

NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE TWENTY EIGHTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Location: Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Washington Inc.

Kamran Dar-e-Meher, 15316 Barnesville Road, Boyds, MD. 20841, USA.

Date: May 16 & 17, 2015

NAMC EXEC 2015 Present:

Kobad Zarolia	Ontario	(President)
Gev Karkaria	Quebec	(Secretary)
Tehemton Mirza	Ontario	(Treasurer)
Khushroo Bharda	Ontario	(EXEC Board Member)

Members Present:

Jehan Bagli	Ontario
Mehbad Dastur	Ontario
Cawas Desai	Pensylvania
Noshir Khumbatta	Texas
Nozer Kotwal	Ontario
Xerxes Madon	Ontario
Noshir Mirza	Ontario
Behram Panthaki	Washington DC
Jal Panthaky	Ontario
Pervez Patel	New York

Fariborz Shahzadi California

Adi Unwalla New Jersey

No Proxies were registered.

Regrets: Arda-E-Viraf and Soli Dastur.

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

Welcome address by Mr. Navroz Gandhi, President, ZAMWI.

Mr. Gandhi welcomed NAMC members. He requested the delegates to discuss two items, which needed immediate attention.

(a) "Succession Planning". First generation Mobeds are getting on and we have to give serious thought to grooming the next generation of younger Mobeds to take over. Time is running out and we need to move quickly.

(b) "Religious Education" : Younger Mobeds are not having adequate knowledge re: prayers and rituals. NAMC should set up a comprehensive curriculum and conduct "hands on" workshops and seminars.

AGENDA ITEMS:

(1) Read, discuss and adopt the minutes of the Twenty Seventh Annual General Meeting held at the Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, 8615 Meadowbrook Dr. Burr Ridge, Illinois on May, 3 & 4 2014.

No comments or discussions.

Cawas Proposed , Nozer Seconded. Minutes were adopted.

(2) Adopt the Financial Statements for the year ending Dec. 31, 2014.

Treasurer Tehemton Mirza presented the Statements and explained all items. On request from Tehemton, Nozer reviewed and approved the statements.

Behram proposed to adopt the Statements and Cawas seconded. Financial Statements were passed unanimously

(3) President's Annual Report:

President Kobad Zarolia highlighted NAMC's activities during 2014 – 2015.

Lecture Circuit:

The NAMC Lecture Team was extremely well received and appreciated in Houston, Chicago & Toronto with requests to plan more visits in 2015. FEZANA has offered to assist NAMC with lecturers' travel expenses.

NAMC "ATHRAVAN" Newsletter:

Thanks to Soli, Khushroo and all the contributing Mobeds, the Newsletter made a fourth year of successful rounds in 2014/15. 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.

Soli Dastur's weekly "Zoroastrian Scripture Extracts" :

Despite serious health issues, Soli continues to send out his weekly e-mail lessons.

Soli is currently recovering from a major heart surgery and could not attend this AGM. All members present, sent out a special "Thank YOU" to Soli and recited a Tandarosti for his quick recovery.

Building design for Atashkedeh or Dar-e-Meher.

Kobad circulated pictures of recent Atashkedehs in Houston and LA. He advocated traditional designs prevalent on the Indian sub-continent. Behram spoke of Washington DC's experience, where the principal donor, decided to design and build on his own and then lease the building to the local association. Jehan

mentioned that the external facade was not very critical. Cawas corroborated and stressed that the internal layout and facilities were of prime importance.

Congratulations to Mobed Pervez Bajan (Mumbai):

Kobad informed the members about Pervez being awarded a Doctorate for teaching Avesta and Pahalvi languages. Congratulations were sent to him on behalf of NAMC.

North American Zoroastrian Congress in LA:

Five young North American Mobeds served on a discussion panel moderated by our Soli Dastur and Houtoxi Contractor. Arda-E-Viraf was also involved in organizing this event which was a big success

NAMC's assistance requested by Pakistan born ex-pats to obtain visa to visit India:

Kobad mentioned that he has been approached by Pakistan born Zoroastrians requesting assistance from NAMC to obtain Indian visitor's visa to enable them to go for pilgrimage visits. Kobad sent personal requests to Dastur Kaikobad Dastur of Udvada and to Arnu Aga (member of India's Rajya Sabha) to help. He has had no response to date. Kobad asked the members, if NAMC should get involved in this matter. A show of hands indicated only two in favour, the rest against.

NAMC Website:

Mehbad / Arda / Behram have updated the site.

Tehemton proposed to adopt the President's report and Gev seconded. Report accepted unanimously.

(4) Mobedyar Program evaluation:

NAMC has one request from Seattle. Soli is assisting by Skyp. Behram is helping an applicant, Hormazd Katki from Washington DC. Pervez mentioned that a 62 year old lady has shown interest in becoming a Mobedyar.

In the absense of Soli and Arda, item #s 6, 7, 8, 9, of the Agenda were put off till the next AGM.

(5)Salaries & Compensation - Zoroastrian Priesthood :

NAMC has received a lot of requests from various NA associations and individuals for advise re: compensation of Mobeds who perform religious services.

Since NAMC has been requested by a number of associations; NAMC provides the following guide lines for “Ashodad” (gifts) for performance of religious services.

Associations may disseminate this recomendation to their members.

