

Minutes of Residents Council
Friday, May 24, 2009

Karen explained that scrip projects are one way that non-profits can generate income. She said that scrip projects have been used successfully by many non-profits, including Lilly's school.

She described three kinds of scrip project that might generate income for the Zen Center.

(The details of Karen's Scrip Proposal can be found in Faith-Spring's e-mail of 5/22/09.)

She offered to take responsibility for such a project if the Center approves it.

The residents present asked questions about the scrip projects and discussed their pros and cons. Towards the end of the discussion, Ensho Sensei recommended that the residents present approve all three programs.

Yudo reminded the Council that some residents have not been using their assigned parking spots and should do so. He also asked that residents show visitors where to park.

Regarding samu assignments, Yudo reported that a few residents have not done their assignments in two to three months. He asked that residents who can't do their assignment for any reason should keep him informed. He said that there are samu jobs to which no resident has been assigned.

Carla recruited for the important job of co-tenzo coordinator, especially for the first two weeks and last week of June. The group discussed why it seems to be difficult to get volunteers for this job. One reason suggested was that for some people, cooking for as many as 50 people seems like a daunting undertaking. She asked for and got volunteers. It was suggested that past co-tenzos meet to brainstorm about the problem of getting volunteers for the post. Regarding kitchen compost, she suggested we do raw compost only.

Board members Myoho and Dharma Joy attended the council to present a proposal from the Board regarding proposed increases of ZCLA's monastery housing fees (what residents pay each month for housing). They explained that such increases are one necessary way that the Board can deal with the Center's budget problems. Dharma Joy reported that for 2009, ZCLA will have a budget deficit of \$65,000. He mentioned other resources the Center draws upon, such as a recent Bequest and Savings.

In the Board's proposal, ZCLA's target with respect to housing fees is: to raise rentals until they are 20% below market rates (bmr) for similar housing in comparable areas of the city. Once the 20% bmr target is reached, rent increases of 3 to 5 percent will take place once a year.

In the Board's proposal, it is recommended that over the course of the next three years, there would be three increases, at 8-month intervals, until the 20% bmr target has been reached. (The next rent increase is scheduled for December 2009.)

This would enable the Board to reach its overall goal with respect to rentals: "to get us (rentals) to a level where we don't need big increases any longer."

Dharma Joy expressed the Board's appreciation for the essential role and many contributions of the resident members in the life of the Zen Center — including their important and essential financial contributions.

Myoho handed out a four-page "Board Proposal for Monastery Housing Fees," which will also be distributed to residents not present during the meeting.

(Every resident received a copy of the complete Proposal in their Sangha House mail box.)

The Proposal has two parts. In part one, rental increase figures are given for each type of apartment in the Nilotpala and Pundarika buildings.

In part two, Myoho presented carefully researched rental figures for comparable buildings and apartments in neighborhoods around the Zen Center. She explained how she calculated the figures included in the Proposal.

Dharma Joy and Myoho encouraged those present at the Council — and ultimately all residents — to communicate their feedback, questions, suggestions and afterthoughts about the Board proposed rental increases to the Board. They also stressed the possibility of special arrangements for residents in difficult financial circumstances.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled to take place on May 31, 2009. Then some time in July.