

HTA BOD minutes of meeting held on 8/20/06

Present: Ashwani Bakshi, Varinder Narang, Jagdish Sharma, Kamal Kharbanda, Uma Ramchandra, Prem Bhardwaja, Ravinder Aggarwal, Sonia Rajvanshi (on phone), Mohini Ahuja (On phone)

Absent: Vijay Sethi, Snigdha Sharma, Mamta Gupta, Vasu Atluri

Others present: Debashish Panda, Krishna Paliwal

The meeting started at 2:45 PM.

Agenda Item # 1—Approve minutes of meeting held on 7/16/06

Members were asked if they had any comments on the minutes of the meeting held on 7/16/06 that had been distributed more than 3 weeks ago. There were no comments.

Motion was proposed by Ravinder Aggarwal to approve the minutes as circulated and it was seconded by Varinder Narang.

Motion was carried unanimously.

It was decided to review the minutes of the meeting dated 8/20/06 within 1 week after they are sent for review. All present agreed to the suggestion.

Agenda item #2—Review temple priest service agreement and performance

Members were asked one by one to provide inputs on the performance of the current priest. Inputs provided are listed below.

Sonia Rajvanshi: Very much happy with performance. Represents good culture and code of ethics.

Mohini Ahuja: Does a good job, is courteous and there are no complaints.

Kamal Kharbanda: Does a very good job, explains mantras when needed and has good knowledge.

Uma Ramchandra: Does good job, he is capable of performing at big functions. As temple grows we will need to have one more priest.

Jagdish Sharma: Does a good job, professional, courteous. We have heard positive comments from devotees.

Prem Bhardwaja: Gives timely response, has versatility, very knowledgeable, well organized, serving community very well so far, can perform puja of various deities, may have some weaknesses as per some comments recd from some people. Recommended for further contract extension. HTA should give him chance to show his talent. He should work

on doing some pravachans. Keeps the dias well organized and clean. Total probation of 6-9 months recommended if contract is extended.

Ravinder Aggarwal: Does a good job, takes initiative, greets people politely, follows administrative directions as provided to him by the board.

Ashwani Bakshi: On several occasions came to temple unannounced at different times and the priest was always available. Never leaves the temple without informing. Brings in more money than we pay him by performing more outside puja and car puja etc.

Varinder Narang: As of date Pandit ji has not claimed and/or asked for any overtime even though has worked more than required as per contract. He supports the temple 7 days a week as needed. Temple has seen constant revenue stream from his efforts to raise donation from outside poojas and on premises individual poojas performed by visiting devotees. Temple is also given (on voluntary basis) help by other family members including his spouse. Recommended that puja committee should raise the bar by motivating him to do more pravchans and raise the puja vidhi to next level.

Debashish Panda: Very satisfied, courteous and does not get into conflicts.

Krishna Paliwal: He is good.

At this point a question was raised if we should extend his contract and if so for how long.

A motion was proposed by Varinder Narang to extend his contract for a period of one year wef 8/1/06 to 7/31/07. The motion was seconded by Ashwani Bakshi.

It was proposed that new contract should

- 1) Specify first review on Sept 13th, 2006 and a second review on Dec 13th, 2006. The reviews should be initiated by the puja committee in a timely fashion
- 2) Should supercede the old service agreement.
- 3) Old service agreement should be reviewed to ensure that no clause remains unfulfilled.

AR- Varinder to provide soft copy of the agreement to Jagdish Sharma.

AR--Jagdish Sharma will send out a copy of the new contract to all board members for review.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Agenda item # 3—Status of project #1

An update was provided by Ravinder Aggarwal on the status of altar project 1. It was stated that the project was completed before the due date and under budget. Total money spent was \$ 7033.92 against an approved spending of \$11,000. Out of the total spending an amount of \$ 6033.92 has already been spent and an amount of \$1,000 has been withheld from the contractor as two items in the scope of work were postponed to the next project

because the permit provided by the city specifically asked that those items should not be done in this project. These items include

- 1) Removal of the present wall behind the existing alter.
- 2) Relocation of the wooden door on the back wall.

These will now be carried out as part of project 2 with no additional funding (beyond \$1,000 held from the contractor) required.

With this update project # 1 is considered complete and closed.

Agenda Item #4—Review project #2

Scope of the work for project # 2 was discussed and a template was updated by Varinder. The scope includes

- 1) Construction of the platform
- 2) Construction of ceiling in the alter area
- 3) Installation of the lights in the alter area
- 4) Ordering of tiles and approval of funding for installation of tiles
- 5) Addition of two six feet wide doors in the side walls of the puja hall in place of the windows
- 6) Plumbing in the alter area.
- 7) Two items not completed in project 1.

Getting the permit from the city is critical path activity for project #2. An architect has been retained to review and approve the drawings and get the permit from the city of Scottsdale. Permit is expected to be received by 9/4/06.

Uma ji stated that even if it costs a little more we should upgrade the look of the main door to look more like the traditional temple door (with some engravings). She was requested to gather some more details from other places. She was also informed that the planning division of the city will have an issue if we deviate too far from the existing look and the the whole approval process could take several months in that case.

All present were OK with the scope of work.

A motion was proposed by Ravinder Aggarwal to approve the scope of work for project # 2 as defined above.

The motion was seconded by Kamal Kharbanda.

The motion was carried unanimously.

A second motion to approve spending of \$32,000 for project # 2 as per scope of work defined above and start the construction activity for project # 2 was proposed by Ravinder Aggarwal. The motion was seconded by Prem Bhardwaja.

