

MINUTES FROM BOARD RETREAT 07/09/2022

Present: Kakumyo Lowe-Charde (A), Alice Chan (1), Todd Tsuho Sattersten (A), Rick Hogetsu Mitchell (2), Sam Murphy (1), Carrie Schultz (3), Stacy Zonnyo Riger (3), Jean Renso Bond (3)

VISIONING

The board spent an hour visioning what we would like to see happen at DRZC over the next 3-5 years. As depicted below, there are a number of these ideas which have some strong interrelationships.

Several topics were common across Board members and will be the focus of discussion at the August meeting. Debt (SEMBLE loan and co-housing buyout) is a challenge to some of the investment members would like to see.

MEMBER CONCERNS

ESLT Masking. At the ESLT event this spring a decision was made for participants to go maskless, which caused significant dissent with kitchen staff and residents. Since most Dharma Rain leaders attended the event, Renso was asked to interview many of the people involved and report to the Board. Renso is drafting a letter to those involved to discuss our findings and the changes we are recommending to prevent an issue like this happening again.

Housing Village. Kakumyo and several board members toured the village at Parkrose church and met with church staff and the non-profit managing the site. Kakumyo is also meeting with several other non-profit groups that could potentially manage a site at DRZC. Kakumyo sent an email to membership discussing this opportunity. The majority of responses were very supportive. This is a project still in the early stages and most of the specifics are not worked out.

Dharma Rain Endorsements. Recently, a member asked DRZC to officially endorse a petition for a ballot amendment. We do not have any policies in place to consider political issues and endorsements. Sam is going to take a pass at a draft policy and distribute it to the board.

REPORTS

Health and Safety. No substantive changes. The Committee is shifting some attention from Covid towards emergency preparedness.

DEI. several Wednesday evening sessions this summer will be focused on sangha wide forums on equity. One session will focus on why DEI is leading with race, and one will focus on gender issues.

Membership. Kakumyo reviewed membership numbers and revenue. Membership was solid through the heart of the pandemic, averaging growth of 2-3%. Revenue appears to be picking up a bit last year and this one.

Communication. Zonnyo reviewed the website and communications processes and responsibilities. The board discussed potentially moving off google for email and list

management due to potential privacy concerns. The board agreed that the benefit was outweighed by the challenges and extra work involved to incorporate a new email platform with all the different systems we use.

Dharma School and Frog Song. The board reviewed the quarterly safety and responsibility reports from the DG Council. We also reviewed the following reports from the Council and Frog Song:

Dharma Garden Council

The DGC voted to change its responsibilities, process and composition. The Board reviewed these changes

An important change is the introduction of four-year term limits. This means that 3 of our council members will step off the council. Also, the position of Administrative Assistant was added. The Admin Assistant attends meetings but has no vote. There are no term limits attached to this position

The DGC is now composed of:

Veronica Roderick, Chair
Shin'yu Vitells, Head of Dharma Garden
Flying Fish Murphy
Molly Bailen, Admin Assistant
Lena Wood will also join the Council.

Dharma School

This 2021-2022 school year, we offered an in-person spring term for the Spruce group (middle school) and Doug Fir (high school) from April 3 to May 22nd. The suggested fee was \$150.00 for the year, with \$50 just for spring term. We had 18 students enrolled (two dropped and two never attended despite enrollment, for a total of 14) and the program took in \$1425.

We met, masked, in the barn with the garage door open for ventilation, created a “classroom” there with carpet, altar, zafus, etc and this space seemed to work well. Basically, we tried to create a space and opportunity for the kids to connect with each other, with Dharma Rain and with their practice and we feel that this was appreciated by kids and parents. We especially appreciate the flexibility and enthusiasm of our four teachers: Kakuon, Haku, Molly and Kyra.

We are hoping to offer a full program in the fall. A sub-committee of the DGC is working on creating new curriculum and lesson plans for the coming school year. This will be the first time we will offer lesson plans to our teachers. The working title for the theme is Community of Practice: Bringing us Back Together.

Dharma Camp

Dharma Camp will take place July 24-29 at Molalla Retreat Center, the same place we held Dharma Camp in 2019. Fee is \$475. Registration is small, so far 24 or 25 kids have registered, despite outreach to other sanghas. Rental fee for Molalla Retreat is \$11,743 so we will more or less break even this year. Kakuon is Head of Dharma Camp, and we are fully staffed.

Frog Song Montessori Preschool

Board Report July 2022

Frog Song offered a full program this school year, from September to June, with our full class of 15 students. Our staff is Claire Lundy, lead teacher, Emily Saxton, assistant teacher, and Danny Brodie who covers lunch breaks and is our main substitute teacher.

During the pandemic, we were operating as an Emergency Childcare Center, but that designation has been lifted, and we now follow the normal rules for Certified Child Care from the Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division. What were requirements under the Emergency rules are now considered recommendations. Our teachers remained masked indoors. Although some children came down with Covid, and were out of school until they tested negative, we never had to close school because of a Covid outbreak.

Summer Camp will run from July 11 to Aug 5. Tuition is \$945. We're fully enrolled.

We're fully enrolled for next year, with a healthy wait list.

Frog Song is running well; staff, families and children are happy. I would, however, like to express a concern to the Board. Because we are such a small program, it's hard to maintain a list of active substitute teachers. At this point, we're looking for available subs and not finding them. With our three teachers, we can manage if one of them gets sick for a brief period. If two are out, we would be in a difficult situation. Larger schools have "floaters" who move from class to class to give breaks to teachers and are available to sub when needed. I have long wished for two preschool classrooms and one infant and toddler classroom, as a more viable model. I know that's not feasible right now but I wanted to share this concern, and this wish, with the Board.

NEW BUSINESS

Organization Structure. As referenced above, the Dharma Garden Council has refined its mandate and added term limits.

Board Slate. We reviewed all current Board members' terms of service. Zonnyo, Jean and Carrie all are in the third year of their first three-year term. All have agreed to continue serving. Kakumyo will circulate a list of potential candidates to bring the Board up to nine people, and we will discuss at the August meeting.

Financial. Alice is finalizing a stub year budget for the remainder of this year (we switched to a calendar year). She is also finalizing a five-year projection. We discussed current reserves and cash flow and based on these projections hope to be able to increase the speed with which we are paying down debt.

Meeting adjourned 3:40

Respectfully submitted by Sam Murphy, Secretary