



Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation

PWAC INTERIM ACTIVITY UPDATE

Presented by the Place of Worship Advisory Committee to the OZCF Board of Directors – June 13, 2013

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1.0 Introduction

In 2011, the Place of Worship Advisory Committee (PWAC) on authority of the Board of Directors and membership of OZCF, commenced its mandate to:

- a. Investigate the feasibility of developing a consecrated place of worship in Ontario
- b. Investigate the community's views around building a consecrated place of worship.

The consecrated Place of Worship would be built in Oakville, Ontario on land owned by the OZCF.

The ultimate vision of building a consecrated Place of Worship would be the installation of a consecrated Adaran. Neither a consecrated Dadgah with a Yasna Gah and Bareshnum facility nor Adaran currently exists in N. America. Typical Dadgahs such as those that currently exist at the OZCF and ZSO facilities, along with many others across Zoroastrian associations in N. America are not consecrated. In a consecrated Dadgah, one can ordain priests which is deemed an important aspect towards the sustainability of Zoroastrianism on this continent. The consecration of the Dadgah is also an essential step that must be completed prior to an Adaran with a consecrated fire. To achieve this, in Phase 1 a consecrated Dadgah would be built. In Phase 2, the Adaran would be installed with a consecrated fire. In Phase 2 a Mobed will be required full time to look after the fire. The development of the ultimate Adaran will be dependent on a number of factors including financial capability and approvals.

2.0 Focus Group Meetings

The committee met several times and developed a strategy to maximize public input through an open and transparent process. Five townhall type focus group meetings were held where Zoroastrians were able to attend, ask questions and voice their views through a structured and focussed interactive process. Written submissions were also received. Notice of meetings were distributed, through the OZCF website, by telephone calls to the membership, in newsletter announcements, to ZSO and by invitation letters to Fezana to inform all Zoroastrian associations in North America.

Meetings were held on:

Mobeds	Saturday February 23rd, 10:00am – 12:00pm
Youth 18 – 34	Sunday February 24th, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Seniors 60 +	Saturday March 2nd, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Adult 35 – 60	Saturday March 2nd, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
Open Meeting	Sunday April 7 th , 10:00am – 12:00pm

Note

The appendices provide details for each of the above sessions that were held with references to questions that were asked and also an analysis of the type of questions and opinions.



3.0 Progress to-date

The committee has completed all the town hall meetings with the five groups. A report has been compiled of all questions asked in each group. This report was a valuable tool to assess the views of the community on this project.

The report is segmented into four main sections deemed the most important aspects amongst the groups, namely: Concept (type of fire and structural); Religious and rituals; Social; and Financial. Questions that did not fit into a specific category are under 'Other'.

We have further analyzed and reported a section called 'Recommendations' that summarizes the main points from the specific group, that were not specific questions. There is a section on 'unanswered questions'. There are not many reported as the committee, through its knowledge and experience, was able to answer or at least draw historical reference, to address most question at the meetings. Questions of personal bias such as who is allowed in and how we check that all purity standards are met before entry, were answered with historical, philosophical and scientific perspective. While the committee has developed a code of conduct and rules for entry, the community will refine these at the appropriate time. A statistical summary is also included identifying the number of attendees, number of speakers, as well as number of questions asked in each of the five main categories (including 'other'). This provides a good overview of audience participation and areas of interest. It also provides us with a learning tool for future meetings.

At the end of each group summary there is a section called 'Comments' which reflect the committee's summary of the specific group's concerns and views. As many questions were repetitious from the various speakers, we have synthesized these to reflect the main points.

This 'Questions' document can be posted on the OZCF website with an introductory explanation as above for review by the membership and others. Availability to those without electronic access can be made by interested parties calling for a printed version which can be sent by mail.

The committee had taped the proceedings of each meeting and advised each group that they were doing so at the commencement of each meeting. This has now been translated in print into a 'Questions and Answers' document. This is a very long and raw document in that it is a printed format of what was said. It has not been edited and due to punctuations, expressions and pauses of normal verbal speech it is often difficult to interpret or put into context. This document can be used as a reference to answer specific questions in the future, as it has a wealth of useful information.

4.0 Next Steps

One of the main concerns in each group was the financial cost and ability of the community to support such a development. Typical questions were around; where would we get the funding to build? what will it take to financially support the place of worship? how do we minimize the burden on future generations? What are the technical and building requirements? Where will we get the mobeds from once the adaran is built and how will we afford the day to day operations?

To answer these questions a sub-committee was formed to develop a 'Needs Analysis' to address religious and community needs within an architectural and building context. The development of such an architectural concept will enable us to get a general cost to build such a facility. The group included experienced mobeds who had access to structural, religious and liturgical information from India, Pakistan and Iran. The committee tried often to obtain



drawings previously developed by an Ontario architect for others within the membership. This was received by us in May, 2013. Upon review by the advisory committee it was deemed that the concepts would not completely meet the needs of the community to develop a consecrated Place of Worship, based on the needs analysis. We asked the Ontario architect who created the drawings for others whether he would be able to put together a conceptual floor plan based on our needs analysis at no cost, but he indicated that he was too busy currently to assist us, but would help us in getting a construction cost estimate.

We contacted an experienced Zoroastrian architect in the USA for guidance, who has designed community facilities. He was helpful and sent us existing concept drawings of community facilities in the USA at no cost. However, these concepts are not specific to our need of building a consecrated Dadgah with facilities to ordain priests and eventually an Adaran installed with a consecrated fire, since none has been built in N. America so far.

We are now developing a concept for general pricing purposes through an architect that has experience in designing community centres in Ontario. He is doing this on a voluntary basis at no cost to us. He has prepared a concept plan for us and estimates a price range for Phase 1 building of the consecrated Dadgah between \$255 - \$350/square foot, depending on quality of materials and timing. A nice looking building that meets our needs is estimated at \$300/sq. ft. An additional soft cost allowance of 12% -15% is estimated, to include fees for architect, engineer, land surveying, soil tests, planning and landscaping. He estimates that the Phase 2 price to build the mobed home on the upper level would cost approximately \$150/sq. ft. Phase 1 construction will include the ability to expand easily into Phase 2 when the Adaran is to be installed with the consecrated fire.

However, more detailed architectural, engineering and technical drawings will be required to develop a preliminary Building Plan, before accurate and final costs can be obtained and provided to the community. To do this, certain costs will be incurred that will require board and membership approval. It is estimated that such investigations will cost approximately \$35,000. While this does not cover all architectural, engineering and planning fees, it will give us enough data to develop a fairly accurate price. Monies spent for these Building Plan drawings and research activities would have been required anyway should we proceed with building of the facility and so does not impose an additional financial burden.

The committee has performed enormous amounts of research on this subject matter, created an environment of excitement within the community through an open and transparent process and conducted the town hall meetings with positive feedback from most of the participants. However, in developing the next steps, there are various aspects that need to be addressed by the community such as fundraising, financing, governance and by-laws for the management of the new facilities. For example, when the place of worship becomes operational the community may consider appointing a board of trustees to manage the day to day and long term affairs of the facility so that the board is not distracted from its executive functions.

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 Reasoning

Based on the responses received from the townhall meetings, the Place of Worship Advisory Committee recommends that the OZCF proceed in developing a consecrated place of worship conditional on preparing a financial plan approved by the membership. Our determination is based on the following:



Ontario Zoroastrian Community Foundation

- 5.1.1 Desire of much of the membership and community based on the meetings, provided it is affordable and financially sound, and maintains rules of purity.
- 5.1.2 The first point within the OZCF Letters Patent speaks to the establishment of a place of worship. *The objects for which this Organization is incorporated are:*

Religious Organizations

(a) To preach and advance the teachings of the Zoroastrian faith and the religious tenets, doctrines, observances and culture associated with that faith.

(b) To establish, maintain and support a house of worship with services conducted in accordance with the tenets and doctrines of the Zoroastrian faith.

- 5.1.3 Upon extensive review of religious literature and requirements, it is technically possible to build a consecrated Dadgah and Adaran while maintaining the required religious and liturgical ceremonies
- 5.1.4 The OZCF land is suitable for building such a facility from an architectural and planning viewpoint. Its central location in the GTA to a large and growing Zoroastrian population and the large size of land are attractive features in building such a facility. Furthermore, its close proximity to Toronto airport and major highways provides an important transportation corridor to make it easily accessible from across N. America for other association members and to ordain priests
- 5.1.5 The importance of being able to ordain priests to enable us to develop our own independent and sustainable priesthood for the benefit of all associations in N. America. This is based on the observation that the priesthood in India, Pakistan and Iran is ageing and there are not enough young people going into the profession for economic and demographic reasons. As more young people migrate from our traditional places and increased political unrest threatens our institutions, the maintenance and sustainability of these institutions is becoming more and more difficult. Furthermore, it is also becoming more difficult to send young people from here to India to be ordained due to deteriorating infrastructure there that cannot be supported due to poor attendance and upkeep. A properly developed system is required in N. America where priests are trained in the inner liturgical ceremonies and compensated fairly to support their families, based on value they bring to the community
- 5.1.6 There is a need for historically religious facilities such as consecrated places of worship as symbols of faith, to enhance religious education and awareness within our community and to non-Zoroastrians
- 5.1.7 The necessity of developing a religious focal point for all Zoroastrian associations in N. America where we are able to perform the inner liturgical ceremonies and ordain priests for all N. American associations
- 5.1.8 The importance of providing a facility to the community for spiritual peace and religious ritual and ceremonies, that resembles such facilities in India, Pakistan and Iran



5.2 Conditions

The consecrated place of worship would be built under the following conditions:

- 5.2.1 Accurate cost projections be determined from detailed designs and evaluations
- 5.2.2 A financial plan to build the facility including sources of revenue and costs, be obtained by the Place of Worship Advisory Committee and approved by the membership. This plan to include capital costs and maintenance costs to sustain the facility
- 5.2.3 The community will be updated continuously on fundraising activities and design evaluations
- 5.2.4 The community initiates and implements a focussed effort to improve awareness of our religion and history within and outside our community through formal education and effective communications
- 5.2.5 The current house will not be demolished until the consecrated Place of Worship is ready to be built following all community and government approvals

6.0 Conclusion

The advisory committee recommends that the board put forward a resolution to the membership for approval to build a consecrated Place of Worship, conditional upon receiving a financial plan to be approved by the membership.

Such a plan will require more detailed investigations of building costs. The advisory committee recommends that the board put forward a resolution to the membership to approve an amount not to exceed \$35,000 for professional fees and other costs necessary to develop a more accurate Building Plan.

The advisory committee strongly feels that it is in the best position to guide this project towards completion, should the community wish to build this consecrated Place of Worship. In the interest of continuity and to expedite the process, we recommend to the board that it seek approval from the membership to allow the Place of Worship Advisory Committee to continue until the facility is constructed and operational.



Appendix A – Mobeds

Mobed Groups – Town Hall Meeting

Summary of Questions / Concerns / Comments Recommendations

1. CONCEPT (Type of Fire and Structural – Yasna and Bareshnum Gah)

- I. Concept of consecrated POW is fine and it is ok to have the Dadgah type structure first when we initially build the POW, however we must build the structure with all of the facilities in place so that the next step of the consecration of the fire becomes easy, for obvious reasons such as cost, timing and willingness of future generation etc.
- II. What is the difference between the consecrated POW building we are planning and what we currently have at ZSO and OZCF? How will the building and prayer room be different from the prayer rooms we have today? Kids may question why we want to build a bigger prayer room when we have a room now.
- III. Concept of consecrated POW is fine and this will provide opportunities for families to be able to ordain their priest in North America. E.g. Current difficulties with obtaining visas for Pakistani citizens, ties with families in India over generations being diluted as younger generations grow in North America.
- IV. Concept of consecrated POW and process fine, what about personnel? Where will mobed's come from? How will we attract them? How will we develop our own and give them a career incentive?
- V. Concept is fine however have we looked at source of fire or bringing in a fire from India? Can it be flown in instead of going through the process of consecration? What is the process?
- VI. Concept is fine, however there is a lack of knowledge among community members with regards to rituals and customs, knowledge of our prayers, emphasis on religion missing in the family unit, respect for priest and their function missing, respect for a POW missing among the youth. All of this must be also addressed.
- VII. We are on the right track, and the community now needs a focal point. Currently we only have rooms to pray at OZCF and ZSO. But there is no focal point. We have enough learned people at this time to guide us and help build this POW. The addition of the Yasna Gah and Bareshnum Gah will provide the opportunity to perform inner liturgical ceremonies and ordain priests.

