

Albuquerque Vipassana Sangha

Minutes of Membership Meeting -- 20 July 2003

Summary

Reports

- Treasurer
- Fund Raising
- Retreat
- Scheduling

Discussion

- Shaila's Potluck
- Tax issues
- Proposal – Agenda on the Web site
- Proposal – Instructions available at each sitting
- Beginner Class Instructor Proposal
- Proposal – Joan to teach class in September
- What does the Sangha want?

The meeting began about 4:15 p.m. at Ken Munoz's home. 10 Sangha members were present including board members Bonnie Kelly, Christine Hall, Fred Herman, Deborah Hill, Ken Munoz, and Lydia Succi. The minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as amended.

Treasurer report

Wynette reported the following account balances:

Checking/Saving	\$4602.61
Retreat	\$2698.27
Scholarship	\$477.00
Teacher	(\$774.92)
Miscellaneous	\$ 2202.26

Fund Raising committee

The fund raising committee did a fund raising effort to help Shaila pay her expenses for her year long retreat at the Forest Refuge. Here is what we have raised so far:

- 1) \$319 in checks made out to AVS that I have not yet turned over to Shaila -- she wants to wait till after the first of the year.
- 2) \$590 in checks made out to Shaila -- given to Shaila last Thursday.
- 3) \$1250 more in monthly or quarterly pledges to come in over the next year.

The committee is planning on doing the annual fund raising letter, but they need additional volunteers to step forward to help with this effort.

Retreat committee

For the October retreat with Eric we have over 20 people signed up so far. The maximum is 33. Upcoming retreats include March 2004 with Eric, fall 2004 date and teacher TBD, and February 2005 with Shaila.

Scheduling committee

DaeJa Napier may be able to come one Friday in August.
On Friday November 21 we will have Marcia Rose.

Shaila's Potluck

Shaila is on the Atkins' Diet, so we can bring meat dishes to the potluck.

Tax Issues

Fred has looked into what it would take for us to become a 501(c)3 religious organization. He found out that about 5 years ago the IRS really made this much harder. Without a building and a regular teacher he thought we had no chance.

Fred talked to an accountant who said another possibility would be to make the teachers employees of the Sangha. Then they wouldn't have to pay gross receipts tax, and they wouldn't have to pay tax on the cost of health insurance.

Finally someone suggested that we could try to use some larger organization, which is already a 501 (c) 3 religious organization, as an umbrella organization. Some possibilities include IMS, Spirit Rock, or even the Thai temple (Wat Buddhasothorn).

Proposal – Agenda on the Web site.

The original proposal:

1. Alert Sangha members to membership meeting agenda items that may be of particular importance to them and so enable prior preparation.
2. Facilitate flow of membership meetings by enabling Sangha members to inform themselves and consider agenda items prior to the actual meeting.

Post the proposed membership meeting agenda on the web site, soon after it becomes available following the Board meeting.

This would become active for the next membership meeting, and would have no additional cost for the Sangha.

Concerns/Comments

1. This would be additional work for the web master. Wynette says this wouldn't be a problem for her as long as someone sends the agenda to her.
2. It might be better to this via email, rather than the web. The email list moderator thought that we could do both.

The proposal was amended as follows:

The agenda will be available prior to the meeting both on the web site, and through email group.

This proposal was accepted by the consensus of the members present.

Proposal – Instructions available at each sitting.

The original proposal:

To ensure that basic meditation instruction is offered at every sitting led by a member of the Sangha.

At every sitting led by a Sangha member, someone (either that member or someone else) will offer basic meditation instruction if an attendee desires it. We will maintain a list of people who are willing as well as written instructions that can be read.

Immediately upon consensus agreement; it would last until changed by consensus.

Concerns/Comments:

1. Joan already has written instruction available in the box, so that part is already taken care of.
2. It is already hard to attract enough people to moderate the meetings, if the moderator also has to read instructions that might further discourage people from moderating. The moderator of the meeting wouldn't have to do it; there would be a list of people who would be willing.
3. It is important to make sure that someone asks the question.
4. We could schedule two people each Thursday night; one to read the instructions, and the other to moderate. Many people thought this idea was too complicated.
5. It is pretty easy to read the instructions.

The proposal was amended as follows:

The scheduling committee will make sure that someone will at the meeting to read instructions. If the moderator isn't willing to read the instructions, then someone from the list will do it.

This proposal was accepted by the consensus of the members present.

Proposal – Joan to teach class in September.

The original proposal:

To have the Sangha sponsor an all day class taught by Joan Granger.

To have an all day class at Joan's house teaching the life of the Buddha, basic teachings of the dharma, sitting, walking, and eating meditation.

This would be a one time class possibly in mid September. Joan would print the flyers, and the class would be announced at the Thursday night sittings.

Concerns/Ideas:

1. We already have an active proposal about who could teach beginner classes. This other proposal hasn't been accepted yet, so we can consider this new one separately.
2. Joan has already taught beginner classes for the Sangha in the past.
3. Joan will teach this class alone.

This proposal was accepted by a consensus of the members present.

Beginner Class Instructor Proposal

This proposal was discussed at a previous membership meeting. This is a continuation of that discussion.

Concerns/Ideas:

1. We should add input from a teacher (specifically Eric) as one of the criterion to see if the person is qualified to teach. The teacher could interview the prospective instructor.
2. Joan said passing on the Dharma is joyous, so as many people should participate as possible.
3. Suzanne commented that some people may feel that the Sangha shouldn't even offer classes. Many people disagreed with this.
4. Fred commented that this is important and we should continue to offer beginner classes.
5. Deborah commented that beginner classes are a way to welcome new people into the Sangha.

The members are in agreement that we should continue to offer beginners classes.

6. Suzanne brought up the question of whether we were talking about only meditation instruction, or should be include basic dharma, such as the four noble truths?
7. George felt the classes should focus on meditation
8. In the past we have varied on the amount of Buddhist thought included in the classes.
9. We could do a series of classes. Meditation would be taught in the first class, followed by a second class with basic Buddhist ideas.
10. We could have tapes to do the classes. This would offer consistency in how the classes were taught.
11. We should focus on how to select the teacher (which what the proposal is about) rather than the curriculum.
12. We already have a group of people who have taught classes in the past. These people could select the new instructors.
13. It is very important that the people who are selected as instructors have a certain minimum amount of experience.
14. People who come on Thursday nights often need to know the basics of the dharma in order to understand some of the more in depth dharma talks.
15. We need help in deciding who is qualified, rather than just objective criteria.

There is not enough time to continue this discussion. We will carry this forward to a later meeting.

What does the Sangha want?

Suzanne suggested that we have a second round of the discussion about what people want from Sangha, with the added reality check that they should also be thinking of what they are willing to do to make it actually happen. In other words what dana can people offer to make their dreams a reality.

Comments:

1. We need to be aware of people who may just be showing up for the first time on Thursday.
2. Needs, strategies, and commitments are three separate things, so we may want to separate these.
3. Instead of doing this we could have a talk on Sangha and what it really means.

The meeting adjourned at about 6:10PM.

* * * * * Kenneth M. Munoz, Secretary * * * * *