

NZC Board of Directors Meeting

Sunday, May 16, 2021

Meeting notification: Meeting scheduled on January 30, 2021

Board members present:

Dosho Port, Executive Director

Tetsugan Zummach, Treasurer

Jim Poleshuk, President (2022)

Joe Janowski, Secretary (2023)

Others present: None

Was a quorum established?

Yes. Meeting called to order by Jim at 1:08 p.m.

Approval of minutes

Jim moved to approve the minutes of the January 30, 2021, annual board meeting; and the minutes of the regular January 30, 2021 board meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Dosho. The motion passed.

Financial Review/Membership

As practice moved online due to the pandemic, the students from the Vine Moodle platform were blended with the students and programming of NZC. Tuition donations from students that had previously been paid for the Vine are now paid to NZC and are tax deductible.

Building/Maintenance Report

No major expenses are foreseen for the grounds or building.
The furnace/AC system will be serviced.

Executive Director/Head Priest Report

As the severity of the pandemic has lessened, Dosho said this is a dynamic time, ripe with possibilities. One possibility would be to resume in-person practice. Prior to the pandemic, he had the sense that the Zen center wasn't making headway. Attendance at Sunday Open Zen had slightly increased on some Sundays, but daily practice numbers (3 or 4 people), class attendance (10-12 people), and sesshin attendance by the local group (5 to 6 people) had not significantly increased. After four years of offering a variety of study topics and avenues for beginners and more seasoned practitioners to find a foothold in the community, he had the sense that the center had not succeeded in establishing a core group of practitioners that could serve supportive roles. Instead, key roles and tasks such as tenzo for sesshins, retreat prep and planning, and cleaning were continuing to fall mainly to Tetsugan.

A second possibility would be in-person practice with simultaneous online attendance for Saturday Open Zen. This option has some technical hurdles, but more importantly, it would prioritize the local group. The local group has a handful of students, plus some casual participants, while the nonlocal group is made up of approximately 30 students. It seems unfair for the majority of students to be sidelined, and it creates challenges to meeting a wide range of practitioner experiences and needs.

A third option would be to maintain the focus on online practice with the addition of periodic in-person retreats/sesshin. In this case, the current building and grounds would no longer be able to accommodate a larger group of practitioners for extended retreats. One possibility then would be to sell the current building, and purchase a space that could be used as a hermitage, serving as the place to continue online teaching and include living space for the teachers. Ideally, this new property would also have the capacity to host practitioners for solo retreats. A facility would be rented that could accommodate a larger group for retreats/sesshin.

Dosho also discussed the importance of the building as a lineage asset. One of the reasons that he and Tetsugan came to Omaha was to see if they could preserve this lineage asset for the future, assuming it would be for the future of an in-person group in Omaha. With the pandemic, the paradigm of local and nonlocal has been shattered and it has become clear that the best chance for preserving the lineage asset and transmitting it to the future would be through focusing their teaching practice online, including a blended group of students, with some who are local to Omaha and many who are nonlocal.

This seems to be the best strategy to implement the mission/vision: to be a refuge for openhearted inquiry and audacious awakening.

Contribution towards replacement vehicle

Dosho and Tetsugan's car was totaled in an accident this spring. Given that since December 2020, Dosho had not been taking the \$900 monthly stipend from NZC, which amounts to \$5,400, and that for the last five years Dosho and Tetsugan had been using their vehicle NZC-related travel with the anticipation of such usage in the future, Dosho moved that the NZC contribute \$10,000 for a replacement vehicle. Tetsugan seconded the motion. Dosho and Tetsugan recused themselves from the vote. The motion passed via email on May 10.

Adjournment

Dosho moved for the meeting to be adjourned at 12:53 p.m. The motion was seconded by Jim. The motion passed.



Joe Janowski

Secretary, Nebraska Zen Center Board of Directors