

NORTH AMERICAN MOBEDS COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE 29th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Location: Zoroastrian Association of Pennsylvania and New Jersey (ZAPANJ)

Date: May 14 & 15, 2016

NAMC EXEC 2015 Present:

Kobad Zarolia	Ontario (President)
Arda-E-Viraf Minocherhomjee	California (Vice-President)
Tehemton Mirza	Ontario (Treasurer)
Khushroo Bharda	Ontario (Executive Board Member)

Members Present:

Adi Unwalla	New Jersey
Noshir Karanjia	New Jersey
Minocher Dadachanji	Pennsylvania
Jehan Bagli	Ontario
Cawas Desai	Pennsylvania
Adil Masani	Pennsylvania
Nozer Kotwal	Ontario
Xerxes Madan	Ontario
Behram Panthaki	Washington DC
Pervez Patel	New York
Cyrus Pavri	New York
Rohinton Dadina	New York
Rohinton Madan	New Jersey
Jehangir Madan	New Jersey
Karl Khambatta	New Jersey

Proxies:

Gev Karkaria

Noshir Mirza

Regrets:

Gev Karkaria

Mehbad Dastur

Soli Dastur

Meeting was called to order by President Ervad Kobad Zarolia after a short prayer. This was followed by a Tandarosti prayer for our revered Dasturji Peshotan Hormazdyar Mirza and a minute of silence for the two Mobeds who recently passed away in Florida.

Welcome speech by Adi Unwalla to all mobeds, welcoming them and their families for attending the 29th North American Mobed Council (NAMC)

- 1) Read and adopted the minutes of the 28th NAMC AGM in Washington, DC.
 - Proposed - Cawas Desai
 - Seconded - Nozer Kotwal
 - 2) Read and adopted Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2015.
 - Tehemton Mirza reminded members that all financial statements are in CAD.
 - Could NAMC give donations outside of Canada as it is a registered non-profit organization in Canada?
Tehemton Mirza said we are making such donations on a case by case basis and with prior approval.
 - 3) Read and adopted President's report.
 - Proposed – Behram Panthaki
 - Seconded– Arda-E-Viraf Minocherhomjee
Unanimously adopted.
 - 4) Mobedyar Status report on training and syllabus.
Currently, there are two Mobedyar's in training:
 1. Seattle – Jamshid Pouresfandiary
 2. Washington – Hormaz KatkiSeparately, a lady from California approached NAMC to become a Mobedyar. She was asked to speak with her local association to recommend her to NAMC for training.
- Tehemton said the Mobedyar syllabus does not need any changes at this time. NAMC President thanked Soli Dastur for training the 2 Mobedyars via Skype.
- 5) NAMC's role in educating young mobeds (Ervad Arda-E-Viraf Minocherhomjee).
 - Arda asked if NAMC should have a program for continuing education of young priests. There was unanimous support for the program. Younger priests were very busy in their careers and do not have much free time to study religious scriptures. Arda suggested that we need to think about different modes of communication-- Facebook/ WhatsApp—that younger mobeds use. Arda will come up with suggestions for religious education of youth.

6) Presentation by NAMC at Iranshah Udvada Utsav in December 2017. Brigadier Ervad Behram Panthaky suggested that NAMC should take part in the next Utsav in Udvada.

7) Funeral Rites and Ceremonies for the departed under certain circumstances (Ervad Kobad Zarolia):

a) Death by Suicide

The consensus was that all ceremonies (*Geh Sarna*, *Uthamnu*, *Pachli Ratnu Uthamnu* and *Charam*) should be performed.

b) Death at sea or in combat where the body has not been recovered.

Again, all ceremonies could be performed. (See recommendation by Behram Panthaki in item 15)

c) Is Death by Euthanasia acceptable under Zoroastrian faith?

The consensus was that it is a very personal decision to be made by/with the family. The priest's role, if any, should be to console the family and to help them make the right decision.

8) NAMC's position on performance of Ashirvad ceremony for Gay and Lesbian couples (Ervad Kobad Zarolia).

- NAMC believes that a marriage should be between a man and a woman based on Patet Pashemani transcript. However, it will be a personal decision of a priest to perform a same sex marriage.

9) NAMC guidelines on the best time of the day to perform Marriage and Navjote ceremonies (Ervad Kobad Zarolia).

- NAMC believes a Navjote Ceremony should be performed in Havan Geh, and where available, at a Zoroastrian cultural centre or place of worship.
- Marriage ceremony timing to be discussed at the next AGM

10) Is Organ donation after death acceptable under Zoroastrian faith? (Ervad Kobad Zarolia).

- Zoroastrianism does not explicitly mention organ donation in its scriptures, as expected. However, in accordance with Zoroastrian teachings of charity, NAMC believes that organ donation would be acceptable. Again, this would be personal choice.

11) Redefine NAMC's role in the World Zoroastrian community (Ervad Kobad Zarolia)

- Most members felt that NAMC's charter is primarily for NA. We could, however, help our brethren in Europe or elsewhere by providing books and other educational material.

12) Dwindling Zoroastrian population- is there a solution? What does the future hold? (Ervad Tehemton Mirza).

- Several issues/reasons were discussed but no recommendation was made.

13) How should NAMC encourage participation and assimilation of all Zoroastrians, regardless of their geographic/cultural origin, in our local congregations (Ervad Tehemton Mirza)?

- A lot of different ideas/suggestions were provided by different priests. Behram, Adi, Tehemton and Pervez provided specific recommendations on keeping the Iranian and Zoroastrians communities together based on their experiences.

14) NAMC website update

- NAMC website is already up and running. Arda stated that any changes or suggestions should be given to him. He thanked Soli Dastur for providing weekly quotes, and lectures

via the web on NAMC's behalf. These quotes and lectures are highly appreciated by the NA Zoroastrian community.

15) Other topics:

- Jal Panthaki's Yasna book. Majority did not think that NAMC should pay for the book as similar books already exist and we have limited funds.
- Cyrus Pavri would like a sound file for the Navar Prayers. He offered to help NAMC to come up with an app.
- A copy of the Mazda Yasni calendar will be sent out to all NAMC Mobeds.
- California Association's (CZC's) process of accepting "new" Zoroastrians into the community was discussed.
- Request sent by Sam Sethna of ZAGNY, New York to give Dastoor title to Ervad Pervez Patel.
NAMC position is to not bestow this title to any mobed in North America as we all are volunteers.
- FEZANA has created an English version of 'Chaye Hame Zarhosti'
- Pervez Patel and Cyrus Pavri requested a procedure and code of conduct to be sent to them if any centre in North America has one. (We follow Atash Kadeh guidelines of Customs and Traditions.).
- Behram Panthaki suggested that Geh Sarna ceremony should not be performed when the body is not present (e.g., a body lost at sea) as prayers are performed primarily for consolation/satisfaction of those living (Gathas do not provide a link between the body and soul.). On the other hand, Ilmakshuminists believe that Geh Sarna prayer must be recited whether the body is present or not.

16) Election results:

President –	Arda-E-Viraf Minocherhomjee	California
Vice President –	Tehemton Mirza	Ontario
Treasurer –	Xerxes Madan	Ontario
Secretary –	Gev Karkaria	Quebec
Executive Office -	Jehangir Madan	New Jersey

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

18) Meeting was adjourned with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair, to the Executive Committee and to our gracious hosts at ZAPANJ. Both Arda and Tehemton thanked Kobad for his service to NAMC and the Zoroastrian community in Ontario.