents.
- Care for humans and each other as we care for the cats.
- The cat owners should take the feelings and complaints of the non-cat owners seriously.
- Beautify the Nilotpala garden.
- Cat owners should figure out solutions and pay any associated costs.
- This is not an EC, but a BHC issue.

At the end we wanted to get concrete action and a time table. So the outcome is:

- Reinforcement of the existing policy: each pet has to be approved by the BHC, regardless of whether the pet belongs to a new resident or an established resident.
- No adding of new cats that live outside of an apartment. Those present can stay if the owners take full responsibility for them.
- The cat owner takes full responsibility for the cats. This includes: taking care of the cleanup of existing problems as well maintenance and ongoing care of the resident space. This includes full financial responsibility for changes to cat care facilities.
- The outside cat owning Nilotpala and Pundarika residents will meet separately and will deliver a maintenance plan for the cats.
- Also, Gessho, as part of the BHC, has agreed to be a point person on organizing the cat owners and following up on whatever actions are taken. This decision was made at the BHC meeting the following week.

Roshi also made clear that the Center needs to stay attractive as a residency and that this is prevented by the cat smell around the place. Practitioners with a cat allergy won't be able to live at the Nilotpala and perhaps at the Center.

As medical research shows (above) there is also risk of serious illnesses to humans and cats.

We ended the evening with feedback about the World Café format and the discussions we had.

Gassho

Radiant Vow and Gemmon