2. RELIGIOUS AND RITUALS

- I. At the time of consecrating the building it has been explained that the fire will be maintained 24 hours a day and after that will the fire be maintained from the 4th day like we maintain it in a Dadgah or will it have to be maintained for 24 hours?
- II. Request for explanation of terms to be in layman's terms as it is difficult for youth and other community members to understand the terminology used. Explanation of Yasna Gah and Bareshnum Gah sought.
- III. Explanation of the 3 types of fire must be simplified as it is difficult for people to understand.
- IV. When we do the Baj and other prayers etc. are we going to have a proper Pavi built?
- V. When we do the ceremonies and prayers we need water from a well? Are we considering those ritual needs such as building a well?
- VI. Am told bringing in Nirang from India is not good. Are we considering a Varasyaji (white hair bull) for the POW?



- VII. Concern regarding education and skill level of current priest? E.g. Vendidad and Yasna prayers. How are we going to prepare the future generation to be able to perform them? Has the committee made plans for that?
- VIII. Concern regarding too much focus on rituals by priest and not enough knowledge regarding rituals and their significance communicated. Lack of commitment from adults with regards to the religious education of their children and too much of this responsibility is being transferred to the Priest. Lack of proper knowledge among the priest re the rituals and customs. Not enough respect for religion, priest and POW within the younger generation.
- IX. Concern regarding attendance if we build this POW. People come for functions to hall and we have 150 people or families attend however only 10 to 12 of them attend the current prayer room we have? We could be spending money on building something that the current generation does not necessarily want?

3. SOCIAL

- I. Concept we bring here must be accepted by the younger generations that will follow and use the POW. Younger generation free in spirit and in their thinking and towards life and religion. We must therefore accommodate their wishes and have to change and not be rigid in our demands with regards to rituals, customs. We must accept this change and still keep the focal point important enough for our youngsters to come to and then we will succeed. We are on the right track but need to be on the right track with more flexibility than what we are advocating.
- II. How has this committee discussed the points such as; would we allow mixed marriage couples to enter, mixed marriage family members, non – Zoroastrians and non – Zoroastrians who would want to convert to Zoroastrianism? Has this been discussed?
- III. Regarding entry and accepting Non Zoroastrians into our faith. What if the community is split 50 / 50 regarding allowing entry to mixed marriage couples, spouses of mixed marriage couples and non-Zoroastrians?
- IV. We can allow non-Zoroastrians in and can have rules regarding purity etc.? How are we going to enforce these rules?
- V. If the majority of the community is accepting the concept than we have to in this current environment. We have to accept non – Zoroastrians as long as we preserve the sanctity of the Kebla and the Bareshnum and Yasna Gah.

4. FINANCIAL

- I. The committee must ensure that some kind of finance arrangement is in place to maintain the POW, prior to moving to complete the steps of consecrating the fire as an Atash e Adaran type fire. This must come in as a recommendation in the report that this committee presents.
- II. Concern regarding the community's ability to maintain the POW if one is built. Current challenges of the BOD's with maintaining what we have (Hall, House, etc.) echoed. How will this committee look at raising funds for building the POW and maintaining it after?
- III. Raising money to build POW is not difficult, but raising funds to continue to maintain will be a challenge? Is the committee looking at options to recommend in the report regarding future maintainence of the POW?

5. OTHERS

- I. The LTPC report completed in 2009 indicates that the senior's home is the 4th on the list of priorities to build. As this report was completed more than 3 years back, the views of the committee and community



members could have changed and therefore this ranking could be different if a poll was completed today. We should therefore look at revisiting the options.

- II. We mentioned this is a Canadian effort, does that mean other associations will contribute and have a say in the building and maintenance of this place?

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MOBED GROUP

Religious:

- I. Our initiative should provide opportunities to families from Athornan families in Canada, North America and even Pakistan to be able to ordain priest in the future.
- II. We should do something now to expose our youth to prayers as just having religion classes is not enough. Environment / Excitement regarding religion must be created so that kids are happy to come and are not being forced to come to the prayer or religion classes as their parents want them too.
- III. We must look at supporting institutions such as the Dadar Madrassa and the Cama Athornan in India. We must look at providing financial supports to these institutions so that their personnel can help train mobed's and they can come here to work as mobed's.
- IV. We need to look at options to train our young mobed's and priest, such as sending them to India to train at institutes and we must fund this training until our own facilities are built.
- V. We must conduct religion classes for adults, similar to classes currently being conducted by Dr. Ramiyar Karanjia in India.
- VI. Essential elements of any organization need to be in place.

Social

- 1. As a community we are well settled now than before and therefore there was not much attention paid to religion. We are settled now and if this generation does not establish a POW there is a possibility that one will never be established on this continent as the kids today will not understand the concept and therefore it is our duty to make sure we leave this legacy.

Financial

- 1. Committee should consider two funds when they present their report. 1) Construction and 2) Maintenance of POW fund.

7. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

None

Summary:

Number of Attendees: 10

Number of speakers: 15 ** Number hire as some attendees spoke multiple times.

Total number of questions / concerns / comments: 26

Total number of recommendations: 8

Question Type	Number of Questions	%
Concept	7	23
Religious	9	34
Social	5	19
Financial	3	12
Other	2	12
Total	26	100



Comments:

The review of the minutes and questions for the mobed group indicates the following:

1. There is an acceptance of the concept and the process being recommended by the committee of building an Atash e Adaran as the first consecrated Place of Worship in North America, to help sustain the Zoroastrian faith. There is an acceptance and a general consensus among the mobed group that to be able to maintain our faith the community must have the capability to be able to ordain priest in Canada and North America to successfully sustain our religion on this continent.
2. There is agreement that a Place of Worship is needed for the following reasons:
 - To provide for the religious and spiritual needs of the community
 - To provide a religious focal point for the community, which has been lacking
 - To provide the younger generation with a sense of religion and a sense of Zoroastrian identity which the community has not been able to provide over the last 40 – 50 years of its existence on this continent.
 - To rekindle the spirit of religion, provide education on our rituals and customs to adults, youths and children.
 - To help create the enthusiasm and belief in the younger generation viz a viz religion as this has been missing.
3. There is agreement that this must be achieved by ensuring that the will of the youth and the socio religious needs of the continent we live in are acknowledged and that we accept this change. The terms of reference as explained and the rules of entry as recommended by the committee were largely accepted. There was a concern regarding how this could be enforced and explained especially to non-Zoroastrians who visit the POW. The committee was urged to look at other creative options to communicate the rules of entry, instead of just having the rules posted on a board.
4. There were questions asked around the cost, financials, planning aspects and the ability of the community to maintain this place in the future, once it has been built.
5. There are recommendations from the mobed group re Religious, Social, and Financials that they would like the committee to recommend to the Board.

In summary the concept was well accepted and the recommendation for change and adapting to the society we live in was accepted and well understood by this group. There was a sense of acceptance to the inevitable changes (social) that will have to be accommodated to have the necessary buy in of the younger generation. The concept and discussion around the type of fire and the steps involved to move from Atash e Dadgah to Atash e Adaran fire were well understood by this group. The important structural questions – such as the Yasnagah, Bareshnumgah and why they are needed and their importance in performing the necessary inner liturgical ceremonies and our long term and important goal of ordaining our own priests in North America was well understood by the mobed group. There was acceptance of the Terms of Reference and the rules of entry in the Place of Worship as recommended by the committee. There were concerns around how rules of entry can be enforced and the mobed group recommended the committee adopt creative ways to ensure these rules are understood prior to entry into the POW. The question of conversion of non – Zoroastrians into the religion was clarified to this group as this question was raised. The committee communicated to the mobed's that it was not within its mandate to consider recommendations viz a viz conversions of non - Zoroastrians and the committee would like that to be addressed by the priest. The committee's mandate is to understand the communities' views around building a consecrated POW.



Appendix B – Youth 18 – 34

Youth Group – Town Hall Meeting

Summary of Questions / Concerns / Comments Recommendations

1. CONCEPT (Type of Fire and Structural – Yasna and Bareshnum Gah)

- I. I was under the impression based on literature that was sent out that we were going to decide on what type of Agiary or POW we are going to build?
- II. What happens when the committee will present the findings and the findings are that building the Place of Worship is not feasible? Do we go back to the 3 options in the LTPC report (Larger Hall, Community Centre, Seniors Home)
- III. What part of Phase 2 or Stage 2 (Atash E Adaran) is not feasible? What is making Phase 2 or Stage 2 unfeasible?
- IV. I think it is an expensive and an over involved Place of Worship?
- V. What type of fire do we have now? What we are trying to do now is have a building consecrated with a Dadgah type fire and then eventually consecrate and move to an Atash e Adaran type fire?
- VI. How much time is it realistically going to take to get to stage 2 (Atash E Adaran)? It is going to come down to our generation to get to that stage and do we even have the mobed's to look after this place in the younger group ?
- VII. It seems that the committee is not clear regarding the type of fire they want to have. There is no commitment to go to the eventual Adaran type fire. What the committee is recommending is let's go to this fire now (Dadgah) and hopefully if things go well, we will get to it (Atash e Adaran type fire) in the future?
- VIII. What's stopping us from making the current place (house) into a proper Place of Worship, instead of breaking this down and rebuilding a new place?
- IX. I kind of agree and don't agree regarding building the Place of Worship.

2 RELIGIOUS AND RITUALS

- I. I am just wondering that as the generations go on there are going to be fewer and fewer Mobed's available to maintain this place?
- II. My concern is not the cost or money, I am sure that our generation will be able to come out with funding, but my concern is whether they are actually going to want to be at the Agiary? There has to be actually somebody in our generation who wants to stay at an Agiary and tend to a fire 24 hours a day? Are we going to find someone who will be interested in doing something like that, by giving up their careers and what not?
- III. We do have a fire hall. We do have a Dar e Mehr? How many of our youth you think are visiting the Place of Worship?



- IV. I don't really think there is a difference between praying in front of a Dadgah or an Adaran type fire? Not sure how we would know what type of fire it is?
- V. My biggest concern is how many of the younger mobed's will be willing to come and spend their time and be willing to perform ceremonies to maintain this place of worship?

3 SOCIAL

- I. My main concern is that today our youth in this community is not involved with the community for social events and stuff like that, so how are we now going to sustain an Agiary once your generation is gone?
- II. Activities to contain the community and have events where we can socialize is important, having a Place of Worship is important, but focusing all our funding, all our resources for which we are not sure of the next generations buy in, goals and intent. I think we are jumping the gun and making a decision on what types of Agiary or what type of Place of Worship we want to build versus; is this something the next generation wants?
- III. What about the youth whose spouse is a non-Zoroastrian in terms of allowing access. I think that a lot of the younger youth have non-Zoroastrian spouses who would like their children to be Zoroastrians. Many of the youth as you will observe do not put a lot of focus on religion to begin with, then why are we putting so much focus and resources on building this place?
- IV. I find it repulsive when someone tells me we are proud to be Zoroastrians. If you are born into the Zoroastrian religion how can we be proud of that. We are no different from any other community or race?
- V. I am involved with the community and the reason why I am here is not for a Place of Worship. I am here for the social and other aspects of it. I enjoy the people, the food the interaction and the fact that we all come from the same background. The religious portion has never been my concern. I believe in the tenets of the religion and I believe in our community and the group of people that are similar in other ways. However to say that we need a Place of Worship in order to solidify our religion, I think it is wrong. I think that there are greater demands actually for other things (Larger Hall, Community Centre etc.).
- VI. I would like to know what are the rules regarding segregation? Is it going to fit into the multi-cultural society we live in or is it still not going to allow for non-Zoroastrian spouses and their children?
- VII. Rules regarding entry as recommended by the committee etc. are absolutely fine and we are adapting to our societal needs?
- VIII. Rules regarding fire and rules regarding entrance recommended by the committee all seem to be fine to me?



