

Phoenix Shambhala Meditation Center

Council Meeting

March 9, 2019

In Attendance: LaDawn, Andre, Lynn, Jill, Kim, Chris, Jim, Muffie, Michelle, Mark, Lucia

LaDawn facilitated the meeting and led a group check-in.

Shambhala Southwest Region

- Phoenix, Tucson, Flagstaff, Yarnell, Albuquerque. We have had regional council meetings in the past but the centers aren't in a good position to meet in person.
- Kim suggests a Regional Alignment call via Zoom. The group agreed that it's a good idea. Kim will send out a Doodle poll to schedule the call.

How do we want to be together?

- LaDawn shared an excerpt from a document from the Steering Committee on communication guidelines that they use for their meetings, based on the six paramitas.

“Walking the Talk” of our values in our communications:

View: Shambhala/GES vision, mindful speech

Path: The Six Paramitas (generosity, discipline, patience, exertion, meditation, wisdom)

1. Generosity: convey warmth, kindness, and friendliness; give others the benefit of doubt
 2. Discipline: refrain from dominating conversations; step back to allow collective wisdom to emerge
 3. Patience: communicate openness and open-mindedness, even when there is disagreement
 4. Exertion: listen actively; maintain curiosity and inquisitiveness about what others are saying; stay connected to the topic at hand
 5. Meditation: pause, check in before speaking; maintain a sitting practice
 6. Wisdom: practice discernment when deciding when to speak and when to listen
- Group shared responses on how we would like to be together and communicate at these meetings.
 - Summary statement of the group's responses: We would like to be together in a way that respects Right Speech and the Six Paramitas, while building community.
 - We want to continue to ask ourselves what we need and what community members need in order to feel good about moving forward together, and continue to reevaluate how we want to be together.

Governance structures

- Do we want to continue with previous governance structures used at the Center, or do we want something new?
- We received information from Cynthia MacKay and Charlie Goetzl at Center of the Mandala (such as it is) regarding appointment of new council positions. There is not currently an official

process. Centers can do largely what their communities wish. Charlie will be happy to “appoint” a Practice & Education director if the Center wishes it, or if the Center wants something less formal he would also accept that, although he wants to know who’s handling P&E.

- Mark reported on what other Centers are doing: many are doing the council-led model that Phoenix has been using. There is wide tolerance for communities to do whatever is best for them.
- Group discussion on ideas about governance structures. Some question about whether we’re still going to be Shambhala came up and was tabled for another meeting, since it is a larger question that needs more time.

How are we going to make decisions?

- LaDawn presented the **consent model** as a possibility:
 - First present the possible decision as a statement (e.g., “We will hold salons once per month”) or question (e.g., “Do you agree to holding salons once per month?”).
 - Three possible responses
 1. Thumbs up (for those who agree with the decision)
 2. Thumbs sideways (for those who have specific concerns, but still can live with the decision as stated)
 3. Thumbs down (will block the decision, present their concerns, and dialogue with the group to arrive at a revised decision with which they can at least live).
 - Address the concerns of sideways and down voters, then go around and reassess.
 - Repeat until everyone is thumbs up or sideways.
 1. A concern: this could go on interminably. We may need to set a time limit or table the decision.
 - Note that some decisions will not be taken to the entire community, such as those made in teams or subcommittees; These smaller groups will make their decisions among themselves in a similar manner and report back to the larger group.
- How to get more participation? Encourage members to get more involved? More face-to-face communication through the MI/guide network, or from team leaders?
- The group decided to use the consent model for today, and used the consent model to agree to it.

Decisions about governance

- Are we willing to move forward in a model that uses teams and team leaders for each group of tasks?
 - Attendees agreed to this model by consent.
- What are the tasks that need to be done?
 - See [notes to the February 9 meeting](#) for the list of identified tasks.
- Based on these tasks, would a P&E team be helpful?
 - Group agreed that it would be.
 - Group also decided we need a process to decide how to choose teams and leads.
- Once we decide what the teams are, we will hold meetings (open to the community) to decide who will be on the team and who will be the leaders.
 - One possible suggestion for choosing team leaders is “spontaneous arising” of leads from the wisdom of team members.

- Group decided that we will decide who will be on the teams and how to choose team leaders at a future meeting.
- Possible teams:
 - Practice and Education
 - Finance
 - Administrative and facilities
 - Marketing and communications
 - Protection team (this is a new name for the existing Kasung Pillar)
 - Note that there will be communication between teams.
 - We have the potential to expand in the future.
 - Group agreed on these teams, with some reservation about whether we can staff them all.
- Where do we put existing positions like Volunteer Coordinator, Membership Coordinator, and Societal Health and Well-being?
- Should we continue the current interim leadership process until the April meeting, and in the meantime get the word out about these teams to the rest of the community?
 - Group agreed to this plan.

Next steps

- Between now and the April meeting, we will continue the current interim process to run the Center, as reported in the February 9 meeting. (See [minutes to this meeting](#).)
- We will also tell people on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays about these teams and encourage them to become involved.
- At the April meeting, we'll discuss more about teams and get people on them.

Next meeting agenda items: April 14, 11:30 - 2

- Review the teams and who is on them. Decide how to choose team leads. What will happen to Volunteer Coordinator and Societal Health and Well-being?
- What program offerings does our community want? Do we want to keep offering Shambhala Training? What else should we offer? How will we bring in revenue?
- How do we communicate with newcomers about sexual misconduct?
- What is our purpose as the Phoenix Shambhala Center? Do we focus on Shambhala? Do we focus on meditation? Do we focus on traditional Buddhist teachings?