

MINUTES
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OAK SPIRIT SANCTUARY
Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Kerry Lynn Easter (President), Darcy Higgins (Secretary), Dawn Finney (Treasurer), George Bunyea

ABSENT (watching on live video): Larry Brown, Jenn Asbury

CALL TO ORDER:

The open meeting of the board of directors was called to order at 11:00am, Dec. 17, 2017

AGENDA:

1. Plans for house/land care
2. Call for nominations for new board members
3. Review of community survey results
4. Update on steps towards wastewater compliance (septic system)
5. Update on fundraising plans
6. Review of options for OSS' non-profit categorization
7. Update on strategic planning process
8. Instituting a project proposal process
9. Community business

PROCEEDINGS

1. Members presented house/land care updates:
 - a. In absence of an on-site steward to maintain the woodstove, George drained the pipes and space heaters are running in the kitchen and bathroom. More firewood will be needed for upcoming events. Our options are to organize volunteer days and/or buy a truckload of firewood from the Amish, which should be cheap.
 - b. Dawn asked about care of the cat on the property: Amy Cook offered to donate a timed feeder to keep outside for the cat. Don Breuer commented on the live video that he would take the cat when he has moved into his new home.
 - c. Kerry announced that the gate will begin to be locked again. Community members wishing to access the land outside of events can call the numbers listed on the sign to be given the lock combination, which will rotate and change.
2. Kerry announced that we are currently seeking nominations and applications from the community for up to 2 board members. Community input is desired. Darcy will post the application online, and nominations can be sent to any board member or info@oakspiritsanctuary.org
3. Patrick presented the executive summary of the community survey, which Darcy will post publicly on the website. Based on the feedback, the board plans to pursue non-profit

board professional training through MU extension office, and to host a community-building workshop weekend open to all.

4. Kerry updated us on the septic system plans. The PE plans have been submitted to DNR and approved by Jacob Cross. We are awaiting approval from Mr. Harwood at the DNR and will also need to submit the plans to Health and Human Services. Fixing the backhoe will enable much of the work to be done. We will fundraise for the supplies, and Kenny Easter's company has offered to donate the labor.
5. Patrick presented his plan for a multi-tier sponsorship system for fundraising.
6. Patrick presented the 4 options available to OSS for our non-profit legal categorization (see attached). The board is currently considering Option 4, as a compromise that would both keep current church status and also give us access to opportunities not available to churches.
7. Patrick informs us that the next step in the strategic planning process is to create a multi-year plan with areas of focus and goals. The strategic planning committee is to set a date for a meeting to develop these.
8. Dawn has developed a draft of a project proposal form. It should be completed and approved whenever anyone would like to commence a project at OSS that impacts the land and infrastructure.
9. Community business
 - a. Rebecca requests that all important information about events be posted in the FB event itself, not auxiliary groups, and that it be included in the information section or pinned, so that it is not lost in the discussion area.
 - b. Amy requests a list of volunteer roles to make it easier for people who want to help to find their role.
 - i. Kerry and Darcy mention that our land management head has resigned, and this is a particularly urgent need now.

MOTIONS

1. Kerry motions to refile our Articles of Incorporation to return the reference to religious purpose, necessary for our church status. Dawn 2nds. All in favor. Motion passes.
2. Darcy motions that the board hold a comment period on the 4 options for our non-profit status, from today to the January 6th, 2018 lunar, after which the board will vote. Dawn 2nds. All in favor. Motion passes.
3. Darcy motions to accept Dawn's project proposal process. Kerry 2nds. All in favor. Motion passes.

ADJOURNMENT

Kerry motions to close the meet at approximately 12:30pm. Darcy seconds. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Option 1: “STATUS QUO” – Oak Spirit Sanctuary remains a CHURCH - although the mission statement, by-laws, faith statement. . . whatever we want. . . can change. In fact, I think we could use a full review.

- The Land remains free of property tax requirements and virtually all reporting requirements save an annual e-file.
- We potentially lose some opportunities for some funding sources.
 - Up until this year, that included all governmental sources (Conservation Dept., DNR, public universities, etc.). A recent Supreme Court decision [Trinity Lutheran Church vs Comer] technically removed that barrier. Private donors may have their own restrictions. John Solomon seems to.
- This is the simplest and cheapest option

Option 2: “RECLASSIFY” - RECLASSIFY Oak Spirit Sanctuary to a NON-CHURCH 501(c)3 .

- We retain our identity (and history).
 - We could POTENTIALLY open up new revenue sources.
 - but what those are we don't know.
 - We may or may not open ourselves up to property tax levy from the County.
 - It could end up costing us money annually if the property tax is not offset by other sources.
 - Our filing requirements with the IRS increase.
 - The forms and record keeping are not insane, but someone would have to do it.
 - This is the SECOND simplest and the cheapest option
- Tom C. is arguing that there are other benefits we would be giving up, including some of our standing with regard to our First Amendment protections.
- There is also, however, a philosophical issue at hand regarding the intention behind of what we are attempting to do as a spiritual organization vis-a-vis our own AND the government's definition of “church”. Are we truly a church and/or do we want to be?

Option 3: “NEW & DESOLVE” - Create a NEW 501(1)c3 organization which is a NON-CHURCH and DISOLVE OSS.

- It is the same as above in terms of taxes and funding sources.
 - Potential property tax
 - Potential new funding sources
 - Financial cost/benefit unclear
 - Once the process is completed, option 2 and 3 are practically the same in terms of year-to-year operation.
- It is the most complicated, and most expensive option to make happen.
- The benefit is that it is a clean, clean break.
 - The only public record relationship between the two organizations would be the transfer of assets from OSS to the new organization.

Option 4: “NEW & KEEP” - Create a NEW 501(c)3 organization which is a NON-CHURCH and KEEP OSS. The two organizations exists side-by-side.

- OSS retains ownership of the property and operates as a church (I would recommend a full review).
- The NEW organization operates within a defined mission NOT as a church.
 - It may or may not have a spiritual mission.
- The two, of course, coordinate like a church auxiliary or a library foundation.
- No county taxes, as the property is own by the church.
- The new NON-CHURCH can seek funds from entities normally restricted from giving to churches.
- Potentially a useful way to divide labor and responsibility, with each organization operating within its own purview.
- Potential power issues between the entities.
- More operational work in terms of record keeping and filing compliance of all the options as there would be two sets of everything.
- The cost to make it happen falls somewhere between Option 2 and 3.

If we opt for option 4, Option 3 remains on the table in perpetuity.

If we opt for option 1, all other options remain on the table in perpetuity