

## NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE TWENTY SEVENTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Location: Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago,  
8615 Meadowbrook Dr. Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527-6263. USA.

**Date: May 3 & 4, 2014**

NAMC EXEC 2013-2014 Present:

Kobad Zarolia	Ontario (President)
Arda-E-Viraf Minocherhomjee	California (Vice-President)
Gev Karkaria	Quebec (Secretary)
Tehemton Mirza	Ontario (Treasurer)
Khushru Bharda	Ontario (EXEC Board Member)

Members Present:

Jamshed Antia	Illinois
Kersi Antia	Illinois
Jehan Bagli	Ontario
Boman Damkevala	Illinois
Mehbad Dastur	Ontario
Freddy Gonda	Illinois
Neriosang Karanjia	Illinois
Zarvan Karanjia	Illinois
Nozer Kotwal	Ontario

Noshir Mirza	Ontario
Keikhasrow Mobed	Illinois
Behram Panthaki	Washington
Neville Vazifdar	Illinois
Pesi Vazifdar	Illinois
Adi Unwalla	New Jersey

Four Proxies were registered.

Meeting was called to order by President Ervad Kobad Zarolia after a short prayer.

(1) Read, discuss and adopt the minutes of the Twenty sixth Annual General Meeting held at the Arthur Seguin Chalet 365 St. Louis, Point Claire, Quebec, Canada on May 18 & 19 May '13

There were no comments or discussions. Nozer Proposed and Behram seconded and the Minutes were adopted.

(2) Adopt the Financial Statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2012.

Treasurer Tehemton Mirza presented the Statements and explained all items. Tehemton also requested Nozer to Audit the same. They were reviewed and audited by Nozer and the statements were found to be in order.

Pesi proposed to adopt the Statements and Gev seconded. Financial Statements were passed unanimously

(3) President's Annual Report: President Kobad Zarolia highlighted NAMC's activities during 2012.

Lecture Circuit: The NAMC Lecture Team was extremely well received and appreciated in Houston, with requests to plan more visits in 2014. There have

been quite a few requests from other Associations for these lectures in 2014 as well. We are trying to schedule Chicago in August this year.

NAMC "ATHRAVAN" Newsletter: Thanks to Soli, Khushru and all the contributing Mobeds, the Newsletter made a third year of successful rounds in 2013/14. The President once again requested all members to participate more actively in this program by contributing articles researched personally and by commenting on the material submitted by others.

International recognition of NAMC: NAMC sent a congratulatory letter to the Russian Zoroastrian Anjuman on their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The president Kobad Zarolia thanked and appreciated Ervad Jehan Bagli's assistance in drafting the letter.

Nozer proposed to adopt the President's report and Behram seconded. Report accepted unanimously.

(4) Mobedyar Program evaluation: MOBEDYAR MANUAL draft was circulated and discussed. Several comments and suggestions were put forward and the author Tehemton agreed to incorporate and revise the draft. NAMC recognizes and appreciates Tehemton's time and effort in compiling this Manual. It was resolved to adopt this Manual after incorporating these corrections / suggestions. Proposed by Khushru and seconded by Noshir. Resolution unanimously adopted. Arda had a good suggestion about the selection process of prospective Mobedyar candidates based on discussions with several Anjumans. We should have a market oriented policy. Local Associations in consultation with their Mobeds should decide on the need for Mobedyars in their region, especially in locations where there is an adequate number of actively participating Mobeds.

(5) NAMC'S role in stemming decline in Zoroastrian population: Kobad listed out some of the reasons for the decline; (a) Biological reasons (b) Late or no

marriages (c) Low birth rate – Highest Literacy and Lowest birth rate (d) Conversion to other faiths (e) Apathy in the community (f) Sexual orientation (g) Reluctance to accept children of women married into other faiths. (h) Dogmatic religious beliefs

Brain storming to find some ideas to stop the bleeding:

(a) Stop conversion to other religions – keep our flock involved.

(b) Create more activities for youth (Mehbad)

(c) In India educate the laity to show more respect to the religion and to the Dasturs & Mobeds (Naryosang)

(d) At every religious function inform the congregation with a translation and meaning of the service. (Kersi)

(e) Every week have a prayer meeting – something like Sunday Service.

(f) Accept children of mixed marriages into our faith (Jehan)

(g) Regular question / answer sessions for Mobeds (Kersi)

(h) Consecrated Place of Worship with dedicated and adequately paid clergy (Kobad)

(6) How should Mobeds manage their congregation:

(a) Religion Classes for both adults and children

(b) Congregation to pray together. Chicago started the practice of everybody praying Atash Nyaesh and Tandarosti together.

