**AMBCOF Board Meeting Minutes Jan 2, 2020, 7PM**

**THE CIRCLE CENTER**

1. **Present:**
2. Directors - Angela Lee Chen, Fereshteh Azad, Jeff Stearns, Dennis Jan Wolterding, Judy Mangold, Laura Crabtree, John Leiter.
3. Guests – Al Grasso, Adrienne Kritz-Geller, Don McBride, Ben Hay, Alisa Genovese, Pamela Butler-Stone, Cathy Riley, Tom Riley.
4. ***I. Opening: Baba’s words, moment of silence***
5. *Quote recited by Al Grasso*
6. ***II. Reading of Norms***

1. Start and end with remembering Baba

2. Participate fully

3. Respect each other

4. Work as a team / no silent disagreements

5. Be careful of using generalizations

6. Seek solutions beyond your own

7. Find joy in what you are doing.

8. Maintain your humor

9. Remain focused on the task

9a. No cell phones 9b. No side conversations 9c. No shifting focus

10. Keep all private information private.

11. Start & End on time and with Baba (7 – 9:00 pm)

1. ***III. Approval of Previous Minutes (December 5, 2019)***

*Motion to approve by Fereshteh Azad. Seconded by Dennis Wolterding. Unanimously approved.*

***IV. Agenda***

1. **strategic planning meeting date**

*Decided upon* ***Feb 15, 2020, 2-6pm.***

1. **AGM in review**

*Attendance was excellent (82 people), food overly abundant… leftovers fed the 80 or 90 people that attended the next day. Maybe we can order for fewer people next time, though Dennis is always nervous about running out of food. The event went smoothly, no major problems to report. Registrations covered the costs. Aesthetic Committee did well to dress up the room.*

1. **auction results, future plans**

*Live auction and silent auction: both types were successful for small less-expensive items. Although no big items sold, the auctions raised about $1300, so a very successful fundraising effort, especially for a first effort. In addition, all the work on this auction was handled by a single hardworking individual (Fereshteh) whose efforts were tireless. Perhaps better advanced notice/publicizing might have helped. Phyllis Fillmore offered to help with future auctions – follow-up needed to find out what help she can offer. Will continue to auction off artwork with an online auction, publicized through Baba listserv, our FB page, etc. Items still to be auctioned include a Lynn Ott original (a possible bid on it already), Charlie Mills original, as well as other artwork.*

1. **planning a thank you for Dennis W & Don McBride, Ben Hay**

*Planning a party or dinner at a restaurant for end Feb or March – details can be ironed out at the next board meeting. Quite possible to combine with a volunteer party…*

1. **Phoenix Renaissance plea for funds**

*Phoenix Renaissance wrote a letter dated December 10, 2019 asking for help toward estimated cost of $25,000 to repair groundwater welling up under their building. Jeff Stearns believes the solution should be fairly simple for a groundwater issue. Dennis Wolterding has expertise in hydrogeology but will not be getting involved. Judy Mangold to email Buz Connor to see how the Meher Center is handling the request, and also writing a letter to Rev Gause asking for more details about the problem, the kind of work recommended, who the estimates were made by, if they have reached out for government help, etc. Laura Crabtree to edit the letter after Judy writes it.*

1. **Facebook policy discussion (attached below)**

*Angela Lee Chen described the recent Facebook experience, where Peter Booth started a thread decrying our keynote speaker being a member of SRO and specifically named as a charming front runner to Sufism Reoriented recruiters, per mandali in 1980. This thread caught the attention of a great number of those aggressively opposed to SRO who were suddenly up in arms against the Circle Center for having bias or leanings towards SRO. The thread with all its comments became more and more attacking, where any effort to calm the storm was simply ignored. Finally, Angela, as moderator of the Facebook page, simply deleted the entire thread and blocked one individual who has been especially irrational and incessant. Certain individuals were so incensed by the maelstrom that they wrote personal emails to Angela and some members of the Board, expressing intense anger and ignoring all efforts at factual self-defense on the part of the Board members: allegations that felt like McCarthyism – where no amount of reason could prove innocence. This matter whipped up so much feeling that several guests were in attendance at the Board meeting tonight to express their thoughts regarding the Circle’s stance of openness to Sufism Reoriented members presenting at the Circle. In any case, our “interim Facebook Policy” adopted in 2017 includes several helpful rules regarding the use of our Facebook page. Reviewing this document has helped Angela understand them in the context of FB terminology, and implementing them will prevent future hurtful interchange from occurring on our own page. Attached is the FB policy, with FB terminology in parantheses.*

