

# MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE SHREE PRETORIA HINDU SEVA SAMAJ

Held at: The Boardroom, Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj  
Date : 30 November 2009  
Time : 7:40 pm

## 1. WELCOME AND PRAYER

The meeting commenced at 7:40 with a prayer and welcome to all present.

## 2. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES

**2.1 Apology** – Pravinbhai Daya, Harshaben Dayal

**2.2 In Attendance:** Prakashbhai Hira, Rameshbhai Chhagan, Anielbhai Soma, Sanjaybhai Govind, Himalbhai Ramjee, Atishbhai Mistry, Jagdishbhai Makan, Jyotiben Joshi, Kishorbhai Naran, Pravinbhai Daya, Pranaybhai Devchand, Rakeshbhai Ravjee and Tershiaben Calien.

## 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the special meeting of the Executive Committee of 27 October 2009, were adopted, without amendments, on the motion of Anielbhai Soma and seconded by Pranaybhai Devchand.

## 4. MATTERS ARISING

### 4.1 Circular to inform community members of new officials

All committee member lists have still not yet been received. Members were reminded to send Rameshbhai the complete names and contact details of all proposed members of the various portfolio committees. It was decided that special projects would be on an *ad hoc* basis and that no names for this portfolio will be provided.

### 4.2 Meeting with Navyug members

A meeting was held with the members of the Navyug Mandal to address issues and concerns they had with respect to being a subcommittee of the Samaj.

Rameshbhai reported that they were given the assurance that they would continue to enjoy decision-making powers and financial control over their affairs.

#### **4.3 Establishing Samaj Office**

Himalbhai Ramjee gave the assurance that the office will be completed by mid February 2010. A steel cabinet would be placed in the office for safe keeping of important documents and other possessions. Thus far, a security gate leading to the main entrance to the Samaj office has been erected, a PC acquired and loaded with the required financial packages.

#### **4.4 Preparations for 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations in 2012**

Whilst not a priority at this stage, Sanjaybhai agreed to work with Amarlalbhai Soma and others to put together a draft concept plan for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2012.

#### **4.5 Establishment of retirement village**

It was decided that this matter would be carried forward.

#### **4.6 Modernizing Balmandir School**

Atishbhai Mistry confirmed that a meeting was held with various teachers to discuss this issue. The teachers were keen to assist and a project plan will be implemented soon.

#### **4.7 Deepening understanding of Hindu Dharma**

Rameshbhai reported that he had discussed with Jagdishbhai and Pankajbhai the need to publish regular articles on Hinduism in order to make the public aware of the essentials of Hindu Dharma. Pankajbhai agreed to co-ordinate a team which would include the Education Committee. Rameshbhai undertook to persuade the Laudium Sun to publish the material produced. All members were

once again reminded to ensure Rameshbhai Chhagan is informed about any dealings they have with the press.

#### **4.8 Crematorium Issue**

At a meeting attended by Kishorbhai, Sanjaybhai, Rameshbhai, Pankajbhai, Bharatbhai and Ramanbhai, it was agreed that the Samaj needed a two-pronged approach to the crematorium issue. In the short-term a delegation would meet with the mayor to request that the Rebecca Street Crematorium was re-opened without further delay. The second long-term solution was to either build our own crematorium or persuade the Council to lease the current crematorium to us to run on their behalf.

Before the meeting with the mayor was set up, Rameshbhai received an invitation from the Pretoria Tamil League to accompany them to attend a meeting with Mrs. Tessa Ernest, who is the Member of the Mayor Committee (MMC) responsible for Agriculture & Environment Management. Sanjaybhai & Bharatbhai also attended. At this meeting it was resolved that (1) the MMC would petition the Green Scorpions to agree to grant the municipality a temporary permit to continue with operations whilst air quality issues were being sorted out and (2) that the delegation would prepare and submit a business plan to lease the Crematorium facility. Sanjaybhai Govind undertook to co-ordinate this process.

#### **4.9 Renovation of the Samaj premises**

Concern was expressed that the Samaj premises are in urgent need of repairs and renovation. Kishorbhai Naran was requested to present a full renovation plan to the Executive at the next meeting for approval

#### **4.10 Management of Samaj Marabastad Centre**

A report was provided by Anielbhai Soma in respect of the arrear rentals which have been recovered to date as well as rentals which are currently in arrears. A

signed acknowledgement of debt has been received from BM Hawkers Centre CC together with a surety thereto.

There are new leases to be signed and same will be presented at the next meeting. Anielbhai Soma is to provide a recoverable list at the next meeting.

#### **4.11 1860 Legacy Foundation**

Rameshbhai Chhagan is currently serving on a task team made up of various Pretoria community organisations that are planning to commemorate the 150 year arrival of Indians to South Africa. A presentation giving details of the plans was e-mailed to all members. An inaugural meeting that would include elections will be held on Monday 7 December 2009. Representatives from the SPHSS shall be Jyotiben Joshi, Rameshbhai Chhagan, Amarlalbhai Soma and any one else who would like to attend

#### **4.12 Social Support for Community**

Members felt that there are our community members who are experiencing hardships as a result of the poor economic situation and that the Samaj needs a plan to address this. Jyotiben mentioned that some charitable work with the assistance of social workers is being done, but this was not under the banner of the Samaj, and was limited to providing hampers only on an ad hoc basis. It was agreed that a Jyotiben and Pranaybhai would host a workshop that would produce a Social Support plan.

#### **4.13 Widening bursary support**

Pranaybhai reported that the Bursary Committee has sufficient funds to meet the demand for bursaries (loans), thus it will not be necessary to look at ways of increasing bursary support.