(7) NAMC WEBSITE Update :

Proposed site identification: <namcmobeds.org>

Pages to be included:

Home Page: Who we are

About Us: History

Mission Statement:

Arda-E-Viraf / Behram / Mehbad to coordinate and finalize.

(8) Other Business permitted by the Chair :

(a) Twitter Accounts “Zarthosti” and “NAMC Mobeds”. Kobad advised that Nazneen Khambhata along with her daughter and son want to try a pilot project to get a reaction from our younger generation. NAMC approved the trial balloon.

(b) Mobed Training Camps and /or Sessions : Kobad mentioned that it has been very difficult to organize a common camp / weekend lock-down for young Mobeds from all over North America. Texas has organized local events successfully. We could have regional get together geographically convenient. Like NE USA ; Canada; Chicago; California; Texas. Khushru suggested planning events many months in advance. Arda-E-Viraf said he would try this in California. There was a comment that explanations and concepts should be conveyed at the appropriate age group level.

(c) Dasturji Minocherhomji's Lectures and Religious Writings: Chicago Association has a vast collection and could be available to NAMC for reference. Kayomarz Mehta is the contact person.

(d) Books published by Jehan and Adi : to be put on NAMC website.

(e) Lectures / Talks by Mobeds after Religious Functions : Fezana has a collection of these items which can be used after Jashans, Mehrgan etc. and synopsis of Navjote, Wedding, Jashan. Similar info is also available under Epilogue in Jehan /

Adi's publication of the three books related to the Understanding & Practice of 1) Jashan Ceremony 2) Navjote and Wedding ceremonies and 3) Obsequies.

(f) Mobed's compensation for religious services: In response to requests from different North American Associations for NAMC to prepare and circulate a “Fee” schedule for religious services provided by Mobeds, NAMC feels that each Association in consultation with local Mobeds should come up with their own Fee structure. If the Association needs further assistance, NAMC should refer them to review the schedule prepared by Chicago.

(g) Presentation by Rohinton Rivetna: Rohinton gave a live demonstration with a model of the mechanics and design of natural draft in a “Goombaz” (Dome above the fire). It was very impressive. Rohinton also stressed the importance of audience participation in Jashan ceremonies. Chicago is working towards the following projects: An Atashkadeh; A Seminary (for Post Graduate Studies in Zoroastrianism); An Athornan Institute (Madresa)

(h) Zoroastrian Library in Houston: Aban Rustomji from Houston has requested NAMC to suggest to all members to consider donating their personal libraries and collection of religious books to the Library. All books would be catalogued and listed appropriately and would be available to any Zoroastrian in North America. Duplicate copies would be made available to Associations having local libraries. Jehan and Adi have decided to donate some of their collections.

(i) Donor for Agiary in Houston: Houston Association has accepted an offer from a donor to build an “Agiary” or a “Place of Worship”. The donor has insisted on their involving the NAMC in this project. Kobad will provide more information as the project progresses.

(j) Navjote Prayers: are available on “ZANT” website.

(k) Prayers on I-Pad: Suggestion was put forward but nobody volunteered to try and undertake this project currently.

(l) Conducting future NAMC meetings: Arda had an excellent suggestion about this subject. Instead of quickly voting on contentious issues, which tends to divide members with different viewpoints, we should try and work towards forming a consensus. When voting on contentious issues is necessary and unanimity cannot be easily achieved, we should require a supermajority vote. Importantly we should be open, transparent and upfront about when we need a majority vs supermajority vote for a resolution.

(m) Long Term Planning: Keikhasrow suggested that we should also try and remove ourselves from our current issues occasionally and evolve a strategy / plan of action for the next thirty years.

(n) Zoroastrian Broadcast time on local Radio Stations: Kerman Katrak from Toronto suggested that we should buy some radio broadcast time to reach our local Zoroastrian population with religious and other pertinent topics. The members thought that this was too premature at this point in time and we should defer it to a few years down the road.

(o) Praying in Unison: Tehemton wanted suggestions about praying in unison at a funeral (Geh Sarna) with a mobed whomay not have a formal training or experience. Suggestion from a number of Mobeds was to decide prior to the ceremony as to who would be the lead Mobed. The other Mobed must adjust to the speed and tempo set by the lead/ experienced Mobed.

(9)Election of New Executive Committee: It was unanimously decided by the members to request the current Committee to continue, so all members were re-elected by acclamation. The members put on record their gratitude and thanked all the Executive Personnel for their hard work and dedication. There was also a unanimous wish to start grooming younger Mobeds to get involved in NAMC activities ---- “Succession Planning”!!

(10)Next AGM (2015) : In Washington DC.

(11) Meeting adjourned with a vote of thanks to the Chair and to our gracious hosts in Chicago.

NM.