4 FINANCIAL

- I. My concern is not cost. My concern is that based on my understanding, there has to be somebody 24 hours a day attending to the fire, etc. So how are we going to be able to sustain these costs?
- II. I agree with the concept Phil just mentioned regarding mobed's and how the committee plans to ensure that there are young mobed's ready to look at this as a career. Realistically I would say when it comes down to it I would say there will be someone who will look at this opportunity, between a free house and education for kids etc. What is the realistic amount say you would pay a mobed?
- III. My concern is regarding the discussion about finding an individual who will be willing to maintain a Place of Worship. Based on attendance of youth, i.e. people under 35 years, so this group is the one who will in the next 30 years use this facility. There's not much interest amongst the youth in a Place of Worship. There is a concern that who is going to attend, when we put all this funding in, we can barely retain someone to look after this (current) place, so we are looking to bring someone in from overseas for this location to maintain it and then the people here will be attending or using this facility. Is this a wise choice of our investment?
- IV. This type of conversation has happened about 5 to 6 years ago, since I have been volunteering over here and the prayer hall we have currently is in shambles right now and there are walls broken and everything is dirty inside the house. How are we now going to maintain the new place which will require thousands and thousands of dollars?
- V. Have you as a committee discussed the structure? What is the size of this structure? How big is it going to be? What is the cost figure? Is it 500 square feet or 1500 square feet structure that will be built?
- VI. The main concern for us is that we don't know what is going to be built. Is the youth agreeing to it?
- VII. I understand that this place was bought and its purpose was to build a Place of Worship. But I think what a lot of us are worried about is putting all the available resources into a big temple or something like that. I think our worry is that a lot of the resources are going to be used to achieve this Place of Worship that is probably not going to be used as much as it should be, when they can be spread out more evenly. Maybe a smaller temple or something more logical to what the demands of the society are. If this is what we need to complete our prayers, sure we need that space. It may be a smaller space than what the community thinks its needs to be. I think resources must be allocated accordingly to what the society demands not based on what you as a committee think it needs.
- VIII. I think it is too early in the process. The committee is not really saying we are building a POW. I don't think a lot of us know what is happening, like e.g. if the committee says building a POW would cost say \$20k. A lot of the youth who don't want an Agiary wouldn't mind an Agiary. It is not clear to us what it is going to cost and it is too early in the process and I think the cost and resources are needed to build this.



5 OTHERS

- I. Being chair of the youth committee and member of the youth committee for close to 4 years it was very difficult to get the youth to come out for events related to the youth. We did not have one single religious event that took place as there was no participation and there was no interest. When we started to have attendance it had nothing to do with religion. The committee in my opinion is not taking a realistic approach on what the youths want.
- II. I think that you are saying that you are developing this to give us the opportunity to become mobed's and carry on the tradition and be religious etc. I don't think that is what this generation may want.
- III. A very important question we want to ask ourselves is who is going to use this facility when we build it. It will take 5 years before we get funding, another 5 years before we build it. 10 years from now most of us will have a family and kids, I question if I will bring them here as my first priority to pray and attend the Place of Worship?
- IV. I think before we get to a point where we discuss the Place of Worship and the feasibility to decide if a Place of Worship is needed, I think it is important to go back to the LTPC report of 2010 as in my opinion it was a completely biased subjective study that was completed. There is a youth chart which shows the highest points. There was a single member of the youth within this group that was a member of the LTPC committee. This was a group that was completely concentrated with a group of individuals who wanted to go for a Place of Worship and was for the project from the beginning and unfortunately this committee up here is again of the same kind of composition.
- V. The Board has asked this committee be formed to provide an opinion if whether or not this large Place of Worship can be built. We should go over again what the LTPC had come to the conclusion of in an objective way and determine that in an objective way. I do appreciate that you are working on getting our opinions on this but your entire committee is pro Agiary and I have seen this being on the committee. I know that it is not about whether or not this Place of Worship can go forward, but it is how we can do it and how we can make sure it happens and I don't think that is the right way to go to make a decision of this size.
- VI. The generation that was born overseas and who grew up here and had connection from back home are completely different from the generation who were born over here? When I feel overwhelmed or stressed, I do not go to a Place of Worship but I go for a walk with my dog or pet my dog. I do not have to go to a church or Place of Worship and will probably not in my view.
- VII. Wasting any part of our resources around this is pointless and I think we need to completely change our focus and reassess whether or not this is something we want to go about to achieve.
- VIII. How many times do we find the youth showing up to pray on a Sunday when Nozer uncle opens the place up? Nobody from the youth shows up.
- IX. Is the main desire here to have people come in and pray or is the main desire here to be the first in North America and have something that we can be proud of?



- X. We already have an Atash e Dadgah in Toronto. We also have one here, but it is not great. So we want to build a big one so that people don't have to drive to Toronto and spend time in traffic and people are going to dish out and pay millions in donations so that they don't have to drive downtown?
- XI. I agree with both sides but am confused. I am a religious person and I know I would come if there is a place of worship built. I also agree with what the youth are saying, we are marrying outside of the community and don't have the time. I am not sure where I really stand. I really do admire that we are doing this. I am stuck in the middle. If we build something in the future people would come out but sooner or later it will die down. I don't think a lot of us are educated enough from a religious aspect to know the difference.
- XII. My main concern is that we have the place right now and it is not open all the time, so it's in accessible when you want to come and visit it. Let's open this place up and see if people come. At this time we don't need it, we have something that is sustainable and we can refurbish and let's open it up for 8 hours a day and see how many people will come in say every Sunday.
- XIII. If we have people coming to the current Place of Worship that we have right now then we should move to the next step, otherwise it does not make sense to build a bigger Place of Worship and then wait for people to come in.
- XIV. I think the community must be objective in its analysis. The committee needs to be reset and has to have a proper youth representation. It needs to be getting rid of some members and add others and dilute it so it is actually equal in terms of representation. The members besides the mobed's on this committee are all pro Agiary and that needs to be corrected as it is not the right group that should be discussing the future of this organization. I have concerns as to how our views will be communicated transparently to the other groups such as the mobed's, adults and seniors.
- XV. Currently there is say 50% of the people in the community are religious and 50% are not. Many years from now I think the non-religious group will be higher than the religious and therefore is it worth spending all this money on building a Place of Worship? As the current lot (older generation) is not going to be there and then who is going to take care of this Place of Worship if there are not many religious minded people in the community?
- XVI. I have grown up in India and had the opportunity of experiencing religion and rituals as there were a lot of Agairies. Our kids without the benefit of an Agiary will not have a chance to understand and experience the religion and its customs and rituals. The only reason I understand it is because I have been provided that opportunity. Tomorrow our kids will not have the opportunity to learn anything about our religion if we do not have a Place of Worship. So I think that it is important to have a Place of Worship as that is how we will be able to maintain religion.
- XVII. I see a clash of perspectives. We have something like what is being proposed in Toronto, which is a mix of temple and community center. The mandate of this committee is based on what seems to be a very subjective group, recommend that the mandate be reassessed. The composition of the committee needs to be reassessed. We have restrictions among the two



groups (ZSO and OZCF) and there is a lack of cohesion. There is a lot of infighting. People will stay away because they are angry with the process that seems to be subjective. There seems to be a lack of objective process that was open to everyone and that everyone had their say. There is a lack of democratic process going on.

- XVIII. Another thing I would like to add that the whole focus of this committee and I have been on the Board for the last 4 years I believe that the youth has not been supported and many times we have been put into difficult situations. It been very very difficult and lot of the times the youth wanted to do things and were completely discouraged by the way we were treated by the community. I think that everyone needs to think that the youth should be focused and involved with the community and if it is not you are going to lose a lot if you don't place priorities on the youths demands and this group should have a bigger voice in the overall opinion rather than the seniors or the adults or the Mobed's group. And this should be the place the voice comes from.
- XIX. Are the things that we said and are being recorded going to be discussed? What will happen regarding the views we have expressed?
- XX. I would like to thank you the committee for providing us the time here and the opportunity and listening to our views. We have had a productive interaction in my opinion and difference in opinion. Me being here as youth and the youths participation has provided feedback to the youth regarding the concepts. We may not agree on everything the committee has presented, however it has provided us the opportunity to voice our views.
- XXI. I disagree regarding the recommendation on placing a higher priority on the youth because look at the presence here, there is 20 youths here out of the entire OZCF youth members and this is a really poor representation. There is such a small representation of youth who are all members, but nobody is here to indicate our intention. So maybe we are one small group and maybe the seniors, mobed's and adult group are all going to say yes we agree and priority should be on that, as that is what the membership wants. If the youth isn't taking an active role in OZCF then we don't get a say. People don't come out so we shouldn't have a higher priority or ranking on what happens, so we are not supporting the OZCF. We donate probably the least amount to OZCF. We donate the least amount of time to OZCF. And we come out to the least number of events. That is unfortunate as I know there are people here who are the youth committee or are on the youth committee. So those are the only youth who are interested and it is important to have the opinions of the youths and all members of the OZCF and those that are making the effort to come out and vote are going to see their voice heard and this is how it all works.
- XXII. Why we can't have something like the ZSO? Why can't we build something similar here as we have so much land? We must not only focus on building a Place of Worship, but also other facilities so that we are able to have social events, sports, religion classes etc.
- XXIII. What he is trying to say is we are not raising the question about whether or what type of Agiary. The concern of the youth right now is that we don't think that people such as the youth or the people in the youth group did get a chance to participate and it's unfortunate, so this is the stage we are at right now. Now we are all saying that now what did we do and how



did this happen and Uncle Phil keeps reiterating that this is not to choose a building or a community center. The committee was set up to obtain the views of the community to build an Agiary / POW. And that's where I think the miscommunication is.

- XXIV. The whole reason why I am against is mostly as a result of seeing the LTFC study and its findings and recommendations and realizing that the youth opinions are being manipulated and I don't know how anyone can object to the fact that this was a biased study. How can the youth's opinion be in the study where there was no youth involved in the first place? If I form a group around my peers I can assure you that the results will be completely different and I am not saying that the group would be right but they would both be biased group. It was well represented by the youth and I am sorry to say that this group still isn't representative of the youth on this committee. We need to realize that as said before by a attendee, the youth are a small portion of the community that are not taking a serious part and then may be our concerns shouldn't be addressed and really than the community should be focusing on what the needs of the senior citizens are and that where I will put in more time to score that group. But we have to keep in mind that what is being told to the youth the last couple of years is that this entire foundation is for the youth. If that is not true than all the previous presidents were lying to me. And at every single BOD meeting I have fought for the youth and that is probably why the people on the BOD's didn't like me being on the BOD. And both the previous presidents on which I was a BOD member asked me to resign. It's ridiculous. And if the youths don't count then that is fine, but at the same time what someone said was wrong, this is a non-profit organization and it doesn't matter if I contribute \$0.00 and others contribute in thousand. My thought or opinion is as important as the other person, whether you think that is funny or not that's the way it should work. My vote matters just as much as anyone up here who has donated a lot of money for the organization and you have to take that into account.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUTH GROUP

Religious:

- I. I kind of agree and don't agree regarding building the POW. There are lots of varying opinions among the youth and it's really difficult to bring the youth together down here, however we are still trying. The previous youth committee chairs have both tried to have Humbandagi meetings etc., most of the youth are just not ready. We would therefore like someone older to start it and then we can tell the youth to come to these prayers. Then it is up to the youth if they want to come down here, but let's try.
- II. We have a house in there that can be just renovated and it's going to be a nice place with a beautiful view and it has capacity of 30 – 50 people. It's small but that's all that is really needed. I don't think we need to expand it anymore and spend any more resources on that house of worship, beyond what we have right now? So that it is built at full capacity until we see that there is actually a lot of demand for it?
- III. I recommend we build a place where we have to try to achieve both in the building that we build a multiple purpose facility such as a building where we have 50% of the structure



allocated to the Agiary and 50% for social events. I think that is the right way to go. We should be able to build and maintain something like that.

