

Minutes of HTA Board meeting held on 11/7/21

A board meeting was held on 11/7/21. Meeting started at 1:04 PM.

Following were present:

Ravinder Aggarwal, Punit Garg, Surinder Tuli, Surinder Khurana (left early), kamal Minocha, Manju Sharma (joined late), Ashok Verma, Chander Sethi, Uttam Behra, Gaurav Sharma, Menakshi Bajaj, Jitender Gunala, Vaibhavi Pradhan. Dr. Harnath Singh was travelling to India and had asked to be excused.

The meeting started at 1:04 PM after quorum was reached. It was a zoom meeting.

RA asked the board members if anybody wanted to add any other items to the agenda that had been sent out earlier. No item was added.

RA proposed a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Ashok Verma (AV). All present approved the agenda and the motion was carried unanimously.

Agenda item 1--- Preparations for AGM/Board elections

RA reminded the board that the AGM was scheduled for December 5th, 2021 at 11 AM. He read out the items that will require to be worked on (these were listed on the agenda also).

One suggestion was made to add appx time allotted for each item. RA confirmed that the same will be added in the next iteration. It was also suggested that the agenda for the AGM should be posted on the temple website and temple notice board. RA informed the board that he will prepare an agenda for the AGM and it will be posted as suggested above.

All present were OK with the items listed.

Agenda item 2—Approval of Proxy form and Nomination form

The proxy form and the nomination form had been mailed to the board members prior to the meeting. Gaurav Sharma (GS) asked if there had been any changes to these forms compared to the previous year. Two changes were pointed out to him by RA—number of proxies being 6 per member and the validity of the proxy form.

Motion was proposed by RA to approve the Proxy form and the Nomination form. The motion was seconded by Gaurav Sharma. All members present were Ok with these forms and they were both approved as submitted, unanimously.

Agenda item 3—Approval of proposed changes to By laws

RA informed the board that the current board in one of its earlier meetings had formed a committee to recommend changes to the By laws. A draft proposal for changes was e mailed to the board by RA prior to the meeting.

During the meeting RA informed the board members that once the board approves the proposed changes the same will be voted on at the AGM. Each item will be voted on separately and incorporated if approved by the AGM.

The secretary (RA) went through each item on the proposed draft of changes and explained to the board why those changes were being recommended (some were to add clarity, some were to make improvements and some were to make corrections in the present document).

One change was proposed to item 5.8. It was suggested that the documentation regarding election (proxies, nomination forms and election results etc) should be kept by the election committee chair person for 7 calendar days instead of 48 hrs as originally proposed.

One change was made to tem 11.1. It will now state “ include past and present board members”. The words “ and volunteers identified by the board as such” were deleted.

There was a lot of discussion on item 13.2. The secretary explained that the purpose of adding this statement was that the temple being the house of God, the thought of dissolution should not even be contemplated. The purpose of adding the proposed item was that the temple should continue to operate so long as one or more member(s) in good standing take the responsibility to operate it, including all expenses and administration etc. After a lot of discussion it was suggested that one more line should be added to the proposal. The line to be added is “The status in such a case will be reviewed by the AGM after one year”.

RA proposed a motion to approve the draft changes to the By laws with above changes to the document as presented to the board.

Motion was seconded by Punit Garg (PG). All present were OK with the proposal and the motion was carried unanimously.

Agenda item 4—HTA Board Response to letter from Vijay Sethi

The secretary (RA) informed the board that a few weeks ago one of the devotees, Mr. Vijay Sethi, had sent separate mails to board members and some devotees making false allegations. It was felt that such false allegations only bring bad publicity to the temple and create unnecessary tensions among community members and negatively impact the harmony among the community members. The secretary further informed the board that one of the devotees had written to Mr Sethi to either withdraw the false allegations or present proof of the same. Mr Sethi had named a devotee who Mr Sethi said was a witness to the (false) allegation in his letter. When this witness was contacted by the devotee he denied any knowledge of the same. This was conveyed to Mr. Sethi by the devotee who was named in his e mail by Mr Sethi. Yet the allegations were not retracted. The secretary also informed the board that he had also written to Mr Sethi stating that the allegations were false but no evidence was ever provided by Mr Sethi to support his allegations.

It was felt that the board must respond to these e mails from Mr Sethi as it was affecting the reputation of the temple and the board. Each board member was requested to give his/her opinion on this and the same are summarized below.

Kamal Minocha—Felt that the false allegations without any supporting evidence were misleading the community and affecting the reputation of the temple and board members. He felt that a "cease and desist" letter should be sent to Mr Sethi through the temple's attorney.

Chander Sethi—Felt that a face to face meeting should be held with Mr Sethi so that he can be given a chance to withdraw false allegations or provide supporting evidence. If he fails to do that then a "cease and desist" letter should be sent to Mr Sethi through the temple's attorney.

Surinder Tuli—Stated that the allegations were not only strong allegations but they were also false allegations and were without any supporting facts. He recommended that a "cease and desist" letter should be sent to Mr Sethi through the temple's attorney if Mr Sethi does not withdraw false allegations.

Ashok Verma—Stated that a "cease and desist" letter should be sent to Mr Sethi through the temple's attorney after the face to face meeting if the matter can not be resolved in the face to face meeting.

Jitender Gunala— Stated that the temple should get an attorney and send a "cease and desist" letter as the false allegations should not be tolerated.

Punit Garg—Punit mentioned that he can follow up with Mr Sethi and if there is no acceptable outcome then the temple should send a letter through the attorney.

Gaurav Sharma—stated that we should try to meet and resolve the issue amicably. If Mr Sethi can not present any evidence (or withdraw false allegations) then a “cease and desist” letter should be sent by the temple’s attorney.

Manju Sharma—stated that one board member should speak with Mr Sethi. If Mr Sethi’s allegations are wrong then the temple should send a letter through the attorney. She felt that we should wait for sometime (give Mr Sethi some time) to provide the evidence or withdraw his false allegations.

Uttam Behra-Felt that Mr Sethi should provide the evidence within one week. If he does not do that then the board should approach the attorney and send the letter.

Vaibhavi Pradhan—Stated that Mr Sethi should be given a timeframe to submit the proof. If the proof can not be provided then the board should send “cease and desist” letter.

The board authorized Mr Punit Garg, board president, to speak with Mr Sethi in this regard and try to reach an amicable solution in the next 2 to 3 weeks. If the solution can not be reached then the board will approach the attorney to send a “cease and desist” letter. All board members present were in favor of this approach.

Agenda item 5—Status of case Surendra Sing Vs Narang

The secretary informed the board that the agreement had been signed by all parties and a copy of the same had also been sent by Surendra Sing’s attorney to all board members. One of the board members asked how was the financial obligation shared between the insurance company of the temple and the Insurance company of Varinder Narang. The secretary informed him that to the best of his knowledge it was equally shared by the insurance companies involved and that it may also be stated in the agreement.

Audit of financial statement:

It was suggested that given his experience Ashwani Bakshi can audit the financial accounts for the period 1/1/21 to 10/31/21 prior to the AGM (if possible). Punit Garg suggested that the audit for the full year 2020 should be done by a CPA. Chander Sethi will co ordinate both these efforts. All board members present were in favor of this approach and approved the same.

Motion to adjourn the meeting was proposed by RA. Seconded by PG.

All present were in favor of the motion.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 PM.

Ravinder Aggarwal

Secretary, HTA Board of Directors 2021