1. **independence from Sufism Reoriented (bylaw addition)**

*Angela proposed the following language change for Bylaws section 1.4. “The Circle fully supports and complements the work of the MSC. However, the Circle is totally independent and autonomous from any other organization, including the Meher Spiritual Center, Inc as well as Sufism Reoriented. Accordingly, nothing in these by-laws shall be construed to deny that autonomy.” After a short discussion, the Board resolved to table this discussion to the Strategic Planning Meeting.*

**h. kinds of meetings we allow/organize**

1. History/early intentions (10 min)
2. Community input? (10 min)
3. Narrowing our focus? (10 min)
4. AMB in our name (10 min)

*After a brief discussion, this entire section of the agenda has been tabled for the Strategic Planning Meeting.*

*Upon Board approval, the guests who had comments to make regarding Sufism Reoriented were given 5 minutes each to speak. Discussion with those individuals was limited by time, but their concerns were duly noted in the audio recording (titled Jan 2 2020 Board meeting) of this meeting.*

**V.**  ***Reports of Officers/Directors (See Assignments in Appendix)***

*Due to limited time, no Officer Reports were made separate from the agenda items listed above.*

1. ***VI. Old Business***
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***VII.******New Business****:*

1. **Fundraising Gala in May or June?**
2. **Amartithi (Jan 30) continuous reading of God Speaks**
3. **Workshop by Laurent Weichberger?**
4. Next mini-Sahavas in March
5. Art workshop by Roger Stephens

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**Avatar Meher Baba's Circle of Friends**

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**INTERIM POLICY-CIRCLE OF FRIENDS FACEBOOK GROUP**

PREAMBLE: The following Interim Policy was adopted by The Board of Directors of Avatar Meher Baba's Circle of Friends, Inc. (The Circle) on February 6, 2017.

The Circle is a non-political, all-volunteer 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina (See [www.ambcircleoffriends.com](http://www.ambcircleoffriends.com/)). Its Mission is “...to strive to remember Avatar Meher Baba through love, fellowship and service to one and all.”

Like our newsletter, The Circle News, and our community center, THE CIRCLE CENTER, our FACEBOOK Site is focused on outreach to the spiritual and secular community of the Grand Strand. It is also a vehicle for the exchange of information that is of interest to those living here or who travel to and from here. It is not a general “Baba” Site and, most certainly, not an ordinary FACEBOOK space. In order to keep it functioning as it should, the Board establishes the following rules:

*PROHIBITED POSTS.*

1. 1. Political posts, especially partisan political posts.
2. 2. Obscene posts (we'll know them when we see them)
3. 3. Venal or defamatory posts that attack individuals or organizations by name, or races or specific groups of people.
4. 4. Posts advocating illegal activity

*DISCOURAGED POSTS:*

1. 5. Crosstalk posts unless such posts clarify an otherwise acceptable post (Limit or moderate commenting: or perhaps disable commenting.)
2. 6. Posts that have little apparent relevance for the local community here
3. 7. Posts that are antithetical to The Circle's Mission but are not prohibited outright.
4. 8. Three or more posts per week by any one person unless genuinely necessary.

*DESIRED POSTS:*

1. 9. Posts giving information/insights relevant to the Grand Strand Spiritual Community

 10. Posts, including prayers, that would be of interest to Spiritual Seekers

 11. Posts otherwise consistent with The Circle Mission

ENFORCEMENT:

The Administrators shall remove prohibited posts, and the author(s) shall be notified.

Anyone posting three or more “prohibited” posts shall be removed from The Circle FACEBOOK Group. The Administrator shall counsel those consistently writing “discouraged” posts and take such other action(s) as is necessary to protect the Site's integrity.

Appeals of and questions concerning this Policy may be addressed to the Administrator, Dennis Wolterding at dennisjanwolterding@gmail.com