The Atheopagan Society

Revering the Earth, Advancing Humanity

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
July 2023

In Attendance:

Rana A.

Robin C.

Mark Green

Michael H.

Jon Cleland Host

Arwen Hubbard

Rachel Wallace

C. Wendt

Dris Bobilin

Susan Paterson

Rebecca N.

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Meeting video was not recorded.

3-Year Anniversary of the Council!

Kudos to Mark for his new job! He confirmed he still has time to keep hosting the Saturday Mixer, YouTube, etc.

Poem (read by Mark) – by Joy Harjo (prior Poet Laureate of the US) – Cherokee/Creek “Eagle Poem”

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(2) Approving Minutes from last Council meeting

MAR2023 Minutes were unanimously approved, with one minor edit to the “next meeting date”.

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(4) Financial Report (Mark)

Our current balance is $5200. Positive cash flow month-to-month. Monthly donors exceed monthly payouts. OK to move ahead with the DEI proposal!

$2600 deposit will be needed in September for SunTree 2024. (For the last SunTree, we took early registration to fund it.)

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(5) Communities (Mark)

No blow-ups; people are mutually supportive and respectful.

Sponsors – We should vet them (a concern has been raised regarding one Sponsor). We should line up a Sponsor for SunTree.

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(6) Media Team (Arwen)

Mark shared his Activities Report, and ensured that all at the meeting had access to a copy.

Susan is our “gluon” for the team. YouTube videos are posted weekly, and are well-received; the number of subscribers is increasing.

Mark and Arwen still produce The Wonder podcast (there are ~400 downloads per episode!). They continue to bring in new members and these members are providing great feedback (“It changed my life!”). Hosting is being paid for by TAPS.

An Instagram account has been created, with two fantastic volunteers managing it.

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(3) Education Committee (Robin)

No updates to report.

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(3) cleric Committee (Mark)

Unfortunately, the Self-Ordination page no longer works (Mailchimp changed functionality). Glen and Mark and discussing how to move the TAPS website off of WordPress. The page now has a note directing prospective clerics how to get ordained manually by Mark.

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(3) Web-Weaving Conference Wrap-Up (Michael)

The Conference, held June 3-4, was super-successful! The rehearsal events went well. There were plenty of volunteers, and few technical issues (except for the “room assignments” feature).

Fortunately, there was no need to eject anyone. A fantastic Keynote Speaker! Although the original Death Doula scheduled to present had to back out on short notice, the team was able to identify another Death Doula to substitute at the last minute.

Great engagement & feedback! Will we hold another in JAN2024? TBD

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(7) Annual Meeting and Officer Elections

At the last Election, the Council decided to stagger the terms of some positions so all Councilmembers’ terms don’t expire at the same time.

Officer terms are 1 year; Council terms are for 2 years.

Four people were up for renewal; below is what they decided:

C. Wendt – Re-upped as Secretary for a new term

Jon – Taking over from Arwen as Council Chair, starting his new term

Robin – Elected to step down from the Council

James – Resigned from the Council prior to this meeting

Arwen will remain on the Council, but will step down as Chair.

Chair – Jon

Vice Chair – Michael (acts as backup/future Chair)

Treasurer – Rachel

Secretary – C. Wendt

Jon and C. Wendt were approved for another term; all others were approved for posts as listed above.

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(7) Strategic Planning Meeting (Michael)

Still working on The Plan.

(1) Vet Sponsors. Ensure alignment with A-P Principles and ethics

(2) DEI. Propose a Survey (anonymous) for FB and Discord

(3) Proposed Sponsorship for Luisa Gibson (presented on LGBTQ @ Web Weaving)

TAPS would give her money for DEI program design training, that she would then bring back to TAPS, so we can produce an in-house DEI program.

Rana also asked us to consider working with another DEI trainer she has met, Naomi. She provided us a proposal; we may not want to follow this proposal.

However, she could assist us in the development of the Survey. Her quote is a bit high.

We need to be more transparent about how people are elected to the TAPS Council. Mark noted that prospective candidates can use our recruitment form, and can contact FB/Discord mods to connect with the Council. Working on an FAQ.

Need a process for comments/queries/issues – a feedback form on the A-P Website.

Rana's Brainstorming workshop (from the Council's previous meeting) identified 3 Goals:

1. Engagement – Maintaining and facilitating interpersonal connection between members of our Community
2. Volunteering – Suggest nominating a Volunteer Coordinator to facilitate delegation (Delegation away from Mark Green to others, to avoid burnout)
3. DEI Effort

Rana posted the screen shot of the Priorities board to the Zoom chat.

Once we start identifying individual tasks towards our three Goals, we can consider:

- Document who is the host/backup
- List of prompts for discussion

ACTION ITEM:

Rana – Create a high-level summary of our Priorities (from the Brainstorming workshop board).

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(7) DEI Proposal

The Council reviewed the letter from Luisa; she has provided DEI training around LGBTQ and Disability, and could be paired with a POC.

She would manage focus groups, lead in forming policies, etc. so that we can become a more welcoming and inclusive community. The scholarship for the 8-month program is £365 ($517).

After she graduates, she would volunteer to develop and present several workshops. She would be retained as an on-call consultant for DEI.

Mark noted that it would be helpful to have someone in-house to flag potential DEI issues; especially if that person had completed specialized training.

The Council agreed it would be best to define expectations in writing.

Rana's contact, Naomi, provided us an initial project estimate of $1200. We have no current need for developing sub-groups by geography, so her proposal would need to be right-sized.

Michael organized a Zoom meet-and-greet with Luisa (with Rachel meeting her in person, since she is only an hour away). Possibly consider one with Naomi. (This meeting with Luisa was held on 16JUL; Michael polled the Council for interview questions, and provided a meeting recording to the Council.)

Mark asked – should we form a sub-committee on developing the DEI program? Or should this be a part of the Strategy sub-committee? And recommend to Council – then vote by email.

The following proposal was unanimously approved:

- Provide up to $1000 to Naomi
- Provide $517 scholarship to Luisa

ACTION ITEM:

Rana - Contact Naomi and determine what can we do for $1000? Or less?

Michael - Set meeting with Luisa for Councilmembers to Q&A

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(7) New Business

Robin Offboarding

Need to offboard A-P emails for Library and Education, and any documents she has created. It is acceptable for her to continue managing them for now.

New Council Members

We may soon have candidates for a new Council. Mark and Michael creating a matrix for assessment of candidates' appropriateness for the Council.

Future Ideas

- Establish a regular Scholarship fund.
- Form a Tech Committee on things like Website management, the mailing list, etc. (Rana)
- Can we explore the use of Fediverse (it is an alternative to Twitter)? (Rebecca)

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The next TAPS meeting will fall on the 2nd Wednesday after the Autumnal Equinox. It will be held on October 4, 2023.