

Deep Spring Center Board of Directors Meeting

November 23, 2015, 6:30 pm @ Deep Spring Center

Ann Arbor, Michigan

attending: Barbara Brodsky, Rori Stienstra, Amy Koch, Jason Riggs, Elizabeth Cheslak, Beth Mulder, Tana Dean, Lisa Zucker, Ken Morley, Hal Rothbart, Roann Altman, Bill Riccobono, Lalita Dokes, Mary Lawton (via conference call)

not attending: Adriana Medina (board candidate)

Brief Sitting

Sangha Commentary

After the Nov 15th Teachers Meeting, questions arose about the financial status and stability of Deep Spring Center. Several members and supporters of the Deep Spring Sangha came to the Board meeting to ask questions, share concerns, listen and learn, and to show their support. Some people expressed surprise about the amount of work it takes to run an organization. Others wanted to “learn more about the dollars and cents” of Deep Spring and also expressed a desire to support the Board and the Sangha through this time of transition. Concrete assistance was offered in the form of contacting the attorney that helped us when we first signed our lease for the Packard space. Hope was expressed that as we move forward, DSC not lose either “the new aspect of inclusiveness” that has been developing at Deep Spring or “the people who are interested in spiritual inquiry”.

Rori expressed her gratitude to those attending the meeting, saying, “it is good to feel supported and to have Sangha Community present” especially at this time.

I. Emrich

A. Reimbursement dispute- On behalf of Deep Spring, Jason has been consulting with an attorney about how we might resolve our “bedbug” reimbursement dispute with Emrich. The attorney feels that in our situation, we are entitled to a full refund (not just repayment for the refunds we made). He says that a refund is reasonable and customary in cases similar to ours. After discussion, the Board agreed that we would have the attorney request a full refund plus attorney fees as a starting point in the process of resolving this issue.

PLAN: Jason will follow up and ask the attorney to write a letter to Emrich on our behalf.

B. Emrich for summer 2016 - We discussed reserving Emrich for 2016. Considering our current difficulties with Emrich over the bedbug issue, as well as our current financial situation (Emrich requires a large deposit, due in January, to hold the space), it was agreed that Deep Spring will let go of Emrich as a 2016 retreat site.

PLAN: Tana will inform Shari that we are releasing our reserved week in June 2016.

We will look at Oakwood as a place for our week-long summer (or fall) retreat.

II. Finances and Moving Forward

A. the state of finances at Deep Spring (review of notes from Elizabeth and Tana's meeting on Nov. 4). A discussion took place about Deep Spring's current financial situation. Assets and obligations were reviewed. Operating expenses for Deep Spring Center are approximately \$3000/ month. Some months are higher due to insurance premiums, retreat deposits, taxes, etc. Our income is derived largely from classes, retreats, fundraisers and Dana. For the past several years, our Sangha has been experiencing a transition, and our membership is shifting. We have only few teachers at the present time, which limits the number of classes and retreats we can offer. Our income has been dwindling during this period, and our projected income can no longer meet our monthly obligations.

At this moment, our combined funds (checking account, the unrestricted fund, and the scholarship fund) will carry us for 3 or 4 months, through February or March of 2016. The last CD was cashed in order to pay the bills in November. This leaves DSC with no financial cushion. A robust response to our year-end fundraiser is not something we can count on. Those are largely one-time funds and we need regular, ongoing income.

The subject of how best to use our limited resources was approached. All agreed that the office manager role is a critical priority: we need Tana in order to function. We also agreed that we do not need a building for Dharma or for Darshan. Ideas of what to do next included:

- ~ stay at Packard (which we currently cannot afford) if sufficient funds can be raised.
- ~ find a new, less expensive space to hold all DSC activities.
- ~ find several new places for for DSC activities.
- ~ create a "membership" with annual "dues" which might help create a financial base
- ~ ask for support from all the Sangha (immediate and aggressive fundraising, launch an S.O.S. Save Our Sangha campaign

We also discussed how best to share this information with all the Sangha.

Immediate plans include:

Tana will generate a list of past donors

Amy will call the donors and ask for financial help.

Rori will draft a letter to the Sangha which will ask for financial help.

Hal will call his list of donors and ask for emergency funds.

Barbara will talk with David at Interfaith about the possibility of and terms for using their space.

Barbara will talk with Oakwood about possible retreat dates for summer/ fall 2016.

There is currently no plan to talk with the landlord about lowering our monthly rent, or about the possibility of our leaving the space before the lease expires.

There is no plan to notify Intuitives and others who use Deep Spring's space for their activities.

III. Administrative issues

1. The Crazy Wisdom ad has been approved

2. Non-profit postal rate for DSC was investigated: the annual cost of the program does not make sense at this time with our very limited amount of snail mail
 3. The fifth Sunday potluck is being promoted (on the website & email) as a holiday party.
 4. Archives- Barbara's archives need to move from the old website to the new website. This is an important project that needs to happen in the next year or two. Transferring the files will be more complex than was originally thought, due to technical computing issues (platforms and PHP language). Because of the time and expertise involved, it is likely to be an expensive undertaking, unless volunteers can be found and trained for the job.
- PLAN: discuss again in six months

Next Meetings: January 25, 2016. There is no meeting in December.

All meetings are held at Deep Spring Center unless otherwise announced. All meetings are open to the Sangha. The agenda for the upcoming meeting, and minutes from past meetings can be found at www.deepspring.org

Adjourned at 8:55 pm

Respectfully submitted by Elizabeth Cheslak, Secretary