Dhamma Pubbananda Annual Trust Meeting 11/21/21

Barry's opening remarks:

There's more peace and harmony at Dhamma Pubbananda than ever before. Reminds me of two phrases Goenkaji used to use; Sweetness of Dhamma and Thousand Hands of Dhamma. Sweetness of Dhamma is essential with dealing with each other. Sankhara's arise from interactions with others. Working with each other with sweetness and harmony has been the foundation for the development and thriving of the Center.

Goenka said I only have two hands but you have thousands of hands. There are now thousands of hands at Dhamma Pubbananda developing of the Center. Contribution from each of us is what' s been important. Our aims are to maintain our own daily practice, keep our sila and purity strong and to give Dhamma Service and selflessly serve others.

Teacher's and Assistant Teachers(AT's)

Teachers- Barry and Kate Lapping, Dr. Sharat Jain, Amy and Rashmi Shankar
Senior AT's- Deb Coy, John and Susanne Hing, Umesh Giri
AT's- Sosimorn Chap, Yanny Hin, Tim Koch, Jamie Metzler, Jon Penn, Sachin Shah, Corinna Sharrief, Tina Savla, Hema Palanivelu, Loza Gared

Trust Members (2022)

Anand Dhelia(President), Eric Richter(Vice President), Vidyut Shukla(Treasurer), Chris Hammond(Secretary), Takae Ishizuka, Rajesh Mittal, Srinivas Saranu, Rowland Orr, Aaron Ashman, Prabin Khadka, Dharmesh Shaw, Matthew Gibbs, Trupti Pandit.

For Overview of the Mid Atlantic Vipassana Association(MAVA). How MAVA works and how decisions are made within MAVA. Descriptions of Committees, list of Committees and members, Committee accomplishments for 2021 and committee goals for 2022. See slide presentation in this link below.

https://vipassanatrust-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/chris_hammond_d

hamma_org/EcHgfAPtnX1Es9tf69nkU38BfN3Zcr6F3KU9K-StMGNUhw?e=Dg1GjF

Finance Committee: (See Slide)

Vidyut- Could use help with bookkeeping, bookkeeper till now has moved and can't offer as much time.
Rajesh- As loans become available from Old Students, projects can move forward.

Center Development Committee: (See Slide)

Doug- CDC was a very big committee this year. Now is creating a long-term master plan for the Center. Meets on a biweekly to monthly basis. Building 3 was completed last year and is going smoothly. There have been problems with the male long term server house; mold remediation, led to the discovery of more extensive renovation needing to be done due to extensive damage found. We are almost done with this.
Rehab of building 4 has started two months ago. There will be 29 more rooms and 32 more meditation cells once building 4 is completed. The interior has been demolished and we are ready to begin construction. The planning of Building 1 turned into an extensive project. The Dhamma hall will be extended and more space will be made for AT's and trainees.
Current Projects: 1) Building 4 is awaiting a construction project permit 2)creating a long-term masterplan for the center 3)Building 1 projects and completing plans and price projections.

Registration Committee: (See Slide)

Eric- Responsible for all Registration components through day 0; Follow-up with students and with protocols, manage email flow. Since 2020-2021 creating the virus protocols has a new thing, covid screening has been the biggest adjustment, has a new virus call team, it used to be done with email. They check in with students on the protocols. Goals: One person to have a certain role per course which will be rotated from course to course so to spread the workload, Improve documentation, having more meetings, looking for more members too.

Center Management: (See Slide)

Doug- Jason Zimmerman is the only Long-Term Server now. During the past year we had many LTS's leave due to the Center vaccination requirement. It's been challenging with one LTS but we are doing ok. Center
Communication Infrastructure project is in progress. Will be installing a center wide

communication network which will include chanting from the Dhamma Hall to the cells and auto gongs. Also, we will be installing reliable internet and phone systems. An Old Student donated new countertops for dining hall which now allows for everyone to eat in the dining hall. Before, some of the students had to eat in the other rooms.
The biggest adjustments have been around the changing covid protocols. We've gone from 8 OS's per course to now 22-23 students, we've been adjusting procedures for Covid throughout year. The Center has been luckily free of Covid. The systems Registration have put in place have been outstanding, calling people before the course and having people show up on time.
Goals for 2022: 1)Get up to 60 students per course. 2)Lots of systems to get restarted. 3)Communication Infrastructure Project. 4)Construction to resume in building 4 in 2022. 5)Recruit more Long Term Servers.

Kitchen Committee (See Slide)

Doug— Food menus became varied over last year with small courses, we are back now to the standard menus. We've updated the daily task sheets for servers. 2022 goals: 1) Serving 60 students again and reestablish services from the regular vendors.

Household Committee (See Slide)

Doug- New meditation cushions are being made for the Dhamma Hall, we have cleaned and stored excess bedding this last year. We hope to reset the beds and Dhamma Hall for 60 students.