- IV. I think otherwise regarding the suggestion of building multi-purpose facility. We have 10 acres of land and we can build what we want over a period of time.
- V. What I am saying is we have a Place of Worship which is currently underutilized. Before we build a bigger Place of Worship we must begin by utilizing the current Place of Worship.
- VI. We are currently not using the room we have; let us begin using that room and then we can move to expand. Don't spend money and then expect people to attend.
- VII. I think we should complete a survey of the youth to find out where they stand regarding this Place of Worship.

Financial

- I. I believe that it would be a prudent use of the Community's funds to conduct a quantitative, in-depth investigation of the long term effects and feasibility of building an Atash Adaran at the ZRCC, possibly conducted by a third-party. Until a feasibility analysis is conducted, I do not believe it would be wise to dismiss this ambitious project, considering that there has been significant interest in pursuing it.
- II. To determine both the benefits and drawbacks of building an Agiary, our community must invest in an in-depth financial analysis of the feasibility of this project so that members are able to make an informed decision as to whether we should pursue building an Agiary.
- III. I would ask that you maintain your transparent decision making process and update the community as frequently as possible. Making your findings available on the OZCF website would allow those of us who are not living in the GTA to partake in the discussion. Encouraging intelligent discussion is in the best interest of all members of the OZCF and ensures that we are able to make informed decisions.

Social

- I. None

7 UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

None

Summary:

Number of Attendees: 20

Number of speakers: 31

Total number of questions / concerns / comments: 54. It is noteworthy that 44 of the 54 (81%) questions and comments were asked by five individuals ('Active Participants'). The remaining attendees asked 10 (19%) of the questions. The analysis below provides the breakdown on how the questions / concerns/ comments were raised in this group.



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Total number of recommendations: 10

Question Type	Total # of Questions	%	Active Participants Questions	% of Question Type	Other Participants	% of Question Type	Total
Concept	9	17	7	78%	2	22%	100
Religious	5	9	5	100%	0	0	100
Social	8	15	8	100%	0	0	100
Financial	8	15	6	75%	2	25%	100
Other	24	44	18	75%	6	25%	100
Total	54	100	44	81%	10	19%	100

Comments:

The review of the minutes and questions for the youth group indicates the following:

- 1) The youth attendees are divided on the key question of whether a Place of Worship is what they would like to see built.
- 2) The youth are divided about the kind of Place of Worship (Dadgah or Adaran) that we should build.
- 3) Would the building of an Atash E Adaran be too involved and some question the ability to be able to finance and maintain it in the future.
- 4) Some question the importance of the Zoroastrian religion and religion generally in the future.
- 5) There are many concerns that the youth have expressed regarding community activities.
 - a) They feel their voices are not heard by the other groups of the community.
 - b) There is a lack of support the youth receives among the other groups of the community.
 - c) Attendees were concerned about the lack of involvement of the youth as a whole viz a viz participation for social and religious events. They lament the lack of participation and involvement among the youth for the community and therefore feel they are not able to effectively communicate their views and let their voices and opinions be heard to the other groups in the community.
 - d) Why do we need to spend valuable resources building this Place of Worship and instead not a larger community hall or a community center?
 - e) Why is there a need for a proper Place of Worship when we already have two prayer halls (Toronto and Oakville)?
 - f) Is the committee's goal of building an Atash e Adaran to be able to have the capacity to ordain future priest to sustain the Place of Worship and our faith realistic and is that the way we must proceed.
 - g) Some questioned the limited participation of the youth and consideration of their views on the LTPC committee and therefore question the original recommendations. They also question



- the current committee's objectivity and feel that both committees (LTPC and POWAC) were stacked with members who are pro building a Place of Worship.
- h) Some feel their generation is not as religious as the elders. They feel differently about religion, customs and rituals. They are concerned there will not be enough people and resources available to maintain this place.
 - i) Suggested that the current prayer hall is not being used to its true potential and therefore the committee should refurbish the current prayer hall to accommodate the current needs regarding attendance and spiritual needs of members and then consider building a larger Place of Worship if there is a demand for it.
- 6) Some of them recommended:
- a) A less involved Place of Worship be built.
 - b) We build a structure that will accommodate the needs of the youth and the current generation. They recommend the building be a multiple purpose facility such as a building where we have 50% of the structure allocated to the Agiary and 50% for social events.
 - c) We conduct a quantitative, in-depth investigation of the long term effects and feasibility of building an Atash Adaran at the ZRCC, by a third-party.
- 7) The youth agree with the committee's recommendations regarding the Terms of Reference and the Rules of Entry to the Place of Worship. They agree that this is required with the changing time and our willingness to adapt to our societal needs.

In summary this was a very involved, vocal and active group of attendees with some voices dominating the meeting.

The attendees can be segmented into two groups.

The first group being completely against building the Place of Worship and what they believe is not a productive use of substantial financial resources of the community and having to do anything with religion. This group is concerned about the single minded focus the other groups in the community have regarding building a Place of Worship. They feel the youth voice was not properly represented or heard in the committees that were set up to determine the future of this organization. This group of youth is probably largely the generation that was born in Canada and has a different and differing view of religion and its importance in the future sustainability of our religion. They are concerned about the financial burdens they will be left with for them to maintain a Place of Worship which they feel fewer and fewer of the current group of youngsters believe in or want. They question the relevance of the Zoroastrian religion and religion generally.

The second group of youth is largely open to the concept of having a Place of Worship and value the importance of having such a Place of Worship. They question if we need to build an Atash E Adaran to continue our faith and religion. These are youngsters who were mostly born in India, Pakistan or Iran and have been exposed to visiting an Agiary prior to immigrating to Canada. They would like to see a consecrated Place of Worship built without it being too involved whereby it may place financial and maintenance burdens on them. They would like to see a financial plan. This group thinks that in order for



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their children to have a sense of religion and an identity as a Zoroastrian they see the need for building this Place of Worship if our religion is to truly survive. They are generally agreeable to the concept of ordaining priests to be able to maintain the continuity of our religion.

The youths as a group agree that there is difficulty in getting youth involved in the community, socially or religiously. The attendees acknowledge the poor attendance and involvement at the Town Hall, in spite of the committee's efforts at announcing this event and requesting participation via various mediums such as facebook; email blast etc. The attendees present were largely members who have tried over the years as youth committee members or chairs to involve youth in the community's affairs. They acknowledge that this lack of participation is restricting their voices from being heard among the other community group members. They urged their fellow youth to increase their involvement and participation in the community's affairs in order for their views and opinions to be taken seriously.

The youth agree with the committee recommendations regarding rules of entry into the Place of Worship and the fact that we are attempting to adapt to the societal changes of our times.



Appendix C – Seniors 60+

Seniors Group – Town Hall Meeting

Summary of Questions / Concerns / Comments / Recommendations

1. CONCEPT (Type of Fire and Structural Concept)

- I. I agree we do need a Place of Worship, that's the one thing that defines us. Building a recreational facility is not what necessarily makes us a Parsi / Zoroastrian. I think we need a Place of Worship as it is special. Whether we decide to consecrate POW and fire etc., or we be practical and decide to build what is within our reach and that is achievable. Unfortunately we don't have a system where we are required to go to a church or a mosque, where we pass the tin around and there is culture of donating or giving something monthly. We just have an annual gala where we try to raise money. Besides that we do not have regular donations etc. We need to be therefore having enough to build something and then be able to maintain it.
- II. I echo my wife and the thinking of some of the members. When we set up OZCF I was one of the original Board members and our mandate was to build a Place of Worship. I personally don't understand why we are taking so long and 3 and 4 years of discussions have come and gone as that is part of our mandate and this is how we separated ourselves from ZSO in the first place. Having said that the other very important point I believe is the fact that having these discussions about whether we should have a hall, senior's home or gym. All those things we can find in our community in Canada everywhere. A Place of Worship is something we don't have and you will not find it if we don't make it today. So all this discussion is really academic and I think it's what we set up OZCF in the first place for and I think we should really go ahead.
- III. The discussion regarding the type of Agiary, I agree with the Atash e Dadgah concept as it is more do able. If it is matter of cost and that is what we are debating today, than obviously the Atash e Dadgah would be the cheapest and most practical solution. It appears to me that if we spend the money and make it such (future proof it) as an Atash e Adaran then really what is left is the prayers that the mobed's have to do. At this point I think we have the largest community of mobed's available because of the 1ST generation of mobed's in the system right now and in more than 10 or 20 years those mobed's will be the only ones available and if the present higher majority of mobed's available today cannot manage it then really how do we expect the future generation of Dasturji's to perform these prayers. It will be virtually impossible for them if you guys can't do it today. So really if it's not going to be done in terms of prayers than what is the point in building the building with the Atash E Adaran type facilities. You will never have the human resources to complete this phase and build the foundation for the building only if there is future manpower to complete this phase



- or manage this. Otherwise what's the point in building something that can never be accomplished in the first place?
- IV. You did describe the different types of fires; of course the Atash e Behram is just not practical whether in Canada, India or Iran. You have to explain to the community what is required to maintain this place, especially the Atash e Adaran where you shall require praying all the five Gahs. Are we taking into consideration that the next generation of youths are going to sacrifice themselves being here and pray for 5 Gahs? We cannot just rely on our elderly priests, who have somehow already done their duty for the community. It is ok for the priest to come for certain days and pray. But you don't accept someone to come 24 hrs. a day. You should explain that to the community, as to what's required between Atash e Dadgah and Atash e Adaran?
- V. What is required to maintain the Atash e Adaran?
- VI. The first time we tried this project was in 1994. We have done all the ground work at the time; we did the survey, plans, costing etc. to consecrate an Atash e Adaran. Since 1994 it has been taken up 3 to 4 times. The last was 2 years ago, when another committee was started and everything again, the plans, everything is in place. What I want to say is let's go another step ahead. Everything is there; whatever you need is there in my file, because I have been associated with it for the past 20 years. The next step is the Atash e Adaran because what we have is a Dar E Mehr which is similar to Atash e Dadgah, only thing different is we have not consecrated the building, so we have that, let's go ahead and do something instead of just talking.
- VII. My personal opinion is that the Place of Worship should have the top most priority above everything else. When you were talking about Atash e Adaran, why do you want an Atash e Adaran as it will further delay the plans for building an Atash e Dadgah? I would very much think that the Atash e Dadgah should be the first priority.
- VIII. I want to congratulate the committee, because what I see you doing is you are making something concrete for our future and for the future of our children and by building something like this you are giving them something to hold onto and it will make them feel I belong there. The other thing is with the change that everybody has mentioned. The narrowness being gone, with being urban, I think the children will change when we change and that others around us will change. It has to be that's how it works. So when we change, the youth will change and they will become interested.
- IX. I just want to thank the committee on a fantastic job, we understood the concept now and I did understand what you are trying to achieve. I am totally for the Adaran as I would think if you want the religion to go forward in North America you absolutely need the Navar's to come out from this place and therefore we need to build this place, because if you have this facility in Canada and North America than you will see a lot of Navar's happening in Canada and North America.
- X. I agree in theory with a larger Place of Worship, but whether it is feasible to have a level 2 consecrated building and fire should be deferred until the cost study has been determined. If



there are so many Agairies in Bombay functioning perfectly without being consecrated, can we put the money towards a better use?

