



Group Conscience Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 21st, 2022 ~ 7:10-7:50

Currently serving trusted servants: Scott S, chair; Ron K, co-chair; Jessica T, secretary; Greg B & Crystal B, co-treasurers; Kristi N, GSR; Andrew B, alt GSR; Doug C, Grapevine chair; Lizzy R, Intergroup Rep; Ginny M, literature chair; Kimberly C, SOT chair; Tom H, Sidney V, group representatives; John P, speaker meeting coordinator; Alex C, PI.

Meeting Opens – 7:12 PM with Welcome and Serenity Prayer

Review of Minutes: Copies available for review, both paper and on www.serenitywoodlands.com and on the current Newsletter.

Greg made a motion to accept the minutes, Ginny seconded the motion.

GSR: No Report

Treasurer Reports: Greg gave highlights of January's treasurer report. Total basket collection for January \$6742.33. Restrictive funds: Literature fund \$2,294.80. 40th Anniversary fund at the beginning of January was \$416.00, at the end of January the total was \$1,943. 40th Anniversary funds collected in the month of February was \$2,988.62. 40th Anniversary funds total to date is \$4,931.62. Greg stated he has been collecting cash for T-shirt sales which he has been putting into the general 40th anniversary collection fund because it was an expense we had at the beginning which was \$1200 dollars in the beginning to have the T-shirts printed. Doug asked where Greg got the \$1200 dollars to purchase the T-shirts. Greg responded that the cost was kindly covered by one of our long standing members out of his personal funds. We will repay with the current \$5000 in donations.

Ron made a motion to pass the treasurer's report, Jessica seconded the motion.

Literature Report: Big books are not available still, they are expected any time at Intergroup. We are really low on hardcover Big Books, haven't purchased any because they haven't had any. A case of Big Books has 20 books at \$10.50 a piece. Planning on getting two cases as soon as they are available, cost will be between \$400-\$500. Ginny recently got a case of 12 & 12's and thinks we are ok on Chips. There are no Big Books at GSO in New York as well as Intergroup.

SOT Report: Currently polling Serenity online hosts to see what the consensus is on how to deal with birthday night, whether we move the 7:00pm meeting to a 6:00pm time slot to allow birthday night to continue on at 7:30 or if we do something completely different. Serenity online had its first international host this month from Dubai.

Grapevine Report: Doug went to the Seta conference business meeting and spoke with Chris who is the current delegate of Grapevine, inquired about materials for Grapevine Rep. Supply chain has printing of



materials screwed up. Doug also inquired about information regarding the Grapevine podcast, and noticed that it has been added to Serenity's website.

P.I. Report: Alex stated that the district meeting is tomorrow. P.I She attended the online North America Conference. She has ordered the workbook, however they are on backorder. She printed out a copy, if anyone wants to check in on anything. She has the right documents and information on some events that we can start doing.

New Business:

Charlie and Ginny made a motion to move GC from April 18th to April 25th and from June 20th to June 27th. Greg seconds Ginny's motion. Took a vote, vote rescinded. It needs to be posted until the next Group Conscience before it can be voted on..

Scott: When we passed the motion to move the speaker meeting from 8:00pm to 6:00pm we didn't discuss whether to have a 6:00pm speaker meeting followed by the 7:30 birthday night on the last Saturday of the month. In order to change it we would need a motion to discuss. Ron mentioned it is another implication of the original change. Scott pointed out that John is not in attendance tonight. Scott stated he has strong feelings and it's probably a long conversation and needs to be thought through. Can't discuss further at this point without a motion and will move on.

Motion: Don made a motion to bring awareness to 13th stepping and predatory behavior in the room.

Discussion:

Greg: asked if there could be a short discussion to have more information about what is going on.

Vicky: stated that "look at it" is not very descriptive, she wants to see actionable things. Scott agreed.

Don: Since I began coming here a year ago there have been multiple things that have happened, I've had to call out one of them and talk to him and it stopped. However it has been brought to my attention again that it continues to happen and conversations on the side of the room that aren't appropriate from people that we respect in the rooms. It's enough for me to come here for my first time and bring it up.

Ginny: Is this happening at the 8:00pm meeting, the 6:00pm meeting is there a certain time of day it tends to happen more or where have you (Don) seen it?.

Don: The evening, 6 or 8ish is when I usually come. A lot of it is me hearing about it and other people that have seen it. I haven't ever heard of anything at a 12 o'clock or early morning one, so I think it's more of an evening kind of thing.

Ginny: Is it happening before, during or after the meeting.

Don: It's before or after, not during the meeting. People are also going to rehab houses of young girls.

Ginny: is it always in this room, the parking lot or following someone out to their car.



Don: No illegal stuff, things that us as leaders in these rooms or the group in itself shouldn't be doing. Other groups around Houston have also heard about the behavior and things that go on here.

Vicki: Sounds like what you're saying it's primarily males inappropriately speaking to females.

Don: Yes, I have not heard of it the other way around.

Scott: I have also heard first hand of things that are going on. I struggle with what to do, what is the right way to handle it. Do we make a bigger safety sign for example? We had this issue last year.

Ginny: We stopped passing around the sign-in book because people were taking phone numbers.

Ron: The sign-in book was always optional.

Vicki: But some of the newer women don't know it's optional.

Crystal: I think it would be important to make it very clear what is considered 13th stepping. What is the issue we are talking about, is it 13th stepping, what does that mean if we are going to ask that question. Or are we just talking about general harassment. We can't just put a term out there that not everyone will understand.

Don: Great point, Crystal. I would say both of those words hit it on the head, harassment, 13th stepping and verbal abuse.

