

## Cedar Rapids Zen Center – Jikyouji

### MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of the CRZC Sangha and Board of Directors April 23, 2017

#### SANGHA MEETING

**Present:** President Eric Higgins-Freese, Vice President Douglas Gustafson, Treasurer Gina Kendall, Secretary Kelly Kruse, Resident Teacher Zuiko Redding, Clergy Representative Daishin McCabe, Ken Burnside, Suisan Goldberg, Henry Higgins-Freese, Reuben Higgins-Freese, Travis Hunt, Brian Merrick, John Rathbun, Julie Shaw

Meeting called to order by President Eric Higgins-Freese at 11:03 AM.

**MINUTES of March 26** – Motion to approve by Gus – Second by Zuiko - Carries

**ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS** – Motion to nominate Julie and John to the board by Zuiko – Second by Ken - Carries

Meeting adjourned at 11:10 AM  
Motion to adjourn by Gina – Second by Zuiko - Carries

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

**Present:** President Eric Higgins-Freese, Vice President Douglas Gustafson, Treasurer Gina Kendall, Secretary Kelly Kruse, Resident Teacher Zuiko Redding, Clergy Representative Daishin McCabe, Ken Burnside, Suisan Goldberg, Henry Higgins-Freese, Reuben Higgins-Freese, Travis Hunt, Brian Merrick, John Rathbun, Julie Shaw

Meeting called to order by President Eric Higgins-Freese at 11:10 AM.

ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES of April 24, 2016 were approved during the year and are posted on the website.

#### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- Possible new officers: Chris Lui, Lauren Manninen, Julie Shaw, and John Rathbun
- Chris is not here, but had expressed interest in being Treasurer in the future; could be appointed as an assistant later without having to be elected to the board
- Motion to re-elect Kelly Kruse Secretary by Eric – Second by Julie – Carries
- Motion to re-elect Gina Kendall Treasurer by Travis – Second by Zuiko – Carries
- Discussion – Would Eric and Gus like to switch roles for a year?
- Motion to elect Gus President by Gina – Second by Kelly – Carries
- Motion to elect Eric Vice President by Ken – Second by Travis - Carries

## **PRACTICE REPORT – Zuiko Redding**

Our mission is to promote Soto Zen practice by providing a welcoming place for zazen, spiritual practice, religious study, and community fellowship. It is also to support each other in living lives guided by zazen and manifested in the sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts.

We are fulfilling that mission well. We are a welcoming sangha, with members who take care of zazen, administration, grounds, and other work as part of their practice. We can congratulate ourselves on what we have become – a place where people can learn, experience, and practice the dharma with the support of others. We are a haven where people come and sit noon and evening, do baika, study dharma, and teach their children about the Buddha’s practice. We are helping in our community. Our presence makes a difference.

We are not a large organization, but we are a grounded one. People are strong in their practice and serious about being awake in daily life. We work quietly in our community. I would like to see more people at sesshins and all-day sittings and perhaps that will happen in the future.

### **Local Practice**

Attendance at zazen instruction and at 8:30 Sunday morning orientation is steady. Most hear about us on the web and a few from Facebook. The four-session course is still poorly attended but it does help people.

Attendance and participation has definitely increased. Ten people attended the New Year’s Day sitting and ceremony, and there were twenty at the Buddha’s Birthday ceremony. We are now regularly seeing the zendo filled on Sunday mornings. Noon zazen usually has one to three sitters. Work days also have been well-attended, with an average of five people. We now have many regular attenders, mixed with others who attend occasionally and with newcomers.

Members are more willing to attempt the practice of being doan and jisha and filling other roles in the center. It would be good to have four or five doans – and also jishas - so people would not have to do it so often. Kelly has ably taken over teaching the introductory evening. I wonder if it wouldn’t be good for someone to train with her so she wouldn’t have to worry if the weather was bad (Gus may do this). We need someone to practice with work – leading work days and Sunday work periods and keeping tabs on the condition of the building and grounds. These duties need not take up much time. Being work leader would likely take a couple of hours a month on average. Taking on these things helps us deepen our practice.

Other practice is also doing well. The previously intermittent study group has become a permanent Monday evening activity with around eight members. Some members are unable to come on Sunday, so this is their “service” each week. The discussion is thoughtful and insightful. Beginning on May 1, Ashok Chawla of the Hindu community will teach and lead discussion on the history of the relationship between the Hindu and Buddhist traditions.

The baika group has three members and meets at 5:30 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays each month. In June, Rev. Yuko Moriyama came to teach, and Rev. Hoko Karnegis will be here to teach on August 5.

### **Community practice**

Our practice has also been visible in the community. Gina Kendall is our representative to the Inter-Religious Council. Zuiko and Tim Macejak gave talks at schools, universities, and churches around the area. Sally Taylor presided at a display on Buddhism at Linn-Mar High School’s Diversity Day.