Grounds Committee (See Slide)

Doug- Expert arborist came to do an informal survey of the tree situation. We need to remove several trees, have more work to do. 2022 Goals- 1)Act on info gotten from the Arborist expert and manage the compromised trees.

Gardening Team

Erin- Landscaped around pagoda, female AT area. Nice donations were dana'd by Old Students, we've bought some tools. Small tasks become big jobs as we find more to do once we get going on a project, taking down vines, weeding, planting of new trees and shrubs. We don't have the best quality of soil at the Center. We put up a fence around server eating area outside of building 2(Shangra la). We've been dealing with the Ashbore threat to trees and have been using a product called Azin to deter the threat.

Alta- Can always use more help on all committees! Encourage Trust members to find a committee to participate in.

Inreach Committee (See Slide)

Srini- Focusing on outreach activities too, coordinating with multiple committees to make Old Students aware of what's going on with dana needs and construction. Also made Old Students aware about changes at the Center during the pandemic.

Alta- Big Shout out to Takae for putting this meeting together!

Open Discussion

Long term vision for the Center

Jon- CDC has been having discussions on the Long-Term Center vision. We have 6 or 7 options with where we are thinking of putting buildings. Alta, Hema, Barry and Kate are involved with the CDC crew. We connected with civil engineering company last week.

Barry- Lots of credit to Hema who has used her architecture skills, should put up the possibilities up online for everyone to see.

Alta- Interesting things we are working on; New Dhamma hall with attached AT residence. We are wondering whether to build a new pagoda or use current cells long term. How many students do we want to look towards? It's a moving target. We are looking towards 80-100 students at max capacity.

Kate- Goenakji said that around 90 students is ideal, it has to be manageable for AT's, servers and management.

Barry- The VMC Dhamma hall could have 250, but the Center is limited by water capacity. Currently VMC is capped at 155 people per course. 70/70 men and women plus servers.

Demand is really great. Look at the demand, the need for servers and Long Term Servers, and restrictions on site. Water use and sewage is not an issue at Dhamma Pubbanada, 80-100 looks practical right now. 80 students look pretty good. Need AT's to be able to manage the courses easily. We don't want to burn anyone out. We want to make it pleasing for old students who serve but also want to serve as many as possible.

We have lots of unused property at Dhamma Pubbananda. We need a hearty group of Long-Term Servers and management staff. There might be a need for another Center if demand exceeds capacity. We now want to gear for 80-100 students at Dhamma Pubbananda. We are zeroing in on a nice plan, the team has done a great job so far.
Kate- Dhamma Pubbananda has been a great training ground for new centers to come up.

Barry- Close ties between Dhamma Pubbananda and Dhamma Dhara has been truly
valuable, a harmonious relationship between these Centers will be beneficial to all. Going well but have some weak spots with human resources. Money is also an issue for funding the up-and-coming projects.

Rajesh- Would the Master Plan require additional building construction?

Barry- Thinking of a new Dhamma hall with attached AT residence between buildings 3 and 4 and, it's away from the road and more secluded. Building 1 could be an administrative building. CDC is making plan now that would make for 80-100 single rooms and single cells.

Finances for Projects ahead and Current Financial Situation

Rajesh- We look for dana to finance construction activities. We hope for more Old Student support.

Barry- Our job is to provide info. about dana, the rest is up to the students. U Ba Khin would write the Center needs up on a black board for 2 weeks and then erase it. The opportunity would be there for meditators to contribute We have lots of communication tools to get the word out without soliciting. Our job is to develop our own parami through dana and service.

Mary Kalyana- With the 500K dana, has it been matching expenses?

Vidyut- Dana in 2021 is down from 2019 by 120K but is above 2020 dana, more students are coming for courses now versus in 2020. We are locating funds for projects each month, there's a general construction fund available to fund any new projects, if need more than that we reach out to Old Students for loans. Financially we are strong at this point, construction will need more funds though.

Rajesh- Building 4 is 1.5-1.7 million dollars.

Alta- We've been lucky through challenging times, we've been running in the black through the pandemic including with paying back loans, a breakdown of expenses can be provided.

Vidyut- 200K is now available for building 4 construction.

Rajesh- It's a demand-based scenario, Current money is sufficient.

Vidyut, We can provide expenses info every month too in trust reports.

Barry- That'd be good, also on Old Student part of site.

Rajesh- We'd be able to provide that data.

Vidyut- On the 10th of every month we have a report on the prior month.

Eric- There's a healthy level of debt now, do we have capacity to take on more?

Vidyut- We have some flexibility on getting more loans, we need to make sure we can pay interest. Hopefully we'll be having more dana next year. Finance Committee will do more analysis on this. We should be fine though.

