

BOT: April 14, Minutes 2013

Members present: Kiran, Shiv, Srinivas, Radha, Nani, Bharathi, Raju, Koeli, Veera, Shailesh Sanjeeva, , Pradeep, Bal,

#### AGENDA (Kiran)

- Better Communication (within the BOT and within the Committees [Chair Responsibilities])
- What Requires BOT Voting and What Doesn't?
- Feedback on Vyas Ramesh Kumar Sharma's Performance
- Priest Selection Process and Schedule (Potential Impacts on Pratishta)
- Committee Reports and Recommendations for BOT Voting
- Priest Contract Feedback

#### Member Suggestions:

- Pran Pratishta Event Planning May 18-19 (Sanjeeva)
- Idol Status (Sanjeeva)
- Planning and Progress of May 18-19 event (Mallu)

#### High Five

1. Idol delivery – everything is done in terms of paperwork except the VACIS exam. Discussion going on about door-to-door delivery with Kiran. Shiv: We should delegate people to handle, moving around, on day of Pran Pratishta (PP) puja we should have “some people who can take responsibility” about the idols (in addition to the BOT members being here on the day of delivery). Discussion: To open it when all BOT members are present; outside vs. inside delivery; how to handle the process; Gurrakkal wants to come and take a look at how to place the deities. Volunteers to receive the idols – Bal – this is not amateurs’ work. We should involve Rajsekhar. He is a considerate kind of a builder and part of the congregation. We are not asking him to do it for free) ..And ask the constituency if they want to volunteer for for this work. This is the time when we should involve people outside the Board. We can send an email to the constituency, may be have 1-2 volunteers (maybe from Facilities Committee – F.C.). Raju – I think it’s a good idea, its so heavy. And we should hire someone from outside – they know how to handle and we can pay for services. (Kiran: 400 kg total weight (including package) – all details are in shipper’s documents. Nani: I worked with Troy – it did not go to Chicago. It came to Champaign, can we not have them deliver in Champaign. Kiran: We can have door-to-door delivery. I shared the doc with all of you. I asked them can you bring it inside – they need a shipper with a forklift. But we need somebody as a standby. Smart thing – have somebody with a forklift as a standby. 2 phases. Right now we are focusing on Phase 1. DISCUSSION on bringing forklift inside and a platform for transportation of idols (Shailesh, Mallu, Nani). Shiv – has to be group of people involved with whole logistics. Pradeep – 1. We need a professional to handle, 2. A special platform to store them on. Nani – we can buy one of these platforms – a 3x3 base – it can take 500-600 lb. We should consider buying those and make moving from here to there easier. Kiran – I

need some volunteers to take over the operation. Mallu – Why not give the responsibility to F.C. and we will help – (Assisted by Mallu, Shailesh, Sanjeeva). Kiran: receiving the idols and have them properly staged). Nani – Troy Container - these people are very good. They deliver door-to-door.

All agree to the proposal of F.C. handling the idol arrival with assistance from by volunteers mentioned.

