Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Body Meeting of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston

The Annual General Body Meeting of the Zoroastrian Association of Houston ("ZAH") was held on March 28, 2021, at the Zarathushti Heritage and Cultural Center ("ZHCC"), 8787 West Airport Blvd., Houston, TX 77071 at 11:30 a.m. and virtually via Zoom.

The ZAH EC members present were Farokh Billimoria, Khursheed B Dastur, Nozer N Dungor, Kamalrukh Gandhi, Khursheed Hormuzdi, Percy Katrak, Kershaw Khumbatta.

Nozer N. Dungor chaired the meeting.

1. Invocations
   After the Invocation, the meeting was convened.

2. Quorum
   Khursheed B. Dastur announced that the quorum had been established – 116 members were required to establish quorum, and 118 members were present.

3. Adoption of Agenda
   Arnavaz Sethna motioned approval of the agenda, which was seconded by Khushrav Nariman, and unanimously approved.

4. Approval of the Minutes of 2020 AGM
   The minutes of the AGM held in 2020 as well as all the 2020 subcommittee reports that had been provided prior to the meeting, were posted on the ZAH website. Farzana Sidhwa motioned approval of the minutes which was seconded by Khushrav Nariman, and unanimously approved.

The various ZAH subcommittees then presented their annual reports, which had been previously posted onto the ZAH website:

5. The Chairperson’s Report was presented by Nozer Dungor. He thanked all ZAH volunteers and indicated that 2020 had been a year of change and an unpredictable year. It had been a year of adapting – from in-person to zoom online, to curbside delivery etc. The Freeze event in early 2021 was the last thing that we adapted to. Covid and the freeze also had a financial impact and community stepped up to the challenge. He re-iterated that our community needs more Youth involvement, especially the age group that leaves high school and beyond. He thanked the following:
   - Building Maintenance Committee – Yezdi Engineer, Aderbad Tamboli, Sheroy Haveliwala for keeping our building premises maintained
   - Building Management Sub Committee – Arnavaz Sethna, Pervin Sagar; Ken and Vili Bhappu for their quick action and help with getting the water damage remediated after the Freeze and for getting the dance floor renovated quickly.
   - Sweta Sethna and Sharzad Nariman for helping the Senior community members get vaccinated for Covid.
   - Diana Balsara, Anita Kavina, Jehanbux Mehta for keeping the Golden group connected

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- The Entertainment Committee under the leadership of Arzin Italia for always stepping up and for making events possible last year.
- Homi Davier and his CARES team for helping our members in need.
- The IMT team – Jamshed Elavia, Vispi Sagar for doing an excellent job with the ZAH Investments.
- Jamshed Elavia – for keeping our Gardens and sprinkler system maintained
- The Atash Kadeh Mobeds – Ervad Maneck Sidhwa and Ervad Pervez Gonda were given a special mention for their dedication and for keeping the Atash Kadeh fire burning through the Winter Storm, even when they had to stay at the Atash Kadeh overnight without power.
- The Sunday school teachers’ (Vehishta Kaikobad, Arnavaz Sethna, Nazneen Khumbatta, Kaemerz Dotiwala, Nozer N. Dungor and Khursheed B Dastur) dedication was commended for continuing with Virtual Sunday school without missing any days.
- Yezdi Engineer was thanked for tirelessly helping numerous community members recover from damages due to frozen pipes in their homes.
- He thanked all the volunteers who helped with the AGM - Khursheed B Dastur and her team of volunteers (Khushrav Nariman, Rayhan Nariman, Kayo Sidhwa, Percy Behramsha, Sheroy Havelliwala) were appreciated for all their efforts in organizing the first hybrid (virtual Zoom and in-person) ZAH AGM and pulling it off seamlessly. Arzin Italia and Zia Anklesaria for helping with snack distribution and cleanup. Manek Nariman and Yasmin Medhora for validating Quorum at the Front Desk. Manek Nariman for being the moderator. Election officers – Raymie Daroga, Jamshed Elavia, Khushrav Nariman for running the election process smoothly.

6. The Treasurer’s Report was presented by Kershaw Khumbatta. He indicated that the ZAH accounts are in the green. IMT was recognized for making significant gains. Expenses were explained including Building maintenance expenses. ZAH members were thanked for continuing to help whenever ZAH needs it. There were some clarifying questions raised by the membership and addressed by Kershaw. Kayo Sidhwa, Lyla Daroga, Farokh Billimoria, Kershaw Khumbatta, Jasmin Mistry, Mitra Khumbatta were thanked for all their efforts with the financials.

