

Still Mountain February Community Meeting

February 8, 2015 @ 11 a.m.

-Meeting commenced at 11:13 a.m.

-Introductions

-Meeting facilitated by David, who opened with asking for meeting process ideas. Suggestions included that people speak up, watch for side conversations, bow if so inclined, follow the usual council rules with the exception of no cross-talk, and not try to talk individuals out of their opinions/ideas as they are stated.

Decision Making

The question arose of who makes decisions. Discussion ensued re: the role of the board vs. the community. It was pointed out that the primary role of the board is executive/administrative and policy detail. When action is needed or the community expresses a wish for an action/policy, it is up to the board to vote on the decision and put it into writing. Something like a retreat would of necessity be a joint effort between the teachers' council and board as well as the community at large. The suggestion was made to have a teacher liaison to the board, which David noted is in the works. David further pointed out that the board should always be keeping in mind the five vision statements and from that, bring forth ideas/policy issues to the community for discussion and recommendation. Ultimately the board is in charge of implementing/taking action on items with the agreement/endorsement of the community. The teacher's council should function in a similar manner. The retreat committee is the group responsible for executing decisions made by the TC/Board and community at large regarding retreats. It was brought to the group's attention that the board, teachers' council and community all need to agree on how decisions are made- consensus vs. majority. The group tentatively agreed that decisions should be made by a majority vote, with the caveat that all needs must be taken into consideration and honored, as in the Quaker consensus model. Several expressed the importance of everyone having the chance to be heard/ have a say. The conversation will be continued. It was noted that any and all decisions are subject/open to change.

Community Meetings: Purpose and Frequency

Community meetings are the forum for discussion of anything pertaining to the board or teacher's council. Issues will be discussed and determined by those present at the meeting, with the agenda to be posted ahead of time in case there are members of the community who wish to have a voice, but are unable to attend the meeting. The board and teachers' council should both identify in advance their agenda items and be prepared to report on such, including the treasurer and retreat committee reports. The concern was expressed that the community meetings can easily become a bureaucratic exercise, and several in attendance questioned whether monthly meetings were necessary. Also at issue was the length of the meeting (1 hour vs. 1 ½ hours). Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of monthly meetings- arguments to have meetings monthly included the value of transparency as well as trust and community building in an organization that is still in its very early stages. The hope was expressed that the meetings might slowly evolve from being a bureaucratic exercise to being more of a social/open/visioning process, and perhaps also eventually shorter in time. There was some further discussion of whether the meeting is about making decisions or social in nature. There was agreement that there needs to be an agenda for each meeting. Meetings do have a purpose in conducting business and are not meant to be just "social" in nature. All further agreed to continue meeting monthly, but to revisit the issue of frequency and length of meetings at the latest in 6 months.

Reports

Teachers' Council: David noted that a second teachers' meeting is upcoming, and that the group has begun to think of what teachers may want to offer in the way of classes in the future.

Treasurer's Report: Hugh reported that the Still Mountain account balance is at \$766.25, with \$416 in deposits and \$505.75 in expenses. He noted that funds will be needed to obtain federal non-profit status (\$400) and to pay Deep Spring for the reserved spot at the Howell Nature Center where the first SM retreat is to take place in October (\$600).

Meeting concluded @ 12:30. Next community meeting: March 8, 2015 @ 11:00 a.m.