All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

It was suggested to identify all critical path items for this project.

Agenda item #5—Financials including event collections

A financial update was provided by Ashwani Bakshi.

Currently we have \$ 41,500 in the bank.

An amount of \$ 29,200 is in the construction account.

An amount of \$ 1,884 is in the vendor account.

Against an approval of spending of \$32,000 for project 2 we already have appx \$ 30,500 in the bank account and more money is being collected daily.

This is in addition to \$12,000 which has been set aside for day to day expenses.

Collections from Jagannath Ji yatra: Some money was received from Snigdha Sharma but a check in the amount of \$ 500 was withheld by her. The explanation given by her for doing so was that there was some misunderstanding last year about the travel arrangements for the priest and hence this amount was being withheld till all expenses, including the priest's travel charges, were paid for. Everybody present felt that the established procedure of HTA was not followed (check held in her possession) in submitting the funds received and no receipts were provided for the expenses.

Following motion was proposed by Jagdish Sharma and seconded by Prem Bhardwaja.

A letter of reprimand should be sent to the event coordinators from the board stating that as a board member she did not follow established reimbursement procedures and did not turn in all the collections within 30 days. Key thing here were that no receipts were submitted and a check was withheld because of lack of trust. Holding of the check in personal possession is viewed as an action against the interest of the temple.

An addendum was made to the motion stating that a one on one meeting will be called by Ashwani Bakshi with Snigdha Sharma to discuss this item.

All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

AR—Ashwani Bakshi to call a meeting with Snigdha Sharma.

Ashwani Bakshi reported that he would be going to see Swami Vyas Ji in California and requested that the board should acknowledge his contribution by presenting him with a token of appreciation.

A motion was proposed by Ashwani Bakshi to give Swami ji a plaque expressing HTA's sincere thanks for excellent pravachan and a donation of \$ 151 from the HTA. It was seconded by Prem Bhardwaja.

All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

Ashwani Bakshi also reported that the donation promised by Vijay Sethi had not been given to the HTA yet. He was requested to follow up the matter with Vijay Sethi and collect the amount of the donation.

The topic of collection of donation for the murtis (when should we start collecting money from devotees who have made commitments) was discussed next and everybody present agreed that we should start collecting money for the commitments made as soon as a) The board approves the scope and funding for project #2 and b) the permit for the next project is granted by the City of Scottsdale.

A motion was proposed by Ravinder Aggarwal that if the money is collected for the murtis and for whatever reason we do not get the murtis in the temple then all money collected for the murtis from now on should be returned to the donors.

The motion was seconded by Prem Bhardwaja.

All present voted in favor and the motion was carried unanimously.

Agenda Item # 6—Puja Committee recent events and updates—

An update was provided by Uma Ramchandra.

Ganesh Chaturthi will be celebrated on August 27th and Jagdish Sharma will be the representative of the board for this occasion. Uma Ji will send an E mail with the details of the plan.

Next issue discussed was regarding two letters given to the board by Hara and Manju Misra. A question was raised whether the board should respond to those letters.

During the discussions it was agreed that we need to stay focused on constructive thoughts and make all efforts to improve the working in the temple. In this connection if some one has any issues they should come to the board meetings and discuss these issues personally in these meetings.

A motion was proposed by Varinder Narang stating that the board should not respond to those letters and if Hara and Manju felt that the matter needed to be discussed they should attend the next board meeting and discuss the matter there.

The motion was seconded by Ashwani Bakshi.

All present voted in favor of the motion and it was carried unanimously.

For the Navratri celebrations Varinder Narang and Prem Bhardwaja will be the representatives of the board. A default budget in the amount of \$250 will be available for this event.

It was agreed to form a calendar committee consisting of new members for 2007 so that fresh ideas could be harnessed. Following will be the members of the calendar committee for 2007.

Debashish panda

Sushma Bakshi

Jagdish Sharma

Prem Bhardwaja will represent the pooja committee.

The committee members will pick a chairperson for the calendar committee from the list above.

Karva Chauth will be celebrated in the temple on Oct 10th. All puja will be performed by the temple priest and Prasad will be provided by the temple.

Ravinder Aggarwal will send a note to Uma ji describing the above decision and she will take further necessary action as necessary once that e mail is sent.

AR—Ravi to send a note to Uma Ji.

It was also discussed that we must have back up puja co ordinators for the following pujas.

Shri Jagannath Ji puj

Shri Satynarayan Puja—Name to be provided by Nirmal Chhibbar

Mata Jagran—Name to be provided by Shashi Tulli

A motion was proposed by Ashwani Bakshi stating that the Jajannath Ji puja on every second Sunday will be co ordained by Debashish Panda and Jagannath Ji puja on all other Sunday's as per the schedule published by the HTA will be coordinated by Manju Misra. However, a question was raised if the previous HTA board or the puja committee had assigned Manju Misra as a coordinator for Lord Jagganth Ji puja. As per ex puja committee chairperson there were no minutes of meeting that indicated that such a decision had been made.

The motion was seconded by Ravinder Aggarwal.

All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion was carried unanimously.

AR--Ravinder Aggarwal will send a letter with the above information to Prem Bhardwaja and Uma ji and they will circulate the information to all puja committee members and new coordinators as well as existing coordinators.

Some help was sought by the volunteers preparing the Prasad.

AR—Varinder Narang to send a list to all board members requesting Prasad sponsorship so that the load can be shared among many board members as opposed to just a few.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 PM.