

AUM

SHREE PRETORIA HINDU SEVA SAMAJ

(Established in 1932)

264 13th Avenue
Box 1811
Laudium, Pretoria, 0037
PRETORIA, 0001

P O

e-mail: ramesh.chhagan@exxaro.com

PBO Ref. No.: 930004205

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

Held at: The Boardroom, Shree Pretoria Hindu Seva Samaj
Date : 25 January 2010
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 – Jyotiben Joshi

2.2 In Attendance: Prakashbhai Hira, Rameshbhai Chhagan, Anielbhai Soma, Sanjaybhai Govind, Himalbhai Ramjee, Jagdishbhai Makan, Kishorbhai Naran, Pravinbhai Daya, Pranaybhai Devchand, Rakeshbhai Ravjee, Harshaben Dayal and Terishiaben Calien.

3.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee of 27 October 2009, were adopted, with amendments, on the motion of Jagdishbhai Makan seconded by Sanjaybhai Govind.

Amendments

3.1 Item 4.2 should reflect that Jagdishbhai was also present;

3.2 Item 9.3 should read as follows: "Prakashbhai expressed concern about an unpaid rates & taxes account sent to the Samaj on which Sodha/Jogee previously conducted business up to December 1999".

4.

MATTERS ARISING

4.1 Circular to inform community members of new officials

This matter was dealt with

4.2 Establishing Samaj Office

Himalbhai Ramjee gave the assurance that the office is still on track to be established by mid February 2010.

4.3 Preparations for 80th 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 by April 2010 for the Samaj 80th anniversary celebrations in 2012.

4.4 Establishment of retirement village

Prakashbhai reported that this matter will be covered later.

4.5 Modernizing Gujarati School

Harshaben reported that she was concluding service contracts with teachers and requested Tershiaben's help in finalizing it. Teachers engaged for specific interventions would be remunerated on an hourly rate.

4.6 Deepening understanding of Hindu Dharma

Jagdishbhai reported that initial meetings were held by him, Harshaben and Pankajbhai. A plan would be produced by March 2010.

4.7 Crematorium Issue

Prakashbhai expressed his thanks to all the members (executive and trustees) as well as Yusuf Abrahamjee who worked towards getting the Crematorium re-opened under trying conditions. He also thanked Mr Daya Chetty of the Gauteng Tamil Federation for setting up the meeting with the MMC where our concerns were raised. Rameshbhai and Sanjaybhai reported a follow-up meeting was held on 20 January with other Hindu organisations to discuss the taking over of the Rebecca Street Crematorium. This meeting resolved that (1) Daya Chetty would do a due diligence on the cost of running

the crematorium and submit these to the organisations; (2) the different organisations would then come to the next meeting with proposals; (3) if no common agreement reached than the decision as to go ahead would be left with the individual organisations.

Prakashbhai expressed reservation in the Samaj getting involved in a potentially expensive project in the light of our very limited number of cremations per annum. However, it was agreed that the team will continue with its collaboration and investigations before a final decision is taken.

4.8 Renovation of the Samaj premises

Kishorbhai stated that he had received some quotations which he wanted Board approval on. Members felt that before any decision could be taken, Kishorbhai should engage the services of professionals to do a complete assessment of what needed to be done and present this plan with costs to the committee by March 2010. Sanjaybhai, Anielbhai, Pravinbhai, Jagdishbhai and Harshaben agreed to help with this big task by giving inputs and assisting with planning.

4.9 Management of Samaj Marabastad Centre

New completed leases were handed over to Anielbhai to sign on behalf of the Samaj.

4.10 1860 Legacy Foundation

Rameshbhai reported that one of our trustees', Mr Amarlal Soma, has been elected as Chairman of this body and will in future keep the Samaj informed of 1860 celebrations progress.

4.11 Social Support for Community

Pranaybhai reported that 2 referrals have been received to assist some desperate community members who were at risk of being evicted from their homes. Rameshbhai mentioned that he received a third referral a few hours before the meeting. All these referrals will be investigated by social workers and committee members and a recommendation made to the Executive.

4.12 Bursary Support

Pranaybhai reported that the Bursary Committee has received only three applications for bursaries (loans) thus far which they are processing.

4.13 **Recovery of Stolen Funds**

Anielbhai and Himalbhai reported that they are finalizing the claim with ABSA – the latter have acknowledged some errors in their calculation. The money is expected to be deposited in our account by 5 February 2010, subject to availability of ABSA attorneys.

4.14 **Finalising Forensic Report**

It was anticipated that this report should be concluded by end May.

