

# The Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre (HTCC) of the ACT

## Annual General Meeting 7 Sept 2013, 1:30 PM, HTCC Temple Florey Draft Minutes

- Since there was not enough Quorum, the AGM commenced at 2:30 Pm in accordance with the notice given to the members after chanting “Om” three times.
- The President, as part of the house keeping rules, reiterated importance of the sanctity of the temple and urged that all AGM Proceedings be conducted in a peaceful and professional manner.

### Agenda # 1

- The apologies of Sh Rakesh Malhotra, Narinder Grover, Hari Prakash, Partap Khanna and Subhash Mohindra were noted. Condolence prayer was conducted for the loss of close family members of the HTCC members Rakesh Malhotra, Lata Malhotra, Renu/Sanjay Sharma, and casualties happened during a recent flood disaster in Uttar Khand was conducted.

### Agenda # 2

- President, as part of his welcome address, captured key aspects of the annual report. The following key milestones were achieved in addition to the regular religious, educational and cultural performances:
  - **Revaluation** of the HTCC Building including Acharya Kutir.
  - Obtaining full “**Certificate of Occupancy**” for the building which was overdue for the last approx. 20 years. One of the main persons who helped without any charge incl his out of pocket expenses – Antoun Hajje.
  - **Multi-Purpose Room (MPR)** – Shantiniketan Phase 1. The MPR construction was fully completed and this room is proving extremely helpful and the new toilets have much better access.
  - **Video Security System.** Was undertaken out of the infrastructure grant given by ACT Govt.

- **Parking Lights.** New tall parking lights have also been installed as part of the infrastructure grant mentioned above.
- **Strategic Plan Development.** The committee with the help of Sh Yogesh Parikh, Ashok Garg and Rakesh Malhotra developed a comprehensive Strategic Plan for the HTCC for many years to come. This plan will help in steering and guiding the future executive committees in deciding the priorities.
- **Communication Media.** The extant electronic communication through Yahoo Group has not been very efficient. A number of members had stopped getting the HTCC broadcast and emails. A patchy solution was implemented as an interim solution to combat this problem. This system, although not very efficient, is working well and has proven to be effective.
- **Obtaining Credit Card / EFTPOS facility.** The HTCC credit card facility / Eftpos system has been obtained and is fully functional. Although there is a bit high expense in all transactions, it does not cost any if we do not use it.
- **Shanti Newsletter.** With the help of Sh Rakesh Malhotra, the committee continued with the quarterly newsletter. This newsletter has been an excellent media for providing full transparency and visibility of HTCC key matters.
- **Establishment of the Indian Seniors Wellbeing Group (ISWG).** This group has already started functioning well and has been by the initiative of Sh Ramesh Malik
- **Questions.**
  - Sh Yogesh Parikh requested that the mention of his name in the report should be removed. He also made a valuable suggestion that the Annual report should cover educational part of the HTCC which is very important for the tax exemption aspect. His suggestion was well supported and an addendum to the report would be produced.
  - Sh Niraj Mehta suggested that the group name “**Indian Senior Wellbeing Group**” should be changed to “**Hindu Seniors** .... Sh Ramesh Malik suggested that he will take this discussion out of session.
  - Sh Lakhan Sharma suggested that to ensure that our new interim Email system is working well, HTCC should broadcast a message asking members if they all receiving the HTCC emails.

- Acceptance of the Annual report was proposed by Sh Yogesh Parikh and seconded by Sh Ashok Jain.

### **Agenda # 3**

- **Endorsement of AGM 2012 Minutes.** Sh Niraj Mehta raised a concern about non mentioning of Rath Yatra discussion at the last AGM. In response Sh Subhash Dang stated that while in the attempt to make very succinct, we might have overlooked that point. Sh Rajesh Satija proposed the endorsement of the Minutes that was seconded by Sh Narender Choudhury and Yogesh Parikh.

### **Agenda # 4**

- **Audited Account Statement.** Financial statements were presented to the membership by the Treasurer, Sh Raman Bhardwaj.
- The president informed the membership how the amount of donation was affected by the Tax Issue emerged during the year. He explained as to how the tax exemption aspect could be satisfied and what education related records must be maintained. He also explained how he took an informed decision to commence issuing the building fund donation receipts again.
  - A minor question was raised by Sh Prakash Mehta on the Priest Salary which was clarified by the by the treasurer satisfactorily.
  - Sh Vinod Mahajan suggested that in Future it may be better if such discussions are taken place before the AGM. This suggestion was debated against by Sh Arvind Kalia.
  - Sh Yogesh Parikh suggested that the President should not be signing the Financial audited report. This should normally a responsibility of the Treasurer, Secretary and the Public Officer.
  - Sh Yogesh Parikh also suggested that the HTCC should be doing a self-audit on HTCC education activities and the records for their compliance with the tax regulation and its stringent requirements.