#### **4.14 Participation in Vishwa Gujarati Samaj**

Rameshbhai reported that he had given a letter to Jivanbhai Kalyan stating that he would be representing the Samaj at the Vishwa Gujarati Samak taking place in Ahmedabad in India from the 22 to 24 January 2010. Jivanbhai will present a report on his return.

#### 4.15 **Forensic Audit Report**

Anielbhai and Himalbhai reported that they had received a letter from ABSA's attorneys acknowledging the validity of the claims made by the Samaj. They have indicated that they will refund the capital amount, together with penalties and interests charged, subject to two conditions, namely that the Samaj lays a criminal charge of fraud against Naresh Mistry and that we indemnify ABSA against any further claims. Anielbhai indicated that the settlement to be received from ABSA should only be communicated to our members. Anielbhai and Himalbhai were given the mandate to enter into an agreement with ABSA to bring the matter to a conclusion.

The only remaining aspect was that of receiving a completed forensic audit report. It was agreed that Tayfin Auditors complete the interview process with the previous officials and trustees in order to obtain a full picture of what went wrong. Rameshbhai was tasked with arranging this discussion meeting.

### **5. CORRESPONDENCE**

#### ***In:***

- 5.1 A letter received from Moris Prokroy Attorneys requesting payment for work done for the previous committee. Payment was approved.
- 5.2 On the motion of Aneilbhai Soma and seconded by Jagdishbhai Makan, it was agreed that the statement of account from the attorneys who represented the concerned group will be paid by the SPHSS.
- 5.3 A letter from Vinay Chagan was received in which he expressed his concern about the management of the priest. The President mentioned that he has already drafted a reply. It was agreed that Jagdishbhai should make arrangements to conclude a new contract with Mukeshbhai.

- 5.4 A letter was received from Hasmukhbhai Nichha requesting R500 for expenses incurred in assisting with Navratri and New Year celebrations. Rameshbhai reported that he had written to Hasmukhbhai to submit a detailed claim to Jagdishbhai who would then process it. To date, he has not done so.
- 5.5 The letter received from Harsulaben Naik and the secretary's response to it was tabled.
- 5.6 An email received from Vijaybhai Khatri wherein which he suggested that the annual President's Award should only be awarded if there are persons in the community who are deserving of it. He further suggested that the traditional format for celebrating the New Year be changed. Jagdishbhai undertook to look into the matter.
- 5.7 A letter received from Vally Chagan Attorneys informing the committee that Samaj documents in his client's possession would be handed over, was tabled. It was noted that to date no documents referred to in his letter has been received.

***Out:***

- 5.8 A letter was written to the MMC requesting information on the progress made in getting a temporary permit to use the Crematorium.

**6. FINANCIAL REPORT**

Anielbhai reported that all the old Samaj tins have been collected and counted. A total of R20 000.00 has been deposited. Sanjaybhai indicated that a list with amounts collected will be circulated next week.

Anielbhai reported that a meeting was held with the forensic auditors PWC and they have agreed to render their services at a reduced price. All documentation from the finance committee shall be handed over to PWC in due course.

It was reported by Anielbhai that the fixed deposit in the FNB account would need to be transferred and that financial report covering the last five months will be written up.

The high bank charges associated with operating a cheque account was raised. It was felt that the latest innovations in internet banking that has built in safeguards around multiple approval for transferring of funds was the most economical yet safe option. However, the constitution specifically states that a cheque account must be used. It was decided that Rameshbhai will canvass permission from the community via email and should this be approved by a majority of persons than we will make the switch and have the change formally approved at the next BGM meeting.

## **7. PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Prakashbhai Hira requested that as from the next meeting all portfolio committees, including finance, should submit their reports in writing. This report should not exceed one page. Rameshbhai undertook to devise a reporting template and circulate it for finalization.

Jyotiben requested permission for her committee to host a senior citizen luncheon on 18 April 2010 at an approximate cost of R50 000.00 for 600 people. Jyotiben was informed that the executive supports her plan and that the Samaj will contribute towards the event on a rand for rand basis.

Jagdishbhai Makan raised the issue of the hall hire fees charged to non-profit organisations. He felt that the current arrangement of giving a 50% discount to non-profit organisations was not suitable as it resulted in them still paying R1000 which he regarded as being excessive. A spirited debate followed with various alternative options being proposed. In the end, it was agreed by common consensus that the arrangement of giving a 50% discount to non-profit organizations would remain.

## 7. **NEW MATTERS**

### 7.1 Funeral Policy

Sanjaybhai is to present a business plan regarding the funeral policy to assist the community.

### 7.2 The Marabastad Centre Properties

The Samaj is the owner of two non adjacent plots and Sanjaybhai is to communicate with the other plot owners to negotiate transfer thereof.

The finance committee shall assist Sanjaybhai herein.

A meeting will be held at the Bowling Green on how to access funds from the council and it was decided that Sanjaybhai Govind will attend same.

### 7.2 **Rates & taxes account for Sodha / Jogee Properties**

Money was apparently paid to Sodha / Jogee but same was not paid to the council. Sanjaybhai is to investigate all rates & taxes of Samaj properties and the properties that are to be transferred.

7.3 It was reported by Jyotiben that 40 members of the senior citizens are going to Mauritius. All moneys have been paid to Family Travel.

7.4 The sms and e-mail notification system will be taken over by Rameshbhai and Tershiaben.

7.5 Sanjaybhai has indicated that he has a list of all the addresses in respect of wedding invites. Same shall be made available to anyone who may require it at a cost.

7.6 With regard to the Laudium Sun advert it was decided that a response will not be sent as all issues in dispute must be raised with the SPHSS directly. In terms of the constitution if there is a complaint it must be formally directed to the SPHSS.



## **8 NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next and first meeting of 2010 shall be held on 25 January 2010.

## **9 PRAYER AND CLOSURE**

The meeting ended with a prayer at 23:20.