5. **CORRESPONDENCE**

In:

5.1 A letter was received from the Pretoria Hindu School requesting assistance. As both Rameshbhai and Pravinbhai were members of the Board of Management of the Pretoria Hindu Society, they were asked to recuse themselves while the rest of the members deliberated the matter. The remaining members approved the granting of financial assistance, subject to proper loan and cession agreements being signed by the Society. It was agreed that the decision taken would be communicated to the community by Prakashbhai by way of a separate communiqué.

5.2 A letter from Girish Daya was received asking the Samaj to participate in relief efforts for victims of the earthquake in Haiti. Members took the decision not to participate at this point in time.

Out:

5.3 A letter was written to Daya Chetty in response to his criticism about not mentioning the role he played in arranging a meeting with the MMC in charge of the Crematorium.

5.4 A letter was written to Trushar Kalan in response to his criticism for late payment to an attorney.

6. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The financial system has been installed and is up and running. In addition, the drive to achieve a single operating bank account has been achieved by the closure of the Navyug and Education accounts and the transfer of funds to this single operating account. Henceforth, all income & expenses will be transacted from the main Samaj account. Receipt books have been issued to the various sub-committee treasurers.

Financials for period 31 July 2009 to 31 December 2009 will be captured in Pastel and both individual and consolidate financial reports will be provided by end February 2009.

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE REPORTS

The following reports were submitted by all Portfolio Heads that detailed their activities for the month of January and their plans going forward.

7.1 Bursary Fund Portfolio

Agreed Focus Areas for 2010:

- * Granting loans to community members for Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) studies
- * Investigate Social support structures and finalise plan with Social Welfare committee.

Summary of Activities / Progress against Focus areas / Decisions Taken:

- Meeting held on 13 Jan with Social & welfare com to brainstorm ideas related to Social support structure for destitute families
- Called all students with outstanding loans and bursary payments. Worked on a payment plan.
- Sent out notice to community about bursaries available and contact details.
- Proposed name change as it clashes with Ed committee. Not yet finalised
- Set up interviews with bursary applicants.

7.2 Education Portfolio

Agreed Focus Areas for 2010:

- * Recruiting and contracting the new educators for the revised Gujarati School programme
- * Developing and implementing the new curriculum for the Gujarati School

- * Developing policies and procedures for the running of both schools (Gujarati & Balmandir)
- * Plan activities together with the Religious & Cultural Committee and with the Navyug Mandal and the Maintenance Committee for renovations of the classrooms.
- * Establish parent committees for both schools

Summary of Activities / Progress against Focus areas / Decisions Taken:

1. There has been a very positive start to the year on the enrolment of children for both schools, even though the fees have been raised: 80 children for the Balmandir (R230/mth) and 30 children for the Gujarati School (R120/mth)
2. 7 new educators have committed to teaching at the school, with subjects ranging from language studies; cultural dance; cultural music; yoga; religious & cultural studies.
3. The new structure for the Gujarati School is taking shape, with a weekday programme and a week-end programme. This will commence in February as the educators are still being contracted in.
4. Administration of the new structure and curriculum for both the Schools is underway.

7.3 Health, Welfare & Gender Portfolio

Agreed Focus Areas for 2010

1. Senior Citizens Club Activities
2. Mauritius Trip
3. 10th Anniversary Celebrations
4. Social Support Structure

Summary of Activities/ Progress against Focus Areas/Decisions Taken

1. Senior Citizens Club meeting held. Blood Pressure and Sugar testing of senior citizens has been done as well as collection of fees and enrollment of new members. Meeting to finalize Mauritius trip held on Saturday 23rd January at which all logistical arrangements were finalised. Members felt it was not feasible to host a 10th Anniversary Celebration of the club as the funds could be utilized for a more deserving purpose.
2. Social Support Structure. A meeting was held with Pranaybhai and committee members. Lots of discussion and exchange of views took place to start a support structure. An implementation plan will be devised shortly.

7.4 Navyug Mandal

Agreed Focus Areas for 2010:

1. Hanuman Chalisa (11 April 2010)
2. Rangoli

3. Social Events
4. Golf Day (March)
5. Friday Night Activities (6pm – 8pm)
6. Charity Month (May) and Events

Summary of Activities / Progress against Focus areas / Decisions Taken:

1. A Family Fun Day has been provisionally planned for the 7 February 2010. At the general community meeting that was held on the 17 January 2010, it was suggested that the event be moved to a different date. This is being considered.
2. Hanuman Chalisa preparations will start at the end of the month.
3. The General Community Meeting was held on the 17 January 2010 at the PHSS Auditorium. The turn out was poor but the brainstorming session after the meeting went extremely well.