2. Kiran - May 18-19 Pran Pratishtha Event discussion. – connected with priest selection. We need consensus – whether we need priest on board by Pratishtha or afterwards. If we say it is not mandatory that we have a permanent before PP then we act accordingly.
  - a. DISCUSSION: The priest selection process: 1. Expectations about permanent vs. temporary priest. Nani – we need to make sure that planning for May 18-19 event is well done. We may or not have someone but if we have someone it will be wonderful if the permanent priest is there for PP – that way he will have an ownership. Pradeep – do we need to have a permanent priest? If yes, then we pick up the priest and decide the date. Kiran: Motion? Pradeep – we should do PP on a certain date and not wait for a permanent priest. Sanjeeva: We have a priest - Ramesh Sharma - why not take him? Bal – wait for the motion to complete. DISCUSSION. BOT should move ahead with hiring priest asap and then do PP. Bal – but PP is already decided. Kiran – We talked of end of April for PP. Then we said we were not ready. Then we discussed 2 set of dates – May and June. Thinking – whether we have permanent priest or not, we will get a temporary priest. Qs. Do we have a fair priest selection process or not. We looked at a priest last year, everyone said good things and then he could not give proper time so we looked at different options. Then second priest – Ramesh Sharma. We never said our primary criteria is having someone permanent. Pradeep’s criteria – valid. Bal – if we make this process at this stage – we need to discuss potential candidates. Within the borderline of the document circulated – (the priest criteria document made by Srinivas, Kiran, Neelu and Koeli) we need to evaluate candidates. Once that is done, we need to look at priest selection contract. Shiv – even if we give them a contract we need to give them some time to review it. And also give some time to negotiate the date. Pradeep – we need to decide if we need a perm priest or not. 90% chance is that we cannot select a priest, get contract, start him by May 18. Koeli – How much can we postpone PP. Pradeep – what are requirements after PP? Puja everyday? Bharathi: Yes. Pradeep – in view of that – BOT should discuss hiring of Priest. DISCUSSION.
  - b. Kiran - Priest selection criteria – Nani had sent me some suggestions – let us discuss. Nani – I sent you an email long time before all this happened last 2 weeks. Lot has happened. A. Subbu, Neelu, Koeli, Srinivas put together a table – a very good one. B. At time of my suggestion – I had heard that we made some verbal offer to Mahadev Shastri. Did we? Kiran – NO. Nani – now I heard it is no. C. Now, I have seen other committees how the hiring is done face-to-face. My suggestion – we start with what Koeli sent – the Spreadsheet table. D. Looks like we have 16-17 member of BOT. Good representation of community, we do not necessarily need outside members. Some BOT can take lead. And decide on 1-2 candidates, interview over phone. Priest should have not only technical skills but also interpersonal skills. Have to know Indian customs from all over India – not

just a few regions, and multiple traditions. Bal – we have to recognize – this is located in East central Illinois, immigrant community, he has to be sensitive to immigrant need and Indian community as it is done HERE and not in India. I feel strongly and emotionally about something I witnessed in last 2 pujas. I have nothing against Vyas – but reading the names – Bal this Nakshatra, Shymala this Nakshatra – that Nakshatra. But no mention of Paul and Christopher (because they are non-Indian/Hindu names?). For me that is - he has lost me. Pradeep – that is a deal breaker. If a priest is that narrow-minded – let us not have him. Koeli – but he said my son-in-law Chris's name. Nani – my idea is we can interview over phone. We can ask about these issues.

- c. Pradeep – has the criteria been agreed upon? Kiran – criteria agreed upon – the table prepared by Koeli, Neelu (incorporating Subbu and others' suggestions). 3-4 people responded. No ratification by BOT yet. We can do 2 ways – 1. Appoint few people from BOT (I have ideas) and those people can recruit from community. That committee can review that idea. This is what we are going to ask. Mallu – Bal has written (I am not biased for anyone) – But we have already discussed that we should have printed cards of the puja sponsor names because sometimes the handwriting is hard to read and understand. I feel he read Chris's name (Koeli's son in law) and omitted Bal's – is more a problem with him being unable to read - we need to eliminate problem and introduce printed card. The process of updating evaluation table is still on – let us wait till other puja Ram Navmi is done. Bal – to clarify on what Mallu saying – The list had several names – Mina-Paul-Anand-K..., Christopher-Anita- Kartik – he omitted Paul and Christopher. Pradeep – this is a mixed community. All people are there – we have to have a priest who is tolerant of everybody. If we have serious qualms, we cannot hire them. Koeli – I have questions about Mahadev Shastri. I had a really negative experience with him when he came for that Ganesh Chaturthi but I kept it to myself – as he was being considered as the first choice. But I had approached him and he would not even talk to me properly. He quite ignored me. I know I am a woman and maybe he has some bias but most of us brought up within these traditions know exactly how to behave with respect and the courtesy that a priest deserves. Shailesh – if we have questions we should just take them out of running. Mallu – I had similar experience with Mahadev Shastri. He would not even talk to me. I did not take seriously. I did not tell anyone. Bal – it is our responsibility to interview this candidate instead of asking them to perform. That is what we do in different committees. Ramesh Sharma had no explanation of what kind of puja he was doing. Many were there who did not know what he was doing. He has a duty to explain. Kiran - we have spent our half hour. Raju – we should select a Committee – to take care of everything – talking to priest, criteria, make it a “Search committee.” Bal - And only Selection committee. must have communication with the priest. The Chair of Search Committee be made the prominent person for contacting priest Nani – Listening to Bal Koeli Mallu – looks like we somehow messed up. I suggest we start from Step 1. But not delay Pran Pratishtha. We will find someone to do puja after PP. If idols are here and they just sit there with no PP, it will create much more nightmare for BOT. **Pradeep – I move the Proposal – BOT TO APPOINT Search Committee to**