7. The resolution for AK Committee Member Ratification for Khushrav Nariman was completed and passed with 55 in favor (In-Person) and 45 in favor (on Zoom) and 0 against

8. FEZANA update was provided by the FEZANA President Arzan Wadia He indicated that it was great to see familiar faces and provided insights into the FEZANA ZAH collaboration projects which are numerous. He especially mentioned the FIRES project contribution by ZAH Library committee, with Aban Rustomji spearheading it and appreciated her leadership of it. He mentioned that the establishment of FIRES a decade ago, has been a significant contribution to FEZANA. There are many other libraries in North America, however FIRES is one of its kind. He mentioned that FIRES needs young adults to be involved with technical, social media savvy skills and emphasized that this is a legacy for all of us and we need to work together towards continued success of FIRES
He mentioned that ZAH is the founding member of FEZANA and has been on the forefront of FEZANA with two of the elected FEZANA Executives from ZAH, Aban Rustomji founding FIREs, Arnavaz Sethna maintaining the FEZANA records, Kershaw and Naznee Khumbatta managing the FEZANA accounts. There are other projects such as the Ava Project where ZAH Youth are involved such as Natasha N. Dungor, Mahtab B. Dastur.

He talked about the Fezana journal, which is one of its kind in the Zoroastrian world in North America and it is a completely volunteer effort. He encouraged ZAH members to subscribe to it.

He mentioned that ZAH was the first to establish a continuous burning wood fire with the Atash Kadeh, thanks to the Bhandara family.

He requested help from the community to take the University of Toronto – professorship to the finish line.

He thanked the ZAH leadership for working with Fezana to make the difficult but correct decision to postpone the 18th North American Zoroastrian Congress and looks forward to ZAH hosting a successful Congress in 2024.

He encouraged ZAH members to volunteer at the World Congress next year in New York and he hopes that many ZAH members can attend it. He gave examples of Bahrom Firozgary and Farzad Sunavala having been speakers in the past.

He thanked the ZAH board for their support.

9. Item request from a Member for Muktad prayers in the prayer room as before:

Katie Irani indicated that Ervad Bomansha Sanjana has been doing Muktad prayers in the Muktad room for many years, however last year he was refused to pray there. She requested that he be allowed to make use of the prayer room for Muktad prayers, which he has been doing for past 20 years. She asked that the EC consider her request.

Kamalrukh Gandhi said that previously we did not have the Atash Kadeh, however now with the Atash Kadeh in place, and ZAH community prayers are to be performed at the Atash Kadeh.

Arnavaz Sethna commented that the Prayer room cannot be rented, however as per the Operating guidelines, any mobed can rent any of the other rooms during Muktad at a nominal rate.

Kamalrukh Gandhi indicated that the EC would discuss Katie Irani’s request internally and will get back to her.

10. Vision 2020 Closeout Report was presented by Kayo Sidhwa

- Vision 2020 has been ongoing for seven years. It started with building the Pervez Rustomji Room, and then improvements were made to the main Hall where tiles installed, Kitchen was remodeled, parking lot was improved, and painting done. Total spend and balance were shared. The vision 2020 over-achieved their target. All the donors were thanked. Special mention to Kamalrukh Gandhi and Yasmin Medhora for supporting with the events.

11. IMT team (Jamshed Elavia)
• Portfolio and Performance Summary was presented
• 2021 was a landmark year and investment of assets has improved considerably
• He indicated that we have had a decade of bullish performance thus far and we need to consider whether the Organization can be sustained for 15 years from now.
• The IMT team initiated the reserve study concept which provides detailed documentation on what is needed to be done over the next few years. The output from the IMT will be shared with the EC.
• He thanked Nozer N. Dungor for his leadership, thanked Vispi Sagar on IMT team and Yezdi Engineer for helping in terms of the work being done on the exterior of the buildings.
• He talked about the landscaping features and fruit orchard that were installed/planted.
• There were some clarifying questions from the members which were addressed.

