

Community Meeting 10/11/20

Present

- Barbara, Diane, Andre, Muffie, Chris, Jim, Alan, Pavel, Michelle
- We began with a quick check-in.

Update on reopening plans

- COVID case counts have been mostly holding steady with a modest increase. We are not meeting the previously agreed-upon criteria for resuming in-person meetings, which was three weeks of continued decline.
- Sarpashana has been meeting in a hybrid model (in-person and online). They have 6-8 people attending in person and about another 6 online.
- Most attendees are satisfied. Two members are bringing in technology that we don't have in the Center (a wide-angle camera and omnidirectional mic) to enable the hybrid discussions. Juggling the technology can be a challenge for the moderator but Andre says it is manageable.
- Attendees are continuing to wear masks, and they help with cleaning the Center after meetings. Recent research suggests that the risk of surface transmission is low. We are currently out of Lysol and we would need to restock.
- Some Sarpashana members value privacy; they can choose to sit outside the camera view.
- Andre has adjusted the thermostat settings to lower the temperature on Tuesday evenings only.
- The camera starts at around \$80, so we could consider purchasing this for our own hybrid meetings and classes.
- Barbara reports that some book study members wish to return to the Center.

Financial update, including rent update

- Barbara notified us that she was mistaken about the rent discount when she reported it previously. We were only given a discount through September, not October. Our October rent is back up to \$2000, and we owe \$800 after making a \$1200 payment for October.
- Our lease indicated a raise to \$2100 for the current 12 months (year 5 of our lease) but Richard has opted not to add the extra \$100 this month. Barbara does not feel comfortable asking Richard for further discounts.
- Andre updated us on current financials, [which have been posted at our website](#).
- We have had good income from recent programs. Thanks to Chris, Muffie, Mark, and Kim for coordinating and teaching.
- We will continue with Levels 4 and 5 after LA teaches Level 3 in November. We will also hold a 4 Reminders class starting in January.
- Questions: Can we return to our normal rent at this time? What are the financial implications of reopening for Sunday sitting? Would we consider breaking the lease or renegotiating for a lower rent? Which of these questions need to be addressed now?
- Andre will update his projections through the end of our lease in June 2021, but at the moment he is optimistic about making it to the end of the lease. [Ed: Andre supplied an

updated projection and determined that we should finish the lease in June 2021 with about \$8000 in the savings account. mmw 10/12/20]

- The group agreed that we will return to paying our normal rent, while keeping an eye on our financial situation, and reviewing the decision again in December to determine whether we need to ask for further discounts. Andre will communicate with Steve about paying the remaining \$843 for October.
- Returning to the discussion of reopening: Public sitting does not need to be hybrid and would not require the technology that Sarpashana uses for their group discussions. Barbara indicates that book study could be run as a hybrid meeting.
- We have limited ROTA volunteers and it would be a challenge to hold separate in-person and online sittings.
- Question: Is the Center liable if anyone contracts COVID? We do have liability insurance, and we would be covered in the event someone sues us. We would want clear signage to be posted, indicating what we're doing and what visitors must do.
- Suggestion: a soft launch for in-person Sunday sitting, in addition to the regular online sitting. This would require 3 people in person: moderator, umdze, Kasung or a person to monitor attendees and make sure they're aware of the guidelines. However, this would reduce the number of possible umdzes, for those who are not willing to meet in person. Some who were not willing to meet in person previously may now be willing to do so.
- Pavel suggests zooming in to a Sarpashana meeting to see how it's managed. (Note that there is an assumption of confidentiality.)
- Group agreed to a trial Sunday sitting on November 8. Bev and Michelle are on; Chris will contact them about whether they are willing to do this sitting in person. She and Muffie can join or sub for rota that day. Jim will Kasung. Chris and Muffie will get cleaning supplies and extra masks; Michelle will make signs and send an announcement to the members/friends list along with the link to the minutes when posted. Cushions should be set 6 feet apart already; capacity is 15 including rota staff. [Edit: The November 8 rota staff decided to do this sitting as a trial and not to promote it widely at this time. It will not be announced in the members/friends email. mmw 11/1/20]

Proposal for decluttering the Center

- Tabled. Pavel has some ideas from Gampo Abbey to contribute. Andre wants to prepare for the potential of packing and moving, though this is not urgent.

Next meeting:

- Monday, November 9 at 6:30 pm, online.
- Ocean of Dharma book study resumes November 23.