- XI. What I want to ask really is that it sounded like a very complex thing; do you think our future generation, who are such influenced Canadians, would really take a position or take a stand on this and agree? For the future wouldn't it be a better idea if we have to expand the hall and it would serve that purpose for the community, because I can't see one of our youngsters in the future taking advantage and using knowledge regarding the religion.

2 RELIGIOUS AND RITUALS

- I. Am I right in saying that in Iran the priest is not there at night? The fire is just covered up and the priest comes first thing in the morning.
- II. Am I right in saying that in Iran anyone can go to an Agiary (anyone means non Zoroastrians)?
- III. When you were giving your presentation you mentioned you already have a Yasna Gah. What does that mean?
- IV. How do the Navar ceremonies currently happen in Iran? Is it a similar process to what is happening in India and how they are different and how are they ordaining the priest?
- V. Regarding the comment that the community has failed in educating our children etc. I think part of the reason is because we don't have an Agiary, when we grew up we always had the Agiary and that itself brought us up unconsciously as Zoroastrians, which our kids do not have here and therefore cannot relate to it the way we did. So having one is important. We have beaten this to death and it seems that we are having paralysis of analysis in the community and it is almost 20 years and 4 or 5 such reports and democratic ways and enough is enough so lets conclude on this and applaud this committee for the work and move to the next important steps in the process to figure out the financing as much of the decision required today will depend on the financial aspect.
- VI. I am more spiritual than I am religious. Religion represents the organized aspect, institutions which can press people into a mold. Hence, doctrines, or guidelines, need to be examined and evolved rather than followed doggedly.
- VII. Some of the views expressed today by those who consider themselves devout Zoroastrians, are unwittingly practicing aspects of other religions. E.g. Women, who do not enter a Place of Worship because they are menstruating, are also the same women who wear saris and teelos – which is an adaptation from the Hindu religion/culture. Yet people are aghast if a Parsi bride is not wearing a sari and believe saris are associated with our religion.

3 SOCIETAL CHANGES AND ADAPTATION

- I. Would a non-Zoroastrian be allowed to enter the Adaran?
- II. You advised that only 20 youth turned up for the town hall, I think that we should take consideration of their views. If you are thinking that we can pay \$50K or \$60k to get a



moved from outside here to start and hope that this generation will continue, what if they decide not to. I am not being negative. I think that this thing should be really considered; otherwise if one mistake has been committed, we might commit another mistake.

- III. I was thinking about this regarding entry into Atash e Adaran and you have indicated that the Non- Zoroastrians can visit. Can they actually visit the hall where the fire is enthroned? Will they be allowed in? I am asking because many of our children are going to be married to non-Zoroastrians, so would their spouses and their children be allowed into this POW? What about concerns from Zoroastrians in India etc. (Entry in POW for Non – Zoroastrians)
- IV. We need to be cognizant that many other religions globally are going through transformations because of outdated dogmas and have less attendance than ever before.
- V. We need to acknowledge that ‘Youth’ around the world is referred to those under the age of 18, not up to the age of 35. Therefore we need to hear the voices of “Young Adults” and not be dismissive of their sentiments. We can all attest to the fact that each generation is becoming rapidly more advanced (smarter) than the last.
- VI. I agree with comments regarding educating non – Parsi members. Let’s demonstrate we are a progressive culture, it is not merely enough to allow non – Zoroastrians to visit. I am sure most Parsi families residing in North America for any length of time, has at least one member who is a non – Parsi. We need to embrace other cultures, so in turn they embrace us.

4 FINANCIAL

- I. Will you be talking about trying to future proofing this thing? So that we make provisions that in the future if we decide to have this we will have enough money to be able to have our own mobed’s etc. and build our Place of Worship. What is the cost of future proofing this, because it seems to me, we have two options; either we build a POW or we decide to future proof this so that we can take it to the next level, because it will require cost to further expand? The next question I have is yes a Place of Worship or Church is what we said we would build in our letter patent. However my question is will be able to raise enough money to build this? Therefore we have to be practical and build as per the needs of the generation today. If the next generation wants to take it to the next step or level, I am assuming they will want it real bad and they will raise the money and then take it to the next step. So I am back to my first question and future proofing this is going to involve a lot more money.
- II. I understand that there is an aim to build an Atash e Adaran. Is there an initial cost involved today to set this thing up, to enable it to be an Atash e Adaran in the future or is there going to be additional cost and if so what would be the additional cost?
- III. I don’t think we can make an informed judgment on what we want to build (AD or AA) unless we know in round terms what it’s going to cost, would it be twice as much to build an Atash e Adaran versus say building an Atash e Dadgah?



- IV. In terms of an Atash e Dadgah today can you quantify the space etc.? Is it going to need a 1000 sq. ft. and to future proof it to make an Atash e Aderan you need a 1500 sq. ft. facility. So that will give us some idea and assist us in deciding what we want to build?
- V. I have a concern regarding maintenance and I would recommend and prefer that the committee consider having an endowment fund so that whatever future expenses, especially when we are going to pay for the mobed's, if that is being taken care off, I am all for that.
- VI. From the past experiences I think we should really remember that pledges of finances are one thing and commitment is another thing.
- VII. Disappointed with the meeting, it seems to me that we are having the same discussion, still talking at the concept phase. I thought we got past it; when you introduced this thing, I thought that it had already been decided that yes we need some sort of POW. What we would be doing today would be something with deliberations and options and here are the differences in the capital and operational cost of what this would be. We could then decide what we can afford and what we would like to have and make an informed decision. We haven't had that, we are still debating today whether we should have this POW and then in the same breath you are saying, you know everything should be on the table and we should have an open forum. I think what has happened is that the community has spoken that they need a POW and some people are trying to push forward their agenda that we should have consecrated POW. The community has spoken, I think they have said we don't want to go down that path, maybe we just want to get on with what we can achieve, which is the Atash D and as you said the community will evolve and the next generation if they have the interest and if they have fire in their belly they will try and take it forward. Now we are just coming back because we are not getting the answer that some people want and therefore we continue to keep having this discussion. I think that the community has said lets have some kind of a balanced approach and try to get an AD which is what we can afford today and also at the same time expand the recreational side and have a balanced approach that will also bring in the younger generation, because they are not interested in this sort of a philosophical discussion. As you said 20 people attended for the youth discussion and one of them circulated an email, where he is echoing what is being said from the floor. We keep having the same discussion and this is depressing. I don't know how many times we have had the same discussion.

5 OTHERS GENERAL QUESTIONS

- I. What is the consensus for the two previous meeting mobed's and youth?
- II. We do really need to put in your plans how to really encourage the younger generation to be interested spiritually about our religion. What we have to provide them to say yes, forget your video games and what not and at least come here for some time.



- III. There was a concern that we are going to build something and leave a burden for the future generation and so on. If our ancestors or grandfathers back home thought that way we would never have any libraries, agairies, dungarwadi's, because as we grow and somebody mentioned here already that as we grow our spirituality increases and we start leaning towards religion. Because the younger generation have many priorities such as education and raising a family, as they grow the spiritual inclination and maturity will come and that should not be a concern.
- IV. We came here for the Agiary and how did we come to this mandate that the Agiary is the first thing we want to build? We should now send out a ballot again to confirm if the community wants a Hall or a senior's home etc. or they want an Agiary so then you will have a clear idea about what the seniors and the juniors want.
- V. I just wanted to know when the mandate was given to the committee to consider building of Atash e Dadgah or Atash e Adaran was it for a consecrated Place of Worship.
- VI. What i am saying is that half the group who voted 3 years back (LTPC) for the Agiary could have changed their opinion and at that time many seniors wanted a Place of Worship and they could have changed their opinion now from what I have gathered. I think we should go back as a whole and revisit the whole idea. If only 20 youth attended the meeting and are not comfortable with having a Place of Worship than we must have one meeting with all groups and have an open discussion about it.
- VII. In order to preserve our community and get the youth bothered and involved in the community, we need a balanced approach. We certainly need an Atash e Dadgah or Atash e Adaran. But I would recommend simultaneously considering building a recreational facility for the kids, such as a hall and other facilities which will increase participation by all members and all sectors of the Zoroastrian community. We need a balanced approach.
- VIII. Majority of the committee is 60+ years old.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM SENIORS GROUP

Religious:

- I. Please explain to the community thoroughly what is the difference between an Atash e Dadgah and Atash e Adaran? Also explain what is required from a religious requirements standpoint to maintain them.
- II. We should have a program that the future mobed's that we have created here can we send them back home (India) to train at our cost to be fully ordained priest and who can perform the inner liturgical ceremonies, so that they will be able to train our future mobed's here too.
- III. One comment, in the future, may be 30 to 50 years from now we are still working with the language that has been dead for so many years. Is there any possibility that we can



bring an understandable language for the younger group, instead of still looking at the language in the Avesta that we do not understand?

- IV. The committee in its report consider outlining steps /plans to encourage the younger generation to be interested spiritually about our religion and generally be interested in religion.

Social

- I. We must simultaneously consider building a recreational facility for the kids, such as a hall and other facilities which will increase participation by all members and all sectors of the Zoroastrian community.
- II. Zoroastrian youth should be raised to practise “Good words, Good thoughts, Good Deeds” in their interactions, rather than leaving them a legacy of an elaborate structure that may stand empty.

Financial

- I. We must ensure we work on future proofing this whole project.
- II. We should not only build the Agiary but look at alternative sources of maintaining the Agiary, which could be commercial activity, i.e. Plaza or Banquet Hall etc. Re the Agiary question, as a secondary cost we should have such plans now so we can have perpetual source of funds.
- III. I would recommend and prefer that the committee consider having an endowment fund so that whatever future expenses, especially when we are going to pay for the mobed’s, if that is being taken care off, I am all for that.

7 UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

None

Summary:

Number of Attendees: 48 to 52 (Not everyone registered)

Number of speakers: 19

Total number of questions / concerns / comments: 39

Total number of recommendations: 9

Question Type	Number of Questions	%
Concept	11	28
Religious	7	18
Social	6	15
Financial	7	18
Other	8	21
Total	39	100



Comments:

The review of the minutes and questions for the seniors group indicates the following:

1. There is an acceptance of the concept and the process being recommended by the committee of building an Atash e Adaran as the first consecrated Place of Worship in North America, to help sustain the Zoroastrian faith. There is some skepticism regarding building of the Adaran e Adaran as some of them feel that that this will delay the building of The Place of Worship as it will cost more to build and Atash e Adaran. The concern related to building the Atash e Adaran is largely financial and that this would slow progress down. There are two secondary concerns and they are 1) Will this be something that the younger generation wants? 2) Will there be enough funds to maintain a Atash e Adaran type facility? There is an acceptance and a general consensus among the seniors group that to be able to maintain our faith the community must have the capability to be able to ordain priest in Canada and North America to successfully sustain our religion on this continent.
2. There is agreement that a Place of Worship is needed for the following reasons:
 - To provide for the religious and spiritual needs of the community
 - To provide a religious focal point for the community, which has been lacking
 - To provide the younger generation with a sense of religion and a sense of Zoroastrian identity.
 - To rekindle the spirit of religion, provide education on our rituals and customs to adults, youths and children.
 - To help create the enthusiasm and belief in the younger generation viz a viz religion as this has been missing.
 - There is a general acceptance that we need to change with the times we live in and adapt. The members were comfortable with the Rules of Entry that the committee has come up with.
3. There is agreement that this must be achieved by ensuring that the will of the youth and the socio religious needs of the continent we live in are acknowledged and that we accept this change. The terms of reference as explained and the rules of entry as recommended by the committee were largely accepted. There were no concerns coming from this group regarding how these rules would be enforced.
4. There were many questions around the cost, financials, planning aspects of the project and the ability of the community to maintain this place in the future, once it has been built. There were questions and recommendations regarding future proofing of this whole project so that financial burdens are not passed on to the next generation. Some of the members were disappointed that we continue to discuss the conceptual need of the POW, rather than moving on and preparing the financial estimates so that the facility can be built.