7.5

Secretarial Portfolio

Agreed Focus Areas for 2010:

1. Updating of Email Database
2. Creating Samaj website & email address
3. Drawing up leases for Samaj Marabastad Centre Tenants
4. Update SMS database
5. Draft a Samaj Funeral policy
6. Draft a Samaj Communication Policy
7. Draft a Code of Conduct Policy

Summary of Activities / Progress against Focus areas / Decisions Taken:

1. A total of 105 additional email addresses were added to the database bringing the total to 515.
2. A meeting with Vinay Chibba of Whispering Communications was held late last year to discuss the structure of the website. Material has been forwarded to him to upload.
3. Leases are being drawn up for Samaj Marabastad Centre and will be completed by end January
4. A Communication Policy document providing guidance for the usage of SMS system, mass emailing system, etc will be circulated shortly for approval. The SMS database is currently being updated
5. A Code of Conduct for Executive members will be drawn up by end February 2010
6. A Samaj Funeral Policy will be drafted by end February

7.5 **Special Projects Portfolio**

Summary of Activities / Progress against Focus areas / Decisions Taken:

1. **Samaj Marabastad Complex**

1.1 Met tenants and negotiated proper lease agreement; leases to be signed before end February; all current rentals are up-to-date, except for BM Wholesalers and Hemmies. Both parties have agreed to payment schedule.

1.2 Sodha/Jogee rates issue.

At a meeting held with Mr Sodha, Samaj officials were informed that Samaj took possession of Erf 660, which was the Samaj's property, in Dec 1999. Construction had begun and completed in year 2000. Samaj would thus be responsible for rates and taxes from January 2000. It was further clarified that Naresh Mistry had paid Mr. Sodha on two separate occasions for rates & taxes for period Jan 2000 - Dec 2000 and subsequently Jan 2001 - June 2001. No record exists of these payments. Mr G. Sodha paid these monies over to the council in lieu of outstanding rates and taxes. Samaj would therefore be responsible for rates and taxes from July 2001. Account in the name of Sodha /Jogee reflecting an outstanding balance of R93 242 -29 shows arrangement of R776.00 per month. Clarity on what this amount entails is needed from council.

2. **Crematorium**

Meetings were held with other Hindu organisations to determine how the community will ensure sustainability of services at Rebecca Street crematorium. Another meeting will be held on 3 February after proper information has been obtained on the implications of leasing premises from the Council has become clearer. Organisations will then decide whether to take crematorium over or not. Special projects are also conducting its own study to determine viability of taking over crematorium.

3. **Land Claims**

Negotiations are continuing with Council to obtain allocated land as well as swapping sites with others.

7.6 **Religious & Culture Portfolio**

Focus Areas for 2010

- Formation of Consultative Forum for Joint Religious Celebrations of Maha Shivatri, Holi, Shree Ramnaumi, Hanuman Jayanti, Krishna Jayanti, Navratri, Diwali and New Year

Summary of Activities

- Held meeting with other organisations on 18 January to form joint working group; Preparations are underway for Maha Shivratri celebrations in the auditorium – pamphlet with full details to be distributed soon.
- Provisional arrangements have been made for a learned swamiji from the Divine Life Mission in Ahmedabad to address the public on 13 March from 2pm to 5pm in the mandir
- The Sunday Youth Devotional Group have agreed to amalgamate with the Navyug Mandal.

7.7 ***Facilities & Funeral Management Portfolio***

Focus Areas for 2010

- Finalising Hall Hire contracts and rates
- Drawing up maintenance plan for approval and implementation
- Upgrading security

Summary of Activities:

- Completed outside lighting of mandir area, revamping of school toilets, and playground area.
- Will provide plan for complete upgrading of premises, including auditorium, mandir and school sections, by March 2010
- Youth using Samaj premises for playing soccer and cricket – concerns will be addressed

8. **NEW MATTERS**

8.1 ***Team Spirit***

Prakashbhai emphasized the importance for members to work as a team. He has received positive feedback from the community on the work that has been done by members. Rameshbhai added that he is currently completing the Code of Conduct which sets out the framework for co-operation. He also appealed to members to give input into all the policy documents that are being prepared.

8.2 ***Clarification of Naresh Mistry's Financial Interests***

Pravinbhai requested that an investigation be conducted to ascertain in which businesses Naresh Mistry has financial interests as this impacts on the Samaj's decisions as to whom they conduct business with. Rameshbhai will investigate.

9 NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on Monday 15 February and all subsequent meetings will be held on the third Monday of every month.

10 PRAYER AND CLOSURE

The meeting ended with a prayer at 10:45pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rameshbhai Chhagan', written in a cursive style.

RAMESHBHAI CHHAGAN
SECRETARY GENERAL: SPHSS