**Nebraska Zen Center**

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

May 1, 2022

**Meeting Notification:** Notice of meeting made via email to all Directors

**Meeting Location:** Nebraska Zen Center

**Board Members Present:**

Pam Griffin (2022) President

Fergus Hoban (2022) Vice President

Vicki Grunwald (2022) Treasurer

George Patenode (2022) Secretary

Scott Rosen (2022)

Annette Jordan (2022)

Michael Pray (2022)

**Board Members Absent:**

Tom Millie (2022)

**Sangha Members Present:**

Sarah Neppl

Karalee Picard

The meeting was called to order by Pam Griffin, President, at 11:30 am. Attendance was taken and a quorum was present.

**Agenda**

The Board reviewed and approved the Minutes of Meetings of the Nebraska Zen Center (NZC) Board of Directors meetings for February 20 and 27, 2022.

NZC Expansion

Fergus Hoban provided an update to his proposed NZC zendo and facility expansion by presenting the current version of the architectural plans that he developed in partnership with a local architect. The proposed plans include a new garage north of the existing zendo, with an expansion of the second level residence and first level NZC common area to the west, and new 60-person zendo to the rear of the property that would adjoin the main level NZC common area via a glass vestibule. The plans also include basement space under the proposed expansion with a new kitchen for NZC use located on the main floor common area. The architectural plans show the proposed expansion has having a continuation of the same roofline and building style of the existing NZC structure so that the street view of the whole facility, new and old, would appear architecturally consistent. Both levels of the expansion would be connected by a stairwell so that the second level could be used by the Sangha for NZC activities. The expansion would provide enough space so that the original building could be dedicated as a private living quarters for a resident guiding teacher. Fergus provided additional details and answered questions from the Board members. The NZC expansion, as proposed and at current construction rates, would have a total cost between $1.2M to $1.5M. Fergus reiterated the Board’s consensus that the start of any actual demolition or construction of NZC expansion would only occur if there is a full-time, resident guiding teacher who is willing to lead in the growth of the Sangha that would necessitate such a facility expansion. After a general discussion about what good or efficient board governance could look like by defining Board Directors as executives a motion was made and accepted to name Fergus as the director of NZC expansion.

Guiding Teacher Search

Fergus had previously met with Daishin McCabe in April and, on behalf of the NZC Board, presented an employment package in offer for Daishin to be the next full-time, resident guiding teacher. Fergus provided to the Board details of his April meeting including that Daishin had a strong interest in accepting the offer but would provide his answer in May. Pam Griffin, during this meeting, read Daishin’s emailed response to the Board that, even though Daishin expressed his gratitude of the offer, he respectfully declined the guiding teacher position due to family commitments. Several Board members expressed a continued interest in Daishin serving as the NZC guiding teacher in some limited capacity and a discussion followed in how the Board could amend the employment offer that would better fit Daishin’s schedule. The Board decided to suspend the search for a guiding teacher in the near term and instead negotiate with Daishin by offering an amended proposal. The Board moved and accepted to give Pam executive control over the proposal process with Daishin.

Communication Committee

It was decided to take a different approach by not developing a logo for NZC but rather pursuing, with a new outside consultant, an investigation of an “identity” of NZC with the intent of creating a new NZC logo that could capture such identity. Annette Jordan accepted the executive control of working with the new outside consultant on the NZC identity project, in addition with the current outside consultant. The Board decided to also table the use of the previously designed enso and tree logo in the meantime.

Annette asked the Board to decide well in advance on certain dates of future fundraising and program events for 2022 so that the Communication Committee is better prepared with the NZC messaging via the newsletter and social media. The Board will work towards using the program calendar more effectively. Annette will, in turn, improve the focus of responsibilities of the outside consultant. She also asked for feedback on the color palate used for NZC web presence.

Tech Committee

Michael Pray provided an update of Tech Committee projects involving the recent developments in the use of Google Calendar for public-facing program event message and the use of the Word document for internal communication with Board members. Michael provided general information about the type and access for the various websites used by NZC. The Tech Committee is also discussing which appropriate system could be used to better record the minutes of the Committee meeting in a format accessible to the Board, how to better perform YouTube updates of edited Sunday morning services, and the implementation of Slack for Board use instead of personal emails.

Treasurer Report

Vicki Grunwald as Treasurer presented the NZC bank account balances as of April 30, 2022 that show NZC is currently in a stable financial condition and within historical ranges for donations and expenses. Vicki notified the board of the corporate merger of the current bank used by NZC with another and that she will plan on obtaining new checks and bank account numbers from the new bank. Vicki discussed the history of donation amounts raised through NZC fundraising over the years and, using the annual high/low dollar ranges as a guide, offered the Board an historical median amount that could be used as a fundraising goal for 2022. Vicki also recommended concentrating on only two fundraising events for 2022, that being Buddha’s Birthday which already passed in April and Giving Tuesday in November. Pam discussed having regular membership drives that could also be a source new donations. The current number of members who regularly donate stands at 19 and is close to the previous goal of 20.

Vicki stated that Treasurer training with Scott Rosen has continued to where she is comfortable for Scott to act as Treasurer for the month of June. A general discussion followed concerning how any facility expansion of NZC would be managed and financed, especially how a larger facility would be maintained financially in the future with current sources of donor income. Vicki will create a project plan spreadsheet that will provide a framework to track the timeline of various events of a facility expansion.

A discussion later occurred into the merits of an independent audit or review of the NZC books for the previous three years. Vicki will investigate potential auditors and the types of audit reports that could be produced. The Board approved $1,500.00 in NZC funding if such an auditor is found.

Amendment to the NZC Bylaws

Pam and George discussed revisions to sections 5.01 *Committees* that allows for the inclusion of at least one Director, and 6.01 *Guiding Teacher Qualifications, duties,* by removing the ability of a lay teacher to be a Guiding Teacher and that the Guiding Teacher meets the recently amended requirements of the SZBA. The stated revisions to both sections 5.01 and 6.01 were approved by Board vote. Pam expressed a need to review other potential sections of the Bylaws including Committee responsibilities and so she will re-write sections 5.01 and 6.01 and provide a complete set of other recommendations to the Board for adoption at the next meeting.

Miscellaneous

Vicki discussed the merits of having NZC as a member and host site of compost bins for the Omaha Compost Club. NZC and any neighborhood members could use it for yard and kitchen waste. The Board approved so long as there is no cost to NZC. Vicki will investigate further.

Pam mentioned that a UNO religion professor, who had previously brought his students for tours of NZC, expressed an interest in doing so again and also wanted to include a religion teacher from Metro Community College and a high school teacher from Central. Pam will host the teachers and students for a tour the following Tuesday.

George reminded the Board of the Remembrance Ceremony planned for May 22nd and will be attended by Shuji Valdene Mintzmyer as service leader. Daishin McCabe is also scheduled to attend NZC on June 17th for a Full Moon Ceremony and the sesshin on the following Saturday.

A decision was made to change the frequency of regular Board meetings going forward from monthly to every other month.

The meeting ended at 2:28 pm.

George Patenode, Secretary

Nebraska Zen Center Board of Directors, May 1, 2022