

## **ZACUCE Minutes 3/25/07**

Meher Mistry's house

### **I. Attendees present**

Anoo Sukhia (trustee), Freny Ranji (trustee), Ava Lala (trustee), Noshir (trustee) & Nergish Karanjia, Jehan Kasad (trustee), Tehmtan Tehsildar, Freny Ranji (trustee), Jehangir & Kerban Chapgar, Meher Mistry, Khurhseed Bapasola, Aban Singh

### **II. Upcoming general body meeting**

- June 9, in Devon PA at 4:30pm, followed by dinner.
- ZAPANJ is organizing it and will be sending out the notice. By-laws state minimum of 15 days notice is required.
- Need a quorum for vote to be binding. Quorum is quarter of membership. Each family has 2 votes. Membership is at least 120-200, so we probably need 50 people attending. (Proxy is not counted as part of quorum)
- Proxies can be done by mail. Valid for one month.
- Prior to meeting, ZAPANJ plans to go to lawyer to find out some more information (ex. about pass through for funds, etc.)
- Porus hasn't determined format of the meeting yet—will he let people speak for and against resolution or if it's just a straight vote.
- We should start calling people and making sure they know the date. If they are not available, remind them that we will have proxy.
- If resolution is passed, ZACUCE would request a ZAPANJ board member join each of our major committees (site selection, legal structure, fundraising) for integration purposes, while the overall structure is still being worked out.

### **III. Research from Other Associations**

- Discussed the pros and cons about talking to other associations.
- Cons were that each association is different and that we'd be comparing apples to oranges; also that the "best practice" guidance may vary depending on who you talk to.
- Pros were that we're doing what people requested of us and we would be able to come to the meeting prepared with documented examples of other successful centers.
- Decided to proceed with contacting the following associations
- Chicago (Freny), LA (Anoo), San Jose (Anoo), Houston (Freny), New York (Khursheed), Washington DC (Ava), Toronto (Aban), Vancouver (Freny)
- Each person will be asking the following questions. Also note the person you talk to and how they fit into the history of the building. (Questionnaire form is at the end of the minutes)
  - Legal structure (building vs. association) –parent body vs. separate
  - Upkeep/maintenance funding and who maintains (external or caretaker)?
  - Annual dues? Did they go up after the center or kept separate?
  - Membership numbers—for both association and building
  - What's the one thing you would do differently?
  - How often is it being used?
  - Do you rent it out?
  - Ask for copies of bylaws and constitution
- Try to have calls completed in a week

### **IV. Three properties to evaluate**

- Nursery school in Mt. Laurel for 800K. 5,000 sq. ft building and to be used only for nursery school because it's in a residential area and got special permission to run it as a school. However, there are only 9 parking spots currently. 3.27 acres of land. Flat building. Next step is to see if we like it enough to pursue it. Then we would try to find a local lawyer or someone with influence to see if purpose could be changed from school to church.

- Mansfield township, NJ, exit 295 or 52. Not far from the other property we looked at. 14 acres of land with no existing building. \$750,000. Zoned residential but could be used for non-profit. Jehan and Tehmtan saw it and talked to Bruce Stoneback. He looked at and thought it has a lot of wetland issues, encroachment issues from utilities, etc. We could use 3 acres for our purposes and maybe could sell a parcel of 2-3 acres. Problem is to get to the 3 acres, need to do a lot of work. Also, that's a lot of money to pay for only 3 usable acres. No sewer or water on the property, so again, lots of initial cost. Would need a septic system b/c township doesn't allow sewer system. Discussion around cost of septic system and how many you would need to accommodate for 150-200 people.
- Plymouth Mtg, PA property: 1 acre, farmhouse on it, building is there but can be use it for religious purposes. Seems a little small for our needs. PA people may do a drive by to see potential.

## V. Fundraising

- Automatic withdrawals. Khursheed got info on two options: donors could authorize their bank to automatically send money from their account to ZACUCE's account. This option doesn't cost us anything and we just need to provide them with our account info (routing and account numbers). Other option is if we have Commerce take money out from donor's accounts. This costs us a monthly fee.
- Instruct people to talk directly to their bank to fill out their form. Meher to make a simple sheet that has our account info on them and tell them to go to their bank.
- 10 members in survey form who gave names and want to donate monthly. Meher will follow up with them.
- Telethon: Aban has Girl Scout script that she will customize for our purposes. Also has list of names.
- First session: Sunday, June 17<sup>th</sup> (Anoo's house), second session June 23 (Aban's house). Have checks go to Ava's address so we can better check who pledged but didn't send in check.
- Will look to have the kids and young adults help out (12+ years and up)

## VI. Misc.

- Katayun received a legal opinion that says that the ZAPANJ "pass through" was fine according to NJ law. Framroze Patel has obtained for ZAPANJ the legal opinion from a lawyer, Dean Surkin, that states ZAPANJ did not violate its by-laws by issuing the checks to ZACUCE. Excerpt from his letter states:

*"...I am of the opinion that ZAPANJ received the sum of \$5,000 that it knew was intended for ZACUCE and therefore had an obligation pursuant to NJ law to remit the money to ZACUCE. NJ law specifically says that a check is payable to the person from whom it is intended, even if the check is mistakenly made payable to another person's name....Having received a check intended for ZACUCE, ZAPANJ had a legal and ethical obligation to remit the funds to ZACUCE in the quickest manner possible. Since banks discourage third-party checks, the most quickest manner to remit the funds to ZACUCE was by ZAPANJ depositing the checks in its own account and issuing its own check to ZACUCE."*

- Put minutes on the web from now on to foster communication. Include Nozer on distribution list for the minutes.

**Next meeting: June 3, 10:30 am, Jehan's house**

## **Questionnaire for Existing Zoroastrian Cultural/Religious Centers**

Name of who you spoke to:

Relationship to Building Project:

1. Legal structure (building vs. association) –parent body vs. separate
2. Upkeep/maintenance funding and who maintains (external or caretaker)?
3. What are your annual dues? Did they go up after the center or have they been kept separate?
4. Membership numbers for both your association and the building
5. What's the one thing you would do differently?
6. How often is your center used?
7. Do you rent it out?
8. Can we get a copy of your bylaws and constitution?