We are also involved with Iowa Interfaith Power and Light in working on sustainability issues, and we make regular contributions to the neighborhood Boys and Girls Club. We also participate in neighborhood cleanups.

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Prison practice is steady. The sangha at Anamosa is small and steady. Zuiko, Tim Macejak and Tim Yuki rotate in sitting with the men on Sunday. Zuiko visits Ft. Madison monthly and Clarinda annually. Daishin visits Ft. Dodge. We also supplied books and other items to the inmates and the groups, and Zuiko corresponded with inmates at these places. Zuiko continues to serve as the state prison chaplains' resource on Buddhism. Gina will be integrating into prison visits soon.

Zuiko, Gina, and Kelly will visit the Bloomington-Normal group in May. Stefen Robinson will be receiving the precepts on May 6.

Eric's care of the web page, Hoko's care of the Facebook page, and Lauren's work with the monthly newsletter have really helped make us visible in the community. Our weekly Facebook posts reach between 300 and 1,000 people and the monthly newsletter is mailed to 330 people and has an average 35% open rate. On average, about 2% are interested in clicking on one of the links in the newsletter. Our quarterly print newsletter is mailed out to 480 people and centers. The responses to these, both in terms of attendance and comments and financial support, indicate that they are helping the dharma.

#### **Zuiko's Activities**

Zuiko's practice has been active, too. She is still a secretary and a board member of Sotoshu, and she continues to edit English translations for their web site. She is still working with Tenpyozan, a training monastery being built in California. Her dharma writings appear regularly in *Ancient Way*. In May she helped with an ordination at Prairie Zen Center in Illinois, in June she attended the installation of Hoko Karnegis as Vice Abbot at Sanshinji, and in October she participated in the installation of Rev. Mugai Takano as Abbot at Saikoji in Japan. She also gave a number of talks and sermons, including ones at a Prairiewoods climate retreat, Danville (Illinois) Prison, Honoring Your Wishes end of life conference in Iowa City, the Inter-Religious Council Thanksgiving service, Shabbat at Temple Judah, and the Holocaust Remembrance.

We are realizing our mission because of all of us. There is no Cedar Rapids Zen Center without sangha members with hearts of practice, willing to show up for zazen, talks, work, sesshin and other things. We have all worked shoulder-to-shoulder to build this practice. Let's be grateful to each other for making this a quiet place with a practice that welcomes and sustains everyone who comes. This center grows from our collected hearts and our effort together. It is actually us.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT – Gina Kendall**

- Cost estimates for gas, insurance, wear and tear on Zuiko's car sent out before meeting
- Gina suggested adding \$2,000 to the budget for this year to pay Zuiko's mileage
- Motion to approve the amended budget by Gus – Second by Kelly – Passes
- 2016 Treasurer's Report in separate document

#### **BUILDING AND GROUNDS REPORT – Zuiko Redding**

Search for Work Leader: Someone who can gather information and share coordination with Zuiko and others about pending tasks and projects. Or someone who can just take on the whole thing.

Projects COMPLETED: No major projects this year, just small ones

##### Painting:

- Repaired plaster and repainted kitchen – March, 2017
- Repaired plaster on ceiling in stairwell and discussion room – March, 2017

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### Replacements:

- Air-conditioner fan – July, 2016
- Runners on porch – October, 2016
- Furnace fan – October, 2016
- Porch light – January, 2017

### Grounds:

- Using brick from the chimney, we continued garden border construction.
- Removed branches from buckthorn that were scratching the house and assessed the health of the other trees. All are fine.

### Projects PENDING

Basement Sealing: Water seeps in around the floor and limestone walls are flaking. Zuiko will call contractors for estimates later this spring. Estimate we'll spend \$3,000 - \$4,000 but it will keep both the basement and the foundation safe.

Painting: Needs in the following areas: Interior, upstairs – woodwork and walls in office, Zuiko's room, parts of the library

### Projects for the LONG-TERM

Roof: Should be replaced in four to five years

Floors: Many need refinishing – upstairs hall, zendo, entry, discussion room, sun porch

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING**

(This brainstorming session on ways to grow the practice and keep people engaged took place during lunch, during the last few minutes of the meeting, and after the meeting adjourned.)

- Restaurant trips after work period on Sunday, or before sitting on Monday
- Revise strategic plan
- Dharma school sort of died out; maybe Buddhist youth group with older kids that wouldn't meet as often
- Dharma study or zazen in nature, or in public to raise interest
- Research ways to get visibility in New Bo area

### **NEXT ANNUAL BOARD MEETING: April 29, 2018**

Meeting adjourned at 1:47 PM

Motion to adjourn by Zuiko – Second by Julie – Carries

Respectfully submitted by Kelly Kruse