

San Francisco Zen Center Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
Sunday, October 11, 2015
Tassajara (During the Board Retreat)

Present: Larry Bye, Linda Ruth Cutts, Helen Degenhardt, Roger Hillyard, George Kellar, Albert Kutchins, Mark Lachman, Brian McCaffrey, Dennis McNally, Margie O'Driscoll, Ed Sattizahn, Fu Schroeder, Anna Thorn, Susan O'Connell, Rita Cummings, and Jeremy Levie.

Absent: Bruce Fortin, Joe Rodriguez, Mark Schieble, Jordan Thorn

Agenda and Minutes Approval

The meeting agenda was approved as proposed. The September Board meeting minutes were approved.

Abbatial reports

Central Abbess Eijun Linda Cutts: Brian, Ed, Larry, and Susan helped Linda with the Divestment/Ethical investment article she wrote for Sangha News. She appreciated the help and encouragement in working on this and has received many positive comments about the article.

Linda met with Juan Lopez, President of Amistad Associates, about working with SFZC on inclusivity and equity issues. He proposed a tiered process that includes a multifaceted plan, which would involve more than simply training. He has worked in major organizations with people of color wanting to move into leadership positions. A meeting has been scheduled for November 6th for him to meet with the group formerly known as PIE: Promoting Inclusivity and Equity.

Linda reported on SFZC's work with the Branching Streams sanghas. Konin Cardenas has been named the guiding teacher in New Rochelle, NY and Reirin Gumbel was recently installed as the guiding teacher at the Milwaukee Zen Center. David Zimmerman has returned from a successful fellowship with the Brooklyn Zen Center. Jiryu Rutschman-Byler will visit Metagene, Columbia. Taigen Dan Leighton in Chicago is interested in help. SFZC offers two kinds of fellowships for Branching Streams sanghas, one for visiting teachers and another for sangha support. The Branching Streams sangha meeting in the fall of 2016 will be held in Austin, Texas.

Steve Weintraub has visited many Branching Streams sanghas all over the country and recently did a seminar on transference and projection for Branching Streams groups that was recorded and will be available. Branching Streams members can receive discounted Dharma supplies with discounted shipping.

Linda is working on the Tri-Temple meeting, working with the full AEG on the retirement policy, and has been part of a working group on the Sangha Project, particularly focusing on the authenticity of the offering and how teachers are selected.

She is also part of a group working with Nancy Heisman on training in difficult conversations and will be leading Spring PP at GGF. Linda reported that the theme for No Race this year will be ethical living, making difficult ethical decisions.

GGF Abiding Abbess Fu Schroeder: Fu reported on what is going well at Green Gulch, including a recent watershed work week focused on land repair; a high functioning, mature senior staff; the many farm and garden apprentices staying for practice period and the size of the practice period about to begin (over 40 participants). She also reported on what is of concern to her at Green Gulch, including the lack of diversity among the student population, the draught and shortage of water.

She is thinking about the most effective role for Green Gulch in Marin working with other local organizations. She would like to see GGF partnering with other organizations in Marin and would like to offer more support for students to volunteer in Marin. Currently, there is a group of students cooking for the homeless once a week. She recently took a mental health training offered through Marin County that she found to be very helpful would recommend to all of our leaders. She would like to promote apprenticeship programs in local communities of color. She may be invited to be the Board Chair of the Marin Community Foundation. The organization is in transition to a situation where there would only be four meetings a year.

Abiding Abbot Ed Sattizahn: Ed reported on the start of practice period in the city, which has over 50 people, including 25 commuters. Curtis Fabens is shuso. Ed reported on the new senior staff that is doing very well. He is working on ideas to alter the schedule, including changing the six week practice period into perhaps two three week practice periods. He is also working on the Zen Inspired Senior Living Center. He spends a lot of time working on housing which is complicated in terms of balancing student housing, guest housing, and retirement housing.

He was involved recently with a Bodhisattva Initiation Ceremony with Lienn Shutt with all people of color that was very encouraging.

President's Report

Susan reported that the Administration is under-supported presently. She also reported on overall organizational demographics. The top layer is solid with the Emergent Leadership Forum seed members and many seniors, but the next layer is thin, with only 12 people at SFZC who are between four and nine years of seniority.