## Agenda # 5

### Strategic Issues and projects

- **Constitution Review.** The president stated that there was a plan to revise the constitution for minor changes to clean it up. Most of these changes were already worked out in 2007-08. These changes were consolidated by Sh Rakesh Malhotra and passed on to other sub team members (Sh Arvind Kalia and Partap Khanna). Unfortunately, Partap Ji was out of country and the changes were not finally agreed within the group and reviewed by Sh Yogesh Parikh. It was decided to pass on these changes to the new incoming committee.
- **Shantiniketan.** The phase 1 (MPR), as described above, has been completed and is being used. The phase 2 (the main extension) will be progressed by the incoming committee.
- **Priest Selection.** The president told the membership present that the Priest Selection, chaired by Sh Rakesh Jain, was undertaken in accordance with the framework prepared by Sh Yogesh Parikh and Ashok Garg and endorsed by the SGM held in March 13. The report copies are available for members to have a look if interested.
- The president also provided the progress to date. The first two ranked priests are not able to come for the next few months. It was resolved that the next EC is authorised take action to appoint a Priest from the list, in order of merit, recommended by the selection committee.
  - **Questions.** Sh Lakhan Sharma asked why the contract for Pt Shailesh Diwedi was not extended. The President responded that the selection was based on the new terms and conditions. Unfortunately, Pt Diwedi did not apply for the position.
  - Sh Yogesh Parikh made a comment that the EC should not disqualify any candidate because of his marital status. Not offering the job to a bachelor will be against Australian law of equity and diversity and HTCC could be in a big trouble. Sh Parikh also suggested that the statement made in the report that the selection has been “fully” compliant with his paper should be changed to just compliant .....

### **Agenda # 6**

- **Appointment of Auditor.** Since the current Auditor, Ms Caralyn S. will not be available to undertake the audit next year, the President proposed **Sh Vijay Bansal of Fintax Business Services, Sydney** be approved as the auditor for the next year. Sh Bansal is not a current member of the HTCC. The membership supported and approved the auditor appointment.

### **Agenda # 7**

- **Any other business.** Sh Mohan Singh commented that his name was aligned to some of the candidate(s) during the priest selection process which is totally wrong. Sh Rakesh Jain and the President supported Sh Mohan Singh and agreed to put this on record.
- **The President offered once again his special compliments** to Pt Rama Sharma, Pt Shailesh Diwedi, Ms Caralyn Shpowloff, Eng Antoun Hajji, Sh Rony of Rivoland Tiles, Sh Rakesh Malhotra, Sh Yogesh Parikh, Smt Renu Sharma, Sh Ashok Garg, Sh Partap Khanna, Sh Mohan Singh, Sh Arvind Kalia and the family members of the EC.
- **In Conclusion,** the incoming committee should as a matter of priority:
  - Resolve the HTCC Tax Issue;
  - Appoint the Resident Priest ASAP;
  - Amend the Constitution;
  - Progress the Shantiniketan project;
  - Improve electronic communication; and
  - Use the Strategic Plan as an overall guide and keep the plan updated.

### **Agenda # 9**

The President and his team vacated the office and requested the Retuning Officer, Sh Paul Sidhu to announce the new committee.

### **Agenda # 8**

Since there was only one candidate for every EC position, there was no election. Sh Sidhu announced the following members elected unopposed:

Sh Sanjay Sharma:                      President

|                      |                |
|----------------------|----------------|
| Sh Bhagwati Khannah: | Vice President |
| Sh Pankaj Puri:      | Vice President |
| Sh Heramb Bal:       | Secretary      |
| Sh Sachin Marwaha    | Asst Secretary |
| Mr Dinesh Sadyal     | Temple Manager |
| Sh Hatendra Sharma   | Public Officer |
| Sh Amresh Kumar      | Treasurer      |

Members-Mr Bhagwan Dutt, Mr Amit Gupta, Mr Karamjeet Singh, Mr Gurmukh Singh, Mr Rajesh Kumar Malhi, Mr Vamshi Goturi, Mr Passang Bhutia

There was no mention of the Ex Officio positions by the Returning Officer and there was no discussion either from the members present.

#### **Agenda # 10**

The outgoing President congratulated the new committee and Sh Sanjay Sharma introduced his committee and gave an introductory speech outlining his commitment for the HTCC and to the benefit of members.

The AGM concluded by the Santi Path by Pt Rama Sharma.

(Tushar Gupta)  
Secretary

(Subhash Dang)  
President