**finalize criteria for Priest selection and the process for selection and come up with recommendation for appointment of priest to the BOT.**

**This motion is unanimously passed.**

Bal – seconded. Nani – we should not dump the table. Pradeep – we will not – majority of BOT agree. For PP let us have a temporary priest – month – 3 months. Radha – from Resumes – Sandeep seemed excellent but performance was nothing. Now we are back to zero from among candidate. Then 1 person suggested for temporary priest – I didn't see him properly. Bal: We still have Pujiyam. It is imperative Search Committee is appointed today.

Establishment of SEARCH Committee – Kiran – I am asking for volunteers – 2 from BOT and 2 from community. Nani – we should increase number of members – many people don't show up. If more numbers – probability of getting together more. Kiran: I am not opposed – the challenge is this – if more people then managing the number is harder. But not opposed to increasing.

Decision – 4 BOT, 3 non BOT community members. Bal – to keep a specific CHAIR from the BOT. Duration of Search Committee – 3-4 months. Nani – we cannot wait that long for PP.

Nani & Mallu: Why prolong for so many months?

Volunteers are solicited – and Priest Search and Selection Committee (PSC) constituted. BOT members volunteer, are accepted and PSC composition decided – Shiv, Nani, Bal, Koeli. Shiv is the Chair.

Srinivas – next week the first person coming – Pujiyam. Who will communicate with Priest – but one person to talk.

Pradeep – We must put this person in the same situation like the previous priests. Shiv – unfortunately all of us have not attended the pujas. Pradeep – we should follow the same procedure again to test. Bal – we have to go proactive. DISCUSSION. Raju – getting 100% of all the criteria met will be impossible. About no sensitivity to interracial marriages – some of these people came from villages. We can educate these people. Kiran – leave it to the sub-committee to make these decisions.

DISCUSSION on composition of PSC Pradeep – keep sensitivity to diversity.

Pran Pratistha – On May 18-19? Whether to have interim priest?

3. Kiran: Communication among BOT – how can we work together as a well-coordinated team. I would like to hear from you – what should we do better. Pradeep – I apologize for being least active this year. But I have been reading these emails. My feeling – has to be high-level of respect and courtesy when we communicate. We are all volunteers – must discount for that. No dispute over unimportant things and even in dispute – let us be courteous. Shiv – type an answer and file draft. Come back and read it. If it makes sense send it otherwise don't. I learnt from my experience it is always better to take some time over these things. Everyone is a volunteer here. Bal – I also feel very much. I don't write assertive emails. I have never bad-mouthed anybody. What hurt me – there were 2 occasions for past week – we asked for sub-committees. I felt hurt because I was kept totally out of the loop. The Chair decided totally without me ---- There must be something wrong with me. I would like to find out for me. Why was it unilaterally decided we will not have Balgopal. If it was openly said, we don't like Bal and we will not have him on our subcommittee.

Sanjeeva – Bal, I replied to you. You said you were out of town. I promised to BOT that we will submit on certain date. We had to work on the contract because we had a deadline. Please do not take personally.

Bal – Response.

Raju – Response.

***The transcription of the April 14 BOT meeting stops here, because of obvious reasons. This recorder made clear that the transcription could not be continued - there was too much of a commotion...***