As City Center clarifies its training temple model, more students are going to Tassajara. Eleven WPAs are planning to go to Tassajara. This will leave City Center and especially the administration short-staffed.

Susan is working on a proposal for new partners to replace Bridge to work on the Zen Inspired Senior Living Center, as there was not an appropriate response to the original RFP. She is meeting with Greenbrier and Greystone, who are leading builders of senior living facilities. They have access to equity and would build the center. There is a site in mind for the project, the Sonoma Mountain Village, which owns the land.

Investment Policy Development

The Board discussed the possibility of making a statement about SFZC's investment policy intentions as a supplement to the statement by Central Abbess Linda Cutts in Sangha News. Larry agreed to check in with Investment Committee to see if the November board meeting could receive a progress report on their work to develop the investment policy. The committee, composed of volunteers, only meets quarterly so this work is taking considerable time.

Development Committee Report

Gratitude was expressed to board members for their help with the Fall Harvest solicitation. Good news was reported: the Harvest campaign is at 50% of its goal. There has been great participation by the Board, and there is a high likelihood of meeting the campaign goal. The Development Committee and development staff are available to help if Board members are stuck in following through with contacting the folks in their portfolios.

Governance Committee Resolution on Statements About Public/Social Issues

The Governance Committee presented a draft of a proposed policy addressing SFZC leaders speaking out on public/social issues. After a lengthy discussion, the Governance Committee withdrew the proposal since many board members questioned the need for the policy and expressed concerns about restricting the leadership's ability to speak out on important issues from time to time.

Governance Committee Report

Piper Murakami was approved as a candidate for the Board for the fall election. Subsequent to the meeting via an email process, the board also approved the three incumbent candidates, Helen Degenhardt, Roger Hillyard, and Dennis McNally, for the fall election. The Committee reported that it is substantial work to find candidates for the Board and that it is not too early to be thinking about candidates for next year.

Finance Committee Report

The profit and loss statement is currently \$50,000 better than budget. Green Gulch is doing very well. Tassajara is a little ahead of budget. City Center is the biggest challenge: income is way down, which is largely attributable to the number of RBT slots being reduced. Finance Committee chair Helen Degenhardt will meet soon with CFO Jordan Thorn and CC Director Mary Stares. She sees three main tasks: reforecasting existing budget (mostly focused on City Center), meeting with Cliff Win regarding installing a new Controller, and working on next year's budget. In addition, work continues on the long-range financial plan.

The Finance Committee has lost a member and is looking for a replacement, especially someone who knows accounting systems. A couple of proposals were made regarding

communicating about SFZC's finances: first, that a budget pie chart be put on the website and, second, that once or twice a year the three directors could present a budget overview at a residents' meeting at their center.

Update on IT Task Force/Plan

The task force humbly requested that their name be changed to the Technology Committee (or Technology Advisory Group). What the IT task force is proposing is not an IT or technology plan. The task force reported that SFZC does not have an IT problem, but a technology problem. SFZC could fix all of its IT problems, but would still have a technology problem, which has more to do with the culture and practice of working with technology. The question was posed about how to get the practice leadership to embrace, model, and teach the practice of working with technology.

Update on Sangha Project Planning

Susan gave an update on the Sangha Project. The concepts for how membership would work and how the Sangha Project as a whole would relate to SFZC have been updated. The current proposal is that the Sangha Project would have dual leadership, spiritual and operational. Questions that still need to be addressed are focused on the organizational structure, the reporting structure, how decisions will be made and what the public identity of the Sangha Project will be. The Development Office is now supportive of the membership function being moved from to the Sangha Project, but wants clarity about how this transition will work.

There will be a presentation on the Sangha Project to the Board at its November meeting and for that presentation, the Board is asking for greater clarification regarding organizational structure, the authenticity of the offering (especially, who will be the teachers), and the business plan. There was a brief discussion about what the board was most interested in with regard to the business plan. In response, interest was expressed in more information regarding cost and revenue projections, critical dependencies, staffing and infrastructure, worst case scenarios and how we would respond, implementation plans, reporting to the Board and how content development will work.

George Kellar will work with Robert Thomas on planning the presentation to be made at the November Board meeting.

Adjournment

Following the discussion of the Sangha Project the board adjourned.