In summary the concept was well accepted however some felt the Atash e Dadgah should be the first priority and we leave the future or next steps to the next generations; unless off-course full financing can be developed now. This was largely because they felt this would need additional finances and would delay the project. There were others who felt strongly that the way forward should include the ability to



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ordain priest and proceed now. They felt that this would result in having more families taking the opportunity to let their youngsters become priests as the facilities are easily available and it would become a less costly venture for these families, compared to travelling to India. There is general agreement regarding the recommendation for change and adapting to the society we live in. The rules of entry as explained by the committee were mostly acceptable. There was a sense of acceptance to the inevitable changes (social) that will have to be accommodated to have the necessary buy-in of the younger generation. The concept and discussion around the type of fire and the steps involved to move from Atash e Dadgah to Atash e Adaran fire were well understood by this group.

There were recommendations from the seniors; similar to the ones that came from the mobed group that this committee recommends within its reports ideas around how the community in general and the youth in particular can be kept religiously engaged on a continuous basis.



Appendix D- Adult (35 – 60)

Adult Group – Town Hall Meeting

Summary of Questions / Concerns / Comments / Recommendations

1. CONCEPT (Type of Fire and Structural Concept)

- I. If it is not actually feasible at this point to have an Atash e Adaran type fire, what is the purpose of actually having anything as we already have a Dadgah Type fire? We have the Dadgah fire which we don't maintain and does not require a priest to be available 24 hours day. What is the purpose if it is not feasible of doing what we are actually attempting to do?
- II. So we are going to build the building which is going to be consecrated and then later on consecrate the fire?
- III. I like the idea very much of the Atash e Adaran coming up?
- IV. There are three types of fire and what are the rules regarding entry into the POW for all three types as we have folks who are married outside the community?
- V. My question tags on to the other questions, so out of the Atash e Dadgah and Atash e Adaran what is the difference in terms of operating them. First of all I don't see why we dismiss the Atash e Adaran. Second question what is the difference when we are we getting the Atash e Adaran consecrated? Are we changing or bending any rules that may be there from India, Iran or somewhere else? Are we changing something and for the maintenance of this thing (Atash e Adaran) what do we have to do? Is there something that we need to do to maintain for years to come and if there is no one here then what happens?
- VI. You said the doctrines are not going to change and that I understand. Of those that we are going to have to change etc. are we missing something that the membership needs to know, a lot of this goes to the financial ability and having said that we need to have a priest in the future having to maintain this place 24 hours a day so it will need finances. The second thing is finances, is there something that we need to be aware of e.g. we are going to say need \$50k a year to maintain the place, to keep it going and so forth and out of those are things (requirement) if we have to slack of on something is it a problem?
- VII. I need clarity regarding what Dr. Bagli said that what we are talking about here is different levels of sacred building to house a not very sacred fire as of now, which will become sacred in a couple of years according to what the committee is saying, and that don't we already have that at the ZSO, could you please explain that?
- VIII. I am struggling to understand the difference between the consecration of building and fire? What would be the difference between consecrating the building and the fire?
- IX. What you are saying is that in India all Agiaries are not Atash e Adaran and they are Atash e Dadgah in most places, however they still have fire maintained 24 hours by a priest. So how would we know the difference as to which Agiary is Atash e Adaran or Atash e Dadgah?



- X. What are we going to do in Canada? We are looking to start the process of building an Atash e Adaran?
- XI. As far as the consecration of building and the fire and the subsequent maintenance and of this (Atash e Adaran) what will be those rules, laws, regulations, which are not going to violate the religion. These are sort of the things before we start the process we know that we have to do this and or this is going to change things?
- XII. I am confused regarding consecrated building. It is a one step process to consecrate the building or do we continuously need to do things to keep it consecrated?
- XIII. An Agiary as you said could be a Atash e Behram, Atash e Adaran or Atash e Dadgah and that is fine and there are so many Agiaries in India that are not holding consecrated fire. Those Agiaries which do not have consecrated fire, they still have a priest, they still do the buoy ceremonies etc. I can give you an example of Agiary in Mhow, we did muktad and buoy ceremony and had a 24 hour fire maintained by a Priest and therefore my comment is perhaps what we should think about is before we take the proviso of building an Atash e Adaran it would be somewhat of an experimental thing that we continue to perform all the duties/ ceremonies as it is a Atash a Adaran without having a consecrated fire to give the feeling to the community that it is a Agiary but could be a Atash e Adaran without having to do much about it later and get it done from the beginning.
- XIV. When we talk about consecrating the building do you consecrate the whole building or only the Kebla? We are saying that any person could come, but it is a consecrated place? So the building is consecrated so we can allow any non-Zoroastrian to attend? Will you only consecrate the Kebla or the whole building?
- XV. I disagree with the concept of consecration of the fire. What I want to say is whether you proceed for the plans for the Atash e Adaran you said that the doctrine has to be intact and one of the important parts of doctrine is the physical purity of a person. This is not with reference to non-Zoroastrian, this is in relation to our own people, so when a woman is not in the purest state for certain days in the month and when you are occasionally not pure. All these principles and doctrine are not changeable and if that is not practiced by our own people, where is the value in consecrating a building and the fire. We are only looking at the social side of things, I am not opposed to the idea however it is fact that our own ladies are not paying attention to this so then how are you going to ensure that a non-Zoroastrian person entering the POW is going to maintain or ensure that she is physically in a pure state. The point that I am trying to make is that we are not practicing ourselves this and how are we going to control the persons who have no idea about our rules and how are we going to then get the spiritual experience that we are looking for. The younger generation is not exposed and therefore they could not care much about the spiritual purity that is required to attend the POW.
- XVI. In Bombay, India Dar E Mehr's have full time mobed's even if the fire is not consecrated are we planning to do something like in India, so that we have a full time fire at the POW. So that we feel that we wanted an Agiary and we have it now with a 24 hour fire?



- XVII. When we are talking about the consecration of the fire, there has been one precedent that I know of where a consecrated fire was transported by air to India, is that possibility being considered of bringing a consecrated fire from India?
- XVIII. It just occurred to me having this open and transparent conversation, let me ask you has anyone over here and I see most of them come originally from India. Has anyone of you been to any of these meetings for building an Atash e Adaran in India. No. Because there were people like Sethna and these philanthropist who decided on their own to build these POW for us. So you have been given an opportunity, where you have expressed your view but to come into the fold of this thing and someone mentioned we have never allowed anybody from outside before and why do you have to now. There are reasons for it, nothing to do with righteousness, honesty or nothing to do with our religious faith. It was just promises made when we entered and took a step into India. That brings me to the final point and this is why we are having these conversations at our events. We as a generation that is my generation and the generation before me, we have failed to transmit this knowledge onto our children. I haven't been able to do so and my parents have not been able to. All we did was check on whether our children did their Kusti's. But the essence of the prayers and rituals were not explained. The facts I am sorry to say the questions and opinions I see at these meeting sometimes have to do because of a lack of knowledge. Therefore as a group we must first get our act together, get ourselves knowledgeable about what we are looking for and then pass it onto our children. To do that we need a central focal point and that would be that POW or Atash e Adaran.
- XIX. What were the mobed's views on the rules of the new facility, how it is going to be run, things like that. We are all talking mostly from non mobed families. I don't know what was the mobed group's view regarding running of the facility and who should be allowed in it and what not?

2. RELIGIOUS AND RITUALS

- I. The people who are attending to the Kebla, do they have to be Martab and do they have to be Navars as well?
- II. For maintaining a fire for 24 hrs. Is the intention to have Navars or can a Martab do it? Would that be possible for the Atash e Adaran or do we only need that for the Atash e Behram?
- III. What are the doctrines that we have to follow and who establishes them, because our community does not have structure or constitution or a rule book to follow? Who determines these doctrines and what we have to follow and what we need to know before we start the whole process?
- IV. My question is most of us have got kids who are young priests; have we thought about how we are going to get them to handover the religion to the next generation of priests? We are building the AD or AA but are we getting them ready to take over from the current mobed's? Are the young priests ready to take over and accept this responsibility?



- V. Rules of entering and practicing regarding consecrated POW: Would there be requirement to do a Kusti at that stage and if there is then we are going to face the complication of Non Zoroastrians coming and how are they going to be cleaning and even the Zoroastrians who may not want to practice that aspect of the religion. How would that be integrated into the picture?
- VI. We are looking at following this very lofty and much enriched project of consecration of building and subsequently of the fire. It is a very emotionally charged proposition. I mean everybody who is pro building a POW would feel a strong surge of emotional and kind of strong feeling invoked in ourselves to envisage and to eventually have a consecrated building and consecrated fire on this continent which has not happened so far. Having said that though because of the inherent complications, possibilities of dilemmas are faced regarding purification and other rituals that might come up, I am wondering as to why in that case then would we be wanting to go through such a huge and expensive and a potentially forever needing to be financially viable proposition of consecrating the building and fire subsequently, if we can achieve this let's say by having a decent building with a fire in it, not in the current house. But having a good structure built and having a fire house in it and people can attend and come for their spiritual solace and whichever way they would want to practice it. Some may want to do their Kusti and some may want to just pray. Some may want to just sit near the fire, whichever or whatever way it might be. So why do we need to go through all the hassle and the whole procedure of doing this consecrated building and have a POW without adding the consecration because it will definitely have a lot of baggage or a lot of dilemma's. Just why not build a POW. Because having come across the definition of consecration, it means making a place sacred for some and we don't want to restrict people who will enter the POW, so why then go through a process of consecration, just because we have to. Why not have a POW as best as we can and leave it at that?
- VII. We talked about getting mobed's here and up to now our tradition has been division of the Athornan vs the Behdin's. Do we have enough Athornan families to create enough mobed's? Are we going to change that tradition? Is it part of dogma or is it part of tradition? If you are going to change, are you going to allow Behdin's to become a mobed? Extending that are we going to allow a female to become a priest? We don't have the tradition and will that happen?