Ron: The difficult part about this, this has been going on every year I have been here. I was involved with the GC president one year and when we had to ask some old guy to stop, he didn't stop and we asked him to not come back and he didn't come back. It's all a matter of degree that is the difficult part, there is a gray area. What is and what isn't appropriate. In the past asking somebody to stop, a first warning and then if they continue we ask them not to come back. It sends a message to everyone else that it's not tolerated. But trying to define it with some kind of PSA is really hard. Ron read the participant guideline for online meetings.

Charlie: In the club we have been charged with this forever now. We have banned people for 30 day, 60 day, 90 days. We have a guy now that is on a permanent ban, he never stopped and he is permanently banned. We have someone on a long term ban now. They are not banned from AA, they are banned from Serenity. It's unacceptable. Sexual harassment is not tolerated, nor is physical. We have another person banned because of physical harassment. We have a formal disciplinary committee with three standing members right now and we have a procedure that those people go through. The way we do it is that there is none of this 'he said' 'she said'. If you have issues please come to any of the board members or officers of the club and we will deal with that. We have a woman on the board if you are uncomfortable talking to a man about an issue like this. Anytime something like this happens we are here to take care of issues like this rapidly. There is no tolerance for this type of stuff and it doesn't get enough press, we are here to help.

Don: The key word is press, maybe just stating it. It puts these people on alert, we are watching you and see you.

Scott: We also don't want this place to get a reputation.

Scott: I would like you (Don) to take it to a committee, get three or four people and make some recommendations. I think a suggestion box, or some kind of hotline. Have something as simple as saying this is a safe environment for all. Or just come up with some suggestions or recommendations.



Sydney: I am a group rep, and attend the club meetings as well. I know the exact instances you are talking about, if you want to put me as a contact for any females that don't feel they can talk to a male about it I'd be happy to.

Alex: I like the idea of a committee coming up with some concrete ideas and bringing them here and having some strong steps to discuss.

Crystal: Everything I'm hearing is also a reaction to these things after they've happened. We can inform people of what does 13th stepping look like, what are inappropriate actions in general. We could have a short 15 minute presentation on it or a larger board on display for a month that says "these types of things are not appropriate". A new person who is fresh in sobriety and new to AA will not know what the term 13th stepping is, they don't know that it exists. They will not assume that there are predators in the room. Talking about education just like when you first go into a workplace environment, having a sign or something that is very obvious, this is what it looks like and hears what you can do to report it ahead of time.

Vicki: Does Don need to talk with Charlie and give him the names he knows about already so the Club can be aware and see if they need to take any action?

Scott / Ron: Yes

Vicki: Otherwise we are just playing with words, if something doesn't happen now then it continues. The only recourse we have right now is going to the club. My suggestion is that Don please take it to Charlie.

Don: Sure

Scott: There are two parts to this, current behavior of things going on and then trying to create a better environment moving forward so that we don't have this continuously happening. Then next thing you know people are not going to come here because there are a bunch of leeches here and they don't feel like dealing with it.

Doug: Alcoholics Anonymous doesn't get involved with halfway houses or club business, what happens in that hour that we rent space is our concern. This safety card that has come out has not been approved by the general service conference including the three or four page letter that came with it. In fact our regional trustee, Jimmy D., is on a committee that is reevaluating all of that verbiage in that original statement. That particular statement has been used to banish people from Alcoholic Anonymous and groups which go against four traditions. If we are trying to have workshops trying to use that old material the point is mute. In the Big Book it says boy meets girl on AA campus and girls do meet boys on AA campus and where else are you going to meet a drunk that's recovering except on AA campus. The business of boys and girls chasing each other is of course of concern at any AA facility. If it's outside our doors it's not our problem, if it's happening out in the parking lot or another facility it's the facilities or management's problem. If something is going down that is illegal then it's time to call the police. Inside the room or outside of the room as citizens we need to do that. Spoke of AA #3 13 stepping. As far as 13th stepping is involved it's been going on for 80 years and we're not going to shut it down this week by making this kind of motion..

Don made a motion to vote, seconded by Sydney.

9 FAVOR
2 AGAINST

Motion: Passed



Ginny: I feel like it's important in this situation to differentiate between 13th stepping and making vulgar comments.

Don: Harassment and predatory behavior was mentioned in the motion.

Alex: Is it possible to make a motion to have a committee in the future.

Scott: The motion is stated to bring awareness, by bringing it up in this meeting and having it in the minutes is awareness. But I think more needs to be done, it can be done and if there are any additional things you want to bring up or talk to other people about is another add on to discuss further. We will have people that have the history of AA chiming in and we'll figure out what to do in terms of the right thing.

Vicki: I volunteer to talk to Sydney, in the Grapevine ad 12 & 12 and places like that there are quotes we can borrow. It is true that the safety card is under revision right now on AA.org, but there is AA literature that could be helpful.

Scott: The motion passes and we will continue to bring awareness.

Anniversary update:

Ginny: The Anniversary committee has been meeting almost every week. We have finalized food and just about everything else. We have gotten gifts, plaque's to give to the speakers as a sort of thank you. The only thing we need right now is volunteers to come to the venue on Friday night, March 4th at about 5:30 to set the tables out. It will be about 30minutes. March 5th is the party which is in less than two weeks. It would be nice to have 4 or 5 people. My personal feeling, I don't sense a high level of enthusiasm in the group. Maybe that's just in the moment. If we want it to be successful we should all make an effort to go to meetings, make announcements and invite people to attend and talk it up a little.

Close of meeting:

Motion to close meeting made by Doug, seconded by Don. Meeting closed with The Lord's Prayer at 7:51 PM