Barry- Looking forward to a bright future, this is just the beginning of vipassana on this planet. If we can afford it, we can take on more debt. Ideally want to be out of debt though as a center. Longer term debt should

ultimately be phased out. Dana is ideal but interest free loans can be good for a second option. The Finance Committee is there to determine the best option with what we can afford. We also don't want to jeopardize

month to month expenses. VMC has an operational fund which needs to constantly be evaluated.

Rajesh- We do have a reserve fund too

Vidyut- We need to look at maturity dates.

Barry- It's important that our student body know what our needs are. If they don't know, they don't have an opportunity to donate.

Vidyut- Can do a projection on pre covid level dana for future needs.

Takae- Could put in every other month newsletter as a link and out on OS website

page.

Vidyut- What format proffered?

Srini- Could come up with a template.

Eric- In professional life is building a dashboard with integration online with quick books, could do something similar with this for donations.

Barry- Also a description and pictures wold be good to put up on the old student page and in the newsletter.

What's the Dhamma Server Situation since Covid?

Peili- Lots of trouble finding servers Pre Covid- what's current status?

Doug- Now we only need 5-6 servers per course. Things have been smooth. We need servers with the 20-day course. Last year mostly AT's and Long-Term Servers were serving courses.

Alta- Doug has made a huge difference and has had many Long-Term Servers' take residence. Always looking for and recruiting Long Term Server's.

Dhamma Service Periods

Doug- Between course service periods are getting 3-6 people coming; Dhamma Service periods could use more people.

Takae- Thinks it's important that an AT is there during a Dhamma Service period. It inspires students to come.

Barry- VMC has a robust group for Dhamma Service Periods, could connect with VMC about it.

Takae- Dhamma Service Periods at VMC are amazing, it would be great if we could emulate that.

Barry- Would be good to write a short blurb with pictures in the newsletter. It's not just about free labor, it's a time to build joy and Dhamma connections.

Kate- Maybe someone in this group willing to organize this effort.

Barry- A committee would be ideal. For new trustees it would be a wonderful opportunity to serve.

Peili- Heard Dhamma Pubbananda is the new training ground for servers. Are we prepared to take on that role?

Barry- Every Center is a training ground for new servers. We can see how much it's grown already. Dhamma Pubbabnanda is in better shape than ever before. We look to become better servers ourselves to help mentor and guide new servers.

Laura- Was also helped and inspired by VMC Dhamma Service Period. It would be great to invest more into them.

Barry- Could have a virtual panel aired to the entire the Dhamma Pubbananda region zoom. Could be used to inspire gratitude, selfless service and joy. It could also be recorded to be used repeatedly. Could also do it after a Trust meeting or during a Dhamma Service Period.

Polly- Trust meeting with an event like Paul Fleishman to draw in lots of people.

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Final Remarks from Barry

Barry- Thinks it's been a great meeting. When I first went to Dhamma Pubbananda I couldn't wait to leave because of its poor condition. The progress over the years has been amazing, the feeling I have of the center has completely changed. It has become a very sweet Center, it's in a fantastic location to serve lots of people. It's amazing that we have 30 people on this call. There are many that have the seed and we are coming to take that seed and develop it. This is the start of the building of Dhamma on this planet which will go for 450 more years. We are in a very unique position in history. We are on the ground floor of what is only going to grow.

If you are burned out, keep in mind what you are doing and why. This is to develop our own parami's to get liberated. It's the development of our parami's which is necessary. Pubbananda provides us with a facility that allows us to grow our 10 parami's. Daily sitting is going to make your volition to serve stronger.

Generally, a householders life revolves around keeping us afloat in life. Dhamma Pubbananda gives us a wonderful opportunity to serve. Spreading Dhamma for more Dhamma which will bring support for the Centers. Be good examples of Dhamma and Dhamma service. Growth in Dhamma is generally slow, we are

trailing the karma of
innumerable lives. Dhamma is a reconditioning process, let the results be an inspiration to keep growing in Dhamma. Keep your practice really pure and strong and be great examples of Dhamma.

Are Urban Centers a great idea?

Eric- Dhamma Pubbananda is the first urban Center. Would you say urban centers are a great idea?

Kate- Think the proof is in the pudding. Dhamma Pubbananda has been a success.

Barry- Actually U Ba Khin's Center was an urban Center too. Are contacts with neighbors positive or negative?

Doug- 3 neighbors have contact with us on a regular business. We are supported by them. Haven't done a lot of community outreach.

Barry- The day we purchased VMC, the community was afraid of a cult. After 3 years, the only negative things heard were from people who didn't know what the Center was about.
Before we bought Dhamma Pubbananda, the property was vandalized. Big improvements have happened since we took over.

Doug- Townhouse prices have gone up considerably since the Center came up.

Barry- It's the direction that's important, not the daily ups and downs. Dhamma Pubbananda is on a great course.