3. SOCIETAL CHANGES AND ADAPTATION

- I. I am not talking about controlling or policing state of purity; (woman) I am just pointing out the facts that if our younger generation hasn't had enough exposure to it as it has not been ingrained in them then how are they going to follow it?
- II. When you explained the rules to enter POW you did not mention about this rule regarding woman in menses? Are we going to include that in the rules?
- III. We talk about change and adapting to change, this new generation of priests are not completely aware of the way things are to be done. They understand what the doctrine, rituals and traditions are. Are they willing to follow that? Is that going to change how we run our



- religion here? It's a confused lot; I am just saying we need to think about it; yes we do all this and it is a fantastic opportunity, I will get my spiritual POW. But I need this generation of priest to get a proper understanding through the NAMC or through our association and they need to have a balance between change and keeping our rituals and everything else. This is my concern.
- IV. I feel personally it is a great move forward and ultimately it has to have the buy-in of the community and assuming we have the finances and all that in place. The buy-in will come because some people have different thoughts of how the Atash e Adaran should function and some will think, if you are going to allow all that then it is not a Agiary, some will say it is a change of time and will accept and until this concept is clear as to what we are going to do and how this thing will function, how will people buy into this thing (concept) that yes I believe that this is Atash e Adaran that I am looking for or that this is just a building as it is too diluted and this does not meet my needs spiritually or what I am looking for. So who is going to lay down if the project goes forward that this is how we are going to observe the rules so that we have the buy-in of the community. If there is no buy-in then why are we even going ahead?
- V. I have been living in this community for a long time and I will say if you build the POW they will come. I have lived here for 40 years and I have taught religious classes and the thing I am saying over and over and over again, if we build the place they (Adults, Youth and Children) will make the effort to come.
- VI. The concern I also had was the education of the interfaith couples, maybe we are not good at that thing but I think there is a strong probability that one of our child will be married to a Canadian and I think they should also be educated. E.g. Menstruating women are not allowed in the POW etc. These are things that are taught in other religions, so are we hiding behind our religion and saying it is exclusive and therefore restricted only to a few of us as a religion. So it I think it is time to move ahead. Regarding the consecration of the fire temple I can see it happening, I think there is two points that need to be made that first of all we build the building and then the fire should be consecrated. And I still feel that most of us feel the fire must be like in India, I was raised in Africa. In India I don't think the outside person is allowed to come in to view the fire and that is what is in our minds. It also happened in Africa and none of the Non Zoroastrians were allowed to come in. So are we changing in Canada and it looks like we are. Do we have to change them? Are there other points we have to make and think about, or are they just reserved for only the Zoroastrians? So those are the kinds of things you have to really think about.
- VII. We come to Canada and we change to start adapting to the NA society over here and leave what we were taught behind and we are leaving our religion also and changing because we feel that it is not going to work around here and so basically what you were saying is when the Agiary is made everybody is allowed inside, which we are basically not doing back home. So then what is the use of an Agiary and it should be just like a temple with just four walls in it and everybody is welcome inside the priest or whatever you know. Why are we making an expense and then leaving it forward for the younger generations to pay for it?



- VIII. We are changing according to people's needs over here basically, as we are growing over here and people want to change the religion basically. Why are we changing something that has been going on for years? All of a sudden we come to North America and now we want to change because this cannot happen or because we want people (non-Zoroastrians) inside or other communities want to come. If this was not done before and if our forefathers never did it who are we to do it now?
- IX. We are saying that from India to here we cannot change. But when we moved from Iran to India, we changed and therefore if we only followed what we were in Iran, we should still be speaking Farsi or Sanskrit. Time is changing and we need to change with them.
- X. I have been brought up this way because of my parents and it becomes so ingrained sometimes that you just can't help it. I just want to make one comment and then I will ask my question. I think what I see is a lot of people are talking about change, when we are talking about changing what we learnt in India and what we saw in Agiaries there and the concern that over the years things may get more and more diluted and we may even lose our religion or at least our fundamentals of what we have been taught over the generations. I think that's one of the concerns that everybody has, coming here in North America and we have worked out things alright here but we don't want to lose what we were taught back home. And we are talking about all these rules for entry for non zoros etc. into the facility we are concerned that we are now allowing others to come here and we are marrying outside the religion in many cases, but we are not allowing them to be part of us and then we have this facility we are separating ourselves or we are going to include, then our blood lines are going to be more and more and diluted. So I think that these are the concerns and how we are going to handle and deal with it and that will need some learning.
- XI. What were the mobed's views on the rules of the new facility, how it is going to be run, things like that. We are all talking mostly from non mobed families. I don't know what was the mobed groups views are re running about the facility and who should be allowed in it and what not?

4. FINANCIAL

- I. I want to know more about next steps and do we have timelines once we go from here? I think this is more about planning and education and obtaining community views. I am just wondering if we have considered the financial aspect and is it something that has been worked on or are we still working on them?
- II. My concern is that yes we are going to build this building and we are going to concentrate on getting a POW. Has PWAC also concluded how the building is going to be maintained, where the funds are going to come from and what the plans are for maintaining this building in the future? It would be a shame to build this building and then have it in a state of disrepair.



5. OTHERS GENERAL QUESTIONS

- I. Did anybody talk about the scores which you showed in the beginning? I want to know how the scores (LTPC) were created?
- II. You said there are non-consecrated fires in Mumbai - India, can you give me example of 3 three agairies which are not consecrated in Mumbai?
- III. I want to know what is the opinion of the other associations such as Fezana and other Canadian Associations as you had mentioned earlier that they were advised of this initiative. What is their position / feedback?

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ADULT GROUP

Religious:

- I. Education programs for youth, adults and the community in general related to religion.
- II. Some kind of a succession plan to prepare our young mobed's for the future to take over from the current set of mobed's.
- III. Look at the option of maintaining the fire in the Atash e Dadgah we build 24 hours a day by a priest, to give the community the feeling of an Atash e Adaran prior to the eventual consecration of the fire.
- IV. Younger priests must have training through the NAMC or through our association in rituals when performing religious ceremonies.

Social

- I. Education of interfaith couples important with regards to laws of purity and rituals when entering our POW.

Financial

None

6. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

- I. Input regarding mentioning rule (Woman in Menses) with the other rules as mentioned by the committee.

Summary:

Number of Attendees: 38 registered adults. 45 to 48 participants

Number of speakers: 24

Total number of questions / concerns / comments: 42

Total number of recommendations: 1

Question Type	Number of Questions	%
Concept	19	45
Religious	7	17
Social	11	26
Financial	2	5



Other	3	7
Total	42	100

Comments:

The review of the minutes and questions for the Adult group indicates the following:

1. There is an acceptance of the concept and the process being recommended by the committee of building an Atash e Adaran as the first consecrated Place of Worship in North America, to help sustain the Zoroastrian faith. There is a small fraction of the attendees who do not like the idea of the Adaran fire and are concerned the enforcement of the rules of entry (Purity, Kusti prior to entrance, and woman in menses) would be difficult to monitor and therefore feel that Atash e Dadgah should be built.
2. The rules of entry as explained by the committee were generally well accepted. This group is amenable to the change that is being recommended and they understand that this change is inevitable. There is however a very small minority that questioned the rules of entry and the recommendations.
3. There is agreement that a Place of Worship is needed for the following reasons:
 - To provide a religious focal point for the community, which has been lacking
 - To provide the younger generation with a sense of religion and a sense of Zoroastrian identity.
 - To provide for the religious and spiritual needs of the community
 - There is a general acceptance that we need to change with the times we live in and adapt. Most of the members were comfortable with the Rules of Entry that the committee has come up with.
4. There is agreement that the POW must be achieved by ensuring that the will of the youth and the socio religious needs of the continent we live in are acknowledged and that we accept this change. There were some concerns from a minority in this group regarding how these rules would be enforced.
5. There were some questions around the cost, financials, planning aspects of the project and the ability of the community to maintain this place in the future, once it has been built. There were recommendations regarding religious education of the community in general, the younger mobed's and that some kind of a succession plan be recommended by the committee to the Board of Directors to train our younger mobed's in rituals to take over from the current set of older mobed's.

In summary the concept as proposed by the committee was well accepted. This group was largely focused on obtaining clarity about the concept, religious and ritual and societal questions and seemed somewhat focused on financial challenges or future maintenance of the Place of Worship. There is general agreement regarding the recommendation for change and adapting to the society we live in other than the issue of women entering during their periods. The rules of entry as explained by the committee were



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mostly acceptable. The concept and discussion around the type of fire and the steps involved to move from Atash e Dadgah to Atash e Adaran fire were well understood by this group.

There were recommendations from this group some of which were similar to the ones that came from the mobed group and the seniors group that this committee recommend within its report ideas around how the community in general and the youth in particular can be kept religiously engaged on a continuous basis.

There was a recommendation that the consecrated Atash e Dadgah that is being built have a fire 24 hours a day manned by priest, as this will give the community the feel of an Atash e Adaran. The example of Atash e Dadgah's in India which have 24 hour fires maintained by a priest was provided.



Appendix E – Open Meeting

Open To All Age Group – Town Hall Meeting

Summary of Questions / Concerns / Comments Recommendations

1. CONCEPT (Type of Fire and Structural – Yasna and Bareshnum Gah)

- I. For the consecration process at OZCF that we are going to follow will they require any modifications compared to what is practiced now?
- II. This 1161 Yezshne and Vendidad and the Bareshnum ceremony can you just briefly explain to me what this is all about?
- III. I have a question which is related to my very first question, yes we are creating an ability to produce priest however if we do not have the support of the priest and the North American Community how are these priest going to get recognized ? For the purposes of producing priest how are we going to get accreditation? Presently both of our Athornan institutions in India have accreditation and therefore these priests and those priests are recognized throughout the Zoroastrian community, so all these questions come up in the mind?
- IV. For the consecration of the Place of Worship to do that we need just the priest initially to do the consecration of the building perhaps, and for that how are we going to get the priest from India in a state of ritual purity?
- V. My opinion is that OZCF as an organization has fought as the unifying force for the Parsi Zoroastrian organization, especially in the west end of the GTA, where the young members of the community have had a growing sense of belonging and a home for the future. I wouldn't want to see a consecrated POW or even a consecrated building. There are too many misunderstandings and it is becoming a little bit clearer to me now. This should not in any way degenerate into disunity and disharmony within this community.
- VI. I thought all the Places of Worship have to be consecrated? I think the question of building this Place of Worship should not even arise as when we bought this place the mandate was to build the POW first, before you build anything else? So then we should move forward only in that direction.
- VII. When we have the Atash E Dadgah can we ordain priest?
- VIII. The drawings that we have in the house right now can they not be used?
- IX. The better option (Atash E Adaran) says 8 priests to do the ceremonies. So then is the 8 priest effort a one-time effort to complete the consecration, or is this going to be an ongoing effort?
- X. Our existing priests here who officiate our navjotes, wedding and other ceremonies, can these priests perform those (consecration) ceremonies?
- XI. Let us say we are successful in reaching that stage (consecration of Atash E Adaran)? Will we be requiring more than one full time priest?



2. **RELIGIOUS AND RITUALS**

- I. What I have noticed is our priests are doing all the ceremonies and all that, but we need the community to at least come for the prayers and support them. I have seen and noted myself that it is not happening. So please come in large numbers for these ceremonies and support them not only physically but financially, that is the important factor. If the community cannot support these priests nobody can move forward. The organization itself cannot function if people don't come.
- II. My concern is more regarding the producing of priests. How are we going to set about getting accreditation to get those priests recognized by the total community?

3. **SOCIAL**

- I. We are talking about doing this for the youth. What is the real # of youth that is interested in getting this done for them versus say the seniors?
- II. Have you considered the demographic change of the society? You are saying I am doing it for myself, but if that younger generation is not there, we will have the ruins here.
- III. I understand that the committee would like to have priest locally ordained, but I want you to understand that our children at least my children are married outside of the religion and I am married outside of the religion. So how will you achieve this if you will not allow people like me or my wife or my children in? Because you need basically the community to want to maintain purity etc. How will you allow these people to come in and worship?
- IV. We already have one POW which has the same rules basically. Now if you are going to start ordaining priest, then you will say we will have different rules?
- V. Question starts when we start ordaining the priest? Are the rules of entry going to change at that time?
- VI. I am just of the very strong and passionate opinion that if we have the support not only of the local Zoroastrian community but even of the North American Zoroastrian community than we stand a better chance when representation is made even to the rest of the global Zoroastrian community, that we have some standing rather than we be perceived as just the OZCF family going ahead and deciding on their own.
- VII. My thing is that the Place of Worship is great so at least my kids can associate with it as opposed to a larger hall. If they think that our community OZCF has a large hall and that is the place to pray that is not what our religion is about. If we build a Place of Worship to me it is more important.
- VIII. Your chart regarding showing some improvement regarding 2017, in regards to that do you have any short term and long term goals as a committee? Do we have to wait till 2017 to show some improvement? Or do we have to do some changes right now to improve this situation?
- IX. I would like to know what the short and long Terms goals would be, so we can start evolving from there and then build upon that.
- X. I just want to clarify that there might be some youth that don't want a POW, but there are youth who want to have this Place of Worship. So I just want to make sure that everyone understands and we just had a youth bowling night on Friday and we were actually discussing



this and there are some youth who do want this place and they are very adamant about it and they do understand that there are some who do not want it at all.