Wedding (Gavah) & Navjote (Sedreh Pushi) \$500

Above includes Nahan

Jashan (per ceremony per Mobed) \$250

Funeral (per ceremony per Mobed) \$250

Dasmu (Dahom), Masiso (Siyom), Varsi (Saal) \$250
(per ceremony per Mobed)

Mukhtad (Panjeh or Gathas) Associations to decide

Travel Expenses : pre-paid plane ticket plus hotel accomodation. If Travelling by car, pay per mileage

Members to provide Sukhad, Loban (Sandalwood & Incense) and Divo (oil lamp)

(6)Yazashne for young prospective Navarias: Adi and Jehan presented their latest book and high lighted its features, especially the easy-to-follow, sequential arrangement of prayers, rituals and ceremony with notes and explanations. Both these senior Mobeds graciously presented a copy of the book to each participant.

Jal has done a similar exercise on this project. He has translated and compiled a document complete with illustrations. The original was prepared in 2004 by his brother Ervad Rustomji Panthaky former principal of the Athornan Madresa in Dadar Mumbai. Jal is also intending to do a similar project for Rapithvin & Visparad.

Since Adi & Jehan's book is already published and printed, it was decided that NAMC should refrain from producing a duplicate book on the same subject.

Kobad suggested to Jal to put his book on the web-site.

(7) Bringing Iranian Mobeds & Mobedyars under the umbrella Of NAMC :

Fariborz briefly explained the Iranian practice of training & ordaining a Navar / Mobed / Mobedyar. He mentioned that in the western USA, as far as he knew, he was the only bilingual Mobed who could perform religious ceremonies in Farsi for Iranian traditions and in English / Gujarati for Parsi traditions. He said that it would be a good idea to send e-mail invitations to Iranian Mobeds to join and participate in NAMC activities. He would collect / compile a list of Mobeds and send them a suitable invitation.

(8) Possibility of ordaining a male child from an inter-faith marriage as Mobed through the ritual of Navar ceremony:

The collective knowledge and information of participants indicated that this would not be possible in India.

(9) Should NAMC reach out to Zoroastrians of European / Central Asian origin (neither Iranian or Parsi) :

Small Zoroastrian groups have become evident in countries like Russia, Norway, France, Kurdistan, Tajikistan, Armenia, and other countries. If and when any group contacts NAMC, the Executive would investigate the source and offer assistance in the form of books, journals, published papers, web-sites etc.

These Zoroastrians would not be eligible to NAMC membership.

NAMC would not certify Mobeds / Mobedyars from these countries.

(10)Can some ceremonies that are currently performed after sunset be performed before sunset:

Sarosh is believed to be our “Guardian Angel” providing protection after dark. We should continue doing this ceremony / prayer after sunset.

Navjote should ideally be done in the morning Hawan Gah.

(11)Muslim families wishing to convert back to Zoroastrianism:

Mobeds should verify this request, check the applicant's sincerity, verify that the person knows the basic information about our religion, knows the basic Kushti prayers. The Sedreh-Pushi ceremony may then be performed.

Fariborz warned against fake applicants. People of Arab descent could claim Iranian lineage. Some could be claiming to be Zoroastrians for immigration or Green Card purposes.

(12)Ceremonies for inter-faith marriages:

Behram suggested that we recite small portions of the “Ashirwad” and do the Tandarosti.

(13)NAMC Website :

Mehbad demonstrated the “New & Improved” updated website, which now looks professional and has several new features. Thanks to the “Website Committee”, Mehbad, Arda-E-Viraf & Behram.

(14)Other business permitted by the Chair :

(a) Kobad informed the members about the 12 Afarganias, varying in sizes, that were donated by the trustees of the Batliwalla Agiary. They had been polished and shipped to Toronto at their expense. NAMC would like to thank the two trustees, Ms. Shireen Desai and Mr. Kersey Treasurywalla. Kobad also thanked our member Cawas Desai who was instrumental in introducing these trustees to NAMC. These Afarganias will be available to North American Associations for use at their community centres.

(b) Kobad spoke about an e-mail distribution, requesting Mobeds to send in their views re: organ donation, euthenesia, blood transfusion, Gay rights, Gay marriages, preferred method of disposal of dead body after funeral ceremony.

(c) Pervez wanted an opinion re: "Can funeral ceremonies of person who has died in NA, be performed in India?" General concensus was YES they could be done in India.

(d) Xerxes suggested that we include younger Mobeds in our "Lecture Circuit". Also make an extra effort to organize week-end workshops & seminars for younger Mobeds.

(e) Kobad suggested that we ask people to donate air-miles, which NAMC could use for their member travel expenses. Rules re: charitable donations in the USA., Cawas was requested to investigate ramifications of US chapter of NAMC. Tehemton mentioned some agreement between Canada, USA & Israel.

(f) Tehemton submitted his resignation as Treasurer from next year on. We have to find a new person to take over. He has promised total assistance and help to the new person.

(g) Guest Speaker Mr. Kersi Shroff, attached to the US Library of Congress, spoke about US adoption laws, particularly as they apply to adoption of babies or children from overseas.

(15) Next AGM (2016) : Location to be decided.

(16) Meeting adjourned with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair, to the Executive Committee and to our gracious hosts in Washington DC.

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