
Portland Friends of the Dhamma Board Meeting Minutes

February 15, 2017

Portland Dhamma Center, 1404 SE 25th Ave, Portland

Directors Present: Greg Satir (Chair), Charla Chamberlain, Kristen Saxton, Sakula (Spiritual Director), Stephanie Allderdice

Officers Present: Tena Hoke (Secretary), Alistair Williamson (Vice Chair), Bonnie Wilson (Treasurer)

Community Members Present: Jim Fairchild, Nathan Varns, Chad Lublin, Robin Donovan

The meeting convened at 6:35 following a meditation led by Sakula.

A quorum was declared, with 4 of 5 Directors present. (Charla arrived during the discussion of fundraising.)

There was no new business, and the agenda was approved.

Minutes Approval. The minutes from the previous meeting held January 18, 2017 were approved with no changes.

Spiritual Director's Report:

Sakula reviewed her written report, noting that Cator (another CALM – Community of Abahayagiri Lay Ministers member) will now definitely be coming in September, and that Matthew will be giving his Buddha's Basic Teachings in May.

Building Committee Report:

Kristen reviewed her written report, clarifying on item #3 that getting bids on electrical repair does not mean that the spending has been approved. Bonnie noted that any costs to repair leakage in the rental office should be accounted for separately so they can be offset against the taxable rental income.

Action Item Kristen – Have a bid for electrical repair of the upstairs lighting by the next Board meeting

Action Item Kristen – Due by the April Board meeting – Either have the downstairs door keypad working or have a plan (including costs) for getting it working.

Insurance Update. Greg explained that we will not be changing insurance carriers because once all updated information was received from both carriers there was no real savings to be gained without lowering our existing coverage.

Action Item Review. All items were completed except the letter about the community meeting, and tenant insurance.

Action Item Charla – write a letter to the community summarizing what the Board took from the Community Meeting, including an invitation to anyone with willingness to anchor a new project (supporting any of these three areas) to contact a Board member. To be done by 3/1, or Charla should reach out for assistance.

Action Item Greg – Put tenant insurance as question to resolve on the next Board meeting agenda.

Fundraising Plan Discussion. Stephanie and Kristen brought their first draft of a fundraising plan for 2018 for discussion, and received the following feedback:

- Note where fundraising fits within the total income picture
- Identify what support will be required for each activity
- Note what the goal will be for the total amount raised, and any metrics needed to track that
- Address scheduling – avoid over-saturation
- Keep in mind that “exposing the need” is a good way to raise funds
- Be clear when bringing the community together whether an activity is for fundraising or not (Sakula will consult on this)
- Cover what roles will be needed, e.g. champion of directed asks for specific needs, role of thanking contributors
- Consider how much energy to put into predictable fundraising methods vs. developing new but less predictable methods

Action Item Stephanie & Kristen – Bring version 2 of the 2018 fundraising plan to the next board meeting.

Writing Job Descriptions. Alistair and Tena, with assistance from Jim, will work on Officer and Director job descriptions. One goal is to develop an accessible page of information. In addition to general duties of each position, the aspects of the job that are made unique by PFOD should also be covered.

Action Item Alistair & Tena – Bring an initial direction on job descriptions to next month’s meeting.

Creating a Volunteer Structure. Alistair discussed the variety of perceptions around what is meant by one of this year’s Board focus areas – creating a volunteer structure. It is not clear what outcome the Board envisioned when we adopted this focus. As a way of thinking about this in a different way, Sakula was invited to share her thoughts on the possible position of an Executive Director.

Executive Director Possibility. Sakula presented the work she has done with her executive coach to define her Spiritual Director duties as separate from her administrative duties. One way of parceling off administrative duties would be to assign them to an Executive Director (ED). Here is the information Sakula presented on the SD role, and a possible definition for an ED role:

Responsibilities of Spiritual Director of PFoD

The Spiritual Director is to encourage and provide opportunities for drawing near the monastics of the Thai Forest Tradition for teaching and spiritual guidance within a sanctuary of welcome and calm (aka, refuge). The S.D. also provides spiritual direction for the PFoD community through programming and interviews.

Key responsibilities are to:

1. Uphold the Spiritual Vision
 - a) Sit as an active, engaged, and permanent voting member of the board
2. Build, maintain and nourish relationships with the Thai Forest monastic lineage both home and abroad and serve as their representative to the lay community at large
3. Oversee the content of programming
 - a) Supply a calm and welcoming atmosphere for spiritual practice
 - b) Support and nurture the spiritual well-being of the PFoD community
4. Leads the Upasika Program*

5. Chairs the Teachers Round-Table
 - a) Oversees the training of future teachers of PFoD
6. Oversees the content of communications (i.e. website, newsletter, Facebook)

Spiritual Vision Statement

We envision a City Sanctuary/Refuge, where we as laypeople can set aside our worldly burdens within a community that nurtures virtue, contentment and calm, so wisdom can arise. We aim to provide support for personal explorations into the Buddha's teachings, guidance in training our minds, and direct contact with lineage of Ajahn Chah monastics. Finally we envision a community of mutual support and companionship as we strive to apply these teachings in our daily lives, and walk the eight fold path.

******(Sakula's personal mission in role as Spiritual Director) To encourage and provide opportunities for lay Buddhist practitioners to draw near monastics of the Thai Forest Tradition for teachings and spiritual guidance and to develop, cultivate and nurture a beautiful and appropriate environment for those partaking in any of our events with a specific focus on those training in the Upasika-program*******.

The Executive Director is to ensure a solid and sustainable foundation by way of the physical and operational structure of the PFoD community. The E.D. is to facilitate and set direction that creates alignment and maintains commitments within a diverse group of volunteers and donors of said community.

Key responsibilities are to:

7. Builds relationships with members within the community to help facilitate the business of the community
8. Works in tandem with the Spiritual Director
9. Works with the Board of Directors to implement their policies, decisions, fundraising goals, and overall strategic plans and purpose
10. Works with the finance committee to oversee the budget
11. Oversees the operations/management of the facility
12. Increases the overall visibility of PFoD's programs and purpose at home and abroad
13. Establishes and maintains a volunteer structure and chairs the Operations Team

An ideal candidate for this position is a person who:

- Has a healthy curiosity of the teachings of the Buddha and our lineage in particular and demonstrates
- Has a deep respect for the human condition
- Can inspire individuals and groups of diverse populations of both volunteers and donors
- Respects and interacts with transparency
- Can think strategically and tactically to achieve PFoD's goals
- Demonstrates self-awareness, integrity and an intent for personal growth

The possibilities of having an ED were discussed. Sakula noted that her coach knows retired ED's who might like to take on a volunteer position. Key discussion points were:

- Unsustainability of Sakula's current work load; burnout is a real problem
- Sakula expressed the strains of the current work load
- There was varied discussion around the definition of an ED position and if it is appropriate to support PFOD's needs.
- Whether it would work to bring in an outsider as ED (noting also the difficulties of filling the position from inside)
- Importance of ED maintaining confidentiality
- Sakula estimates the position would be 16 hours/week to start, possibly later reducing to as little as 5 hours/week

Action Item Greg – Bring next steps on this issue (volunteer structure/ED possibilities) to the next Board meeting, after consulting with Sakula and possibly also Sakula’s executive coach.

Calendar Review:

Action Item Greg & Sakula – identify potential Board candidates by the next Board meeting.

Action Item Stephanie – publicize on the egroup and online calendar Sakula’s upcoming teaching at Dharma Rain.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.