4. FINANCIAL

- I. Can you shine any light on cost, what we are planning, how big a Place of Worship can we build, where on the property we are going to build on the property, is it going to be separate from the hall?
- II. One has to realize that the longer we wait the cost is also increasing and we are unable to do our work, and what desires we have. And the same thing has happened at ZSO from 2 million to 8 million that is very substantial, so what you can do now you have to do now.
- III. There are other institutes and they bring priests from back home. Why do we have to pay them \$50K?
- IV. I think the finances can come. The community has enough wealth, I think it is just a matter of putting their hands in their pocket and donate?
- V. When you say that we don't want to burden the community, I want you to realize all of you that there is no place built with cash money upfront. We have to take certain amount of mortgage which can be replenished every year by the community, because there is no cash available. I think that the mortgage is not a burden; it is a responsibility which will go to the future generation, who has to carry on the functioning of the organization.
- VI. You know the thing that has not happened with other organizations (meant ZSO), are you going to entice those donors to put their dollars into this institute?
- VII. My key concern is that it will be up to this generation to lay the ground work for the younger generation and is there an endowment fund in place for the maintenance of this POW? It is this generation along with the young presently to somehow allay the fears of the youth to address their concerns regarding somehow the financial responsibility falling on them at a later stage. I think where the crux of the matter is coming to is finance and I think it will be this generation in a certain sense that donates the money and put up the funds. It is us that are responsible for doing that. Just like in India when the donor built POW and ensured there were funds in place for the future generation to maintain the POW's. Otherwise it will cost us big time and that is a burden the young will not want.

5. OTHERS

- I. My recommendation to this committee as well as the BOD is that we should seek out support from the rest of North American Associations and even from all Zoroastrian associations in the GTA area?
- II. In the presentation you showed us three graphs there. Are you going to update this graph (LTPC) as part of the report that you present to the community? My question is if that was to be collated with the present thing that you guys are doing, I am sure that you will come up with something very good. It is misleading because that information has to be upgraded and collated somehow, because that has got no meaning at the moment and I am telling you my



reason for it so you understand it and the people who heard it may understand it? My point is only that the LTFC graph and this report must be collated. That is what I am saying.

- III. You pointed out that between Dundas and Burnhamthorpe Road that we see facing up here that development is already being started. Up here we have the transitional and then industrial etc. The thing is that Phil, Burnhamthorpe Road is no longer going to be Burnhamthorpe Road, at the moment it is an arterial road. The new road is coming up just north of us in actually the next intersection, which is going to be called the Burnhamthorpe Road. This is going to be transferred as it is a regional road right now. So what is going to happen is the moment it is transferred to the Town as a local road or subdivision road, we will form part of that and all the servicing in the south end will be passing through here. I mean you have to have a loop. So what I am saying is that thing that we are trying to look at should not be misleading to the people who will make the final decision outside of the committee or at the BOD level. So that's the reason why I am questioning you is because it is very important that that thing comes out very clearly and you mentioned yourself and that the services will come here 17 years down the line. These are all figures thrown around and which are really misleading, simply because the moment this road becomes a subdivision road, the entry and access to everything to the north side which is our side and the south side would be identically the same and quoting you, you said that as soon as the development starts coming from Dundas Street to up here, let's say this becomes Old Burnhamthorpe Road, this one may have a time factor of only 4 or 5 years. Because the sub divisions that are coming up here we are no longer an arterial road, so please bear that in mind.
- IV. Have you taken into account the Town of Oakville and their permission? For the Place of Worship do you expect any show stoppers from the Town? The reason I am asking is because the committee has worked systematically to follow the process and for some reason do you expect the town to come out with issues that would be considered show stoppers?
- V. The youth must understand that there is no free lunch. If they come to our functions and even give one dollar into the kitty it will generate a little bit more income.
- VI. What is the estimate you have in your mind to submit the report? Are you going to break it down or will this be the final report
- VII. Are you looking in your recommendations at things like a) Time frames to build the POW – 2 year plan or 5 year plan; b) Financing and what is involved financially to support the place financially? Has that been completed? Will those findings come to the community and how?

- **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OPEN TO ALL AGE GROUPS**

Religious:

- I. We look at accreditation of the priests who we propose to ordain over here. There must be a system put in place by NAMC to recognize these priests.

Social

- I. This committee as well as the Board should seek out support from not just Canadian and North American Associations but even from all Zoroastrian associations in the GTA area.



- II. That the committee provide more education or understanding of what we are doing viz a viz the concept so as to not create misconceptions among members.
- III. We can bring in a priest here on a 3 year contract who can eventually become a naturalized citizen.

Financial

- 1. Endowment fund is recommended to be able to maintain the POW in the future, without placing a burden on the future generation.

- **UNANSWERED QUESTIONS**

None

Summary:

Number of Attendees: 20

Total Number of Speakers: 15

Total number of questions / concerns / comments: 37

Total number of recommendations: 5

Question Type	Number of Questions	%
Concept	11	30
Religious	2	5
Social	10	27
Financial	7	19
Other	7	19
Total	37	100

Comments:

The review of the minutes and questions for this group indicates the following:

- 1. There is an acceptance of the concept and the process being recommended by the committee of building an Atash e Adaran as the first consecrated Place of Worship in North America, to help sustain the Zoroastrian faith. There is an acceptance and a general consensus among this group that to be able to maintain our faith the community must have the capability to be able to ordain priest in Canada and North America to successfully sustain our religion on this continent. There were one or two differing views regarding consecration of the Place of Worship and the consecration of the building.
- 2. There is a general consensus that this is our time to build this Place of Worship and the members echo the committees view that if this generation does not proceed to achieve this goal then there is every possibility of the Place of Worship not being built later.
- 3. There is acceptance of the committee's recommendations regarding rules of entry and recommendation for adapting to changes in line with the time we live in.
- 4. There is agreement that a Place of Worship is needed for the following reasons:



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- To provide for the religious and spiritual needs of the community
 - To provide a religious focal point for the community, which has been lacking
 - To provide the younger generation with a sense of religion and a sense of Zoroastrian identity which the community has not been able to provide over the last 40 – 50 years of its existence on this continent.
 - To rekindle the spirit of religion, provide education on our rituals and customs to adults, youths and children.
 - To help create the enthusiasm and belief in the younger generation viz a viz religion as this has been missing.
5. There were questions asked around the cost, financials, planning aspects and the ability of the community to maintain this place in the future, once it has been built. There was emphasis placed by the members that the pursuit of this goal not be at the cost of leaving a financial burden for the future generations.
 6. There are recommendations from the group re Religious, Social, and Financials that they would like the committee to recommend to the Board.
 7. There were recommendations that we achieve our goals keeping the other North American and Canadian Associations in the loop and have their buy-in on the concept, so that we are better placed when we present our vision and attempt to raise funds globally.
 8. There was a recommendation that we look at developing an accreditation process for the priests we intend to ordain in Canada / North America.

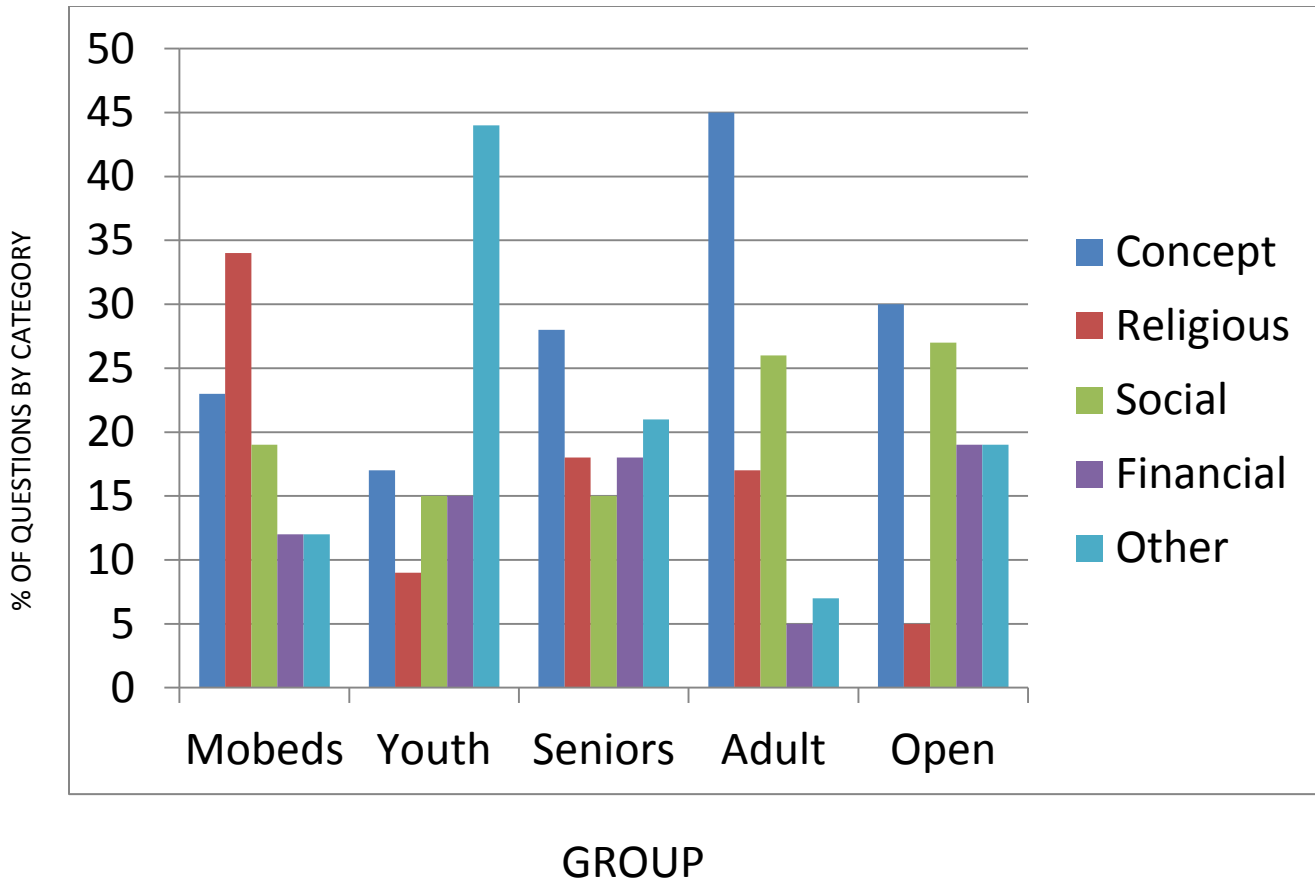
In summary this was a very active and participative group and the concept and the committee recommendations regarding having an eventual consecrated Atash E Adaran fire was well accepted. There was one member of this group who did not want to have anything to do with the consecration of the building or the fire. The group echoed the committee's sense of urgency in building this Place of Worship and its importance and agreed that if we do not build this place now it may never be built. There was acceptance to the inevitable changes (social) that will have to be accommodated to have the necessary buy-in of the younger generation. The concept and discussion around the type of fire and the steps involved to move from Atash e Dadgah to Atash e Adaran fire were well understood by this group. There was acceptance of the Terms of Reference and the rules of entry in the Place of Worship as recommended by the committee. There were no concerns around how rules of entry can be enforced as raised in some of the other groups. There were many questions around planning, financing, size