12. The Youth Report Q&A representative was Zara Italia.
• Zara presented the Youth report with the various activities undertaken through the year. Youth has been active with fundraisers and charity drives. They have a major Fundraiser planned for 17th July - Dandiya night and requested everyone to attend to help pay for the Freeze related repairs at the center.

13. Entertainment Committee Report Q&A representative was Zia Anklesaria.
• The report was shared online. There were no questions.
• Arnavaz Sethna indicated that the Entertainment committee did an excellent job despite all the inconveniences due to the Pandemic.

14. The Library Committee Report Q&A was represented by Aban Rustomjii.
• Mehryar Rivetna has authored a book “Zarathushtra and his message” and the proceeds will go to ZAH Library. Everyone was encouraged to buy the book to help support the library.

15. The Publication Committee Report Q&A was represented by Arnavaz Sethna
• Vispi Katrak is the is a new member on the committee as the Social Media officer. He has created the ZAH Facebook and Instagram pages. Please contact Vispi Katrak for content to be placed on the ZAH Facebook and Instagram pages

16. The Building Maintenance Committee Report Q&A was represented by Aderbad Tamboli.
• There was a call for additional volunteers for all the work that is being undertaken by the BMC team. Farzad Sarkari volunteered to help.

17. The Parking Lot Committee Closeout Report Q&A was represented by Sheroy Haveliwala
• Kudos to all the volunteers who helped with Parking lot repairs.
• Pavers have been designed and installed with thanks to Kayo Sidhwa, Jasmin Katrak
and other numerous volunteers who helped with the Pavers project

18. The Legacy 2000 Scholarship report Q&A was presented by Homi Davier.
   • No Q&A

19. The CARES Committee Report Q&A was represented by Homi Davier
   • The CARES committee have provided assistance to many members during the Pandemic

20. The Atash Kadeh (AK) Committee report Q&A was represented by Khushrav Nariman
   • Thanked the committee members – Feroze Bhandara, Nazneen Khumbatta, Persis Behramsha. The AK was kept open, and Boyes continued during the pandemic with the Boye humbandagi being live streamed on Saturdays and Sundays.
   • Need donations from to help offset AK related costs. Three categories of sponsorship have been setup for which details are in the report. There are other ways to donate such as adopting a utility etc. During the freeze there were expenses with the Air Conditioning
   • Clarifying questions raised were addressed.

21. The Outreach Committee report was represented by Kaemerz Dotiwalla
Committee has been continually active in 2021 and 2021. The message of history and culture of Zarathusti people is spreading. Different people from community have been interviewed and some were asked to attend radio station shows. There is a renewed interest in our institution recently especially from universities and schools. Many tours have been conducted of the Center, Library, Atash Kadeh. Ervd Neville Kanga participated in the Rothko chapel ceremony and did very well with representing ZAH.

22. Voting for EC FEZANA representative
   - The candidates nominated for this position were Kaemerz Dotiwala and Nazanin Sarkari
   - Both candidates gave short speeches to represent themselves
     i. Nazanin indicated that she has been with FEZANA since its founding and has a lot of passion for furthering Zarathushti community via Fezana. She indicated that she is in a place in life where she has time to devote to her passion
     ii. Kaemerz Dotiwala indicated that he has been involved with FEZANA since its founding. He has brought three congresses into ZAH from Fezana. Would like youth and seniors to be involved.
   - Voting by anonymous ballot was done on the AGM floor and voting by anonymous poll was done in the Zoom meeting
   - Nazanin Sarkari was successful in the election with 56 votes compared to 41 votes

23. Incoming EC and AK members were welcomed, and outgoing EC and AK members thanked
   - Election of New EC Members - the following Executive Committee members were eligible to run for 2nd term and decided to do so:
     • Khursheed B Dastur – Secretary
     • Khursheed Hormuzdi – Member
     • Percy Katrak – Member

   - The FEZANA Representative Executive Committee position was open. There were two candidates nominated for this position. The following members was successful in the election:
     • Nazanin Sarkari – FEZANA Representative

   - Election of New AK Members
     • Nazneen Khumbatta was eligible to run for a 2nd term but declined to do so.
     • The following member was nominated and elected to the AK Committee open position:
       o Rustom Engineer

24. Benediction and meeting close
• There being no other business, Jehanbux Mehta proposed a vote of thanks to the Chair, who then declared the meeting closed.

Recorded by Khursheed B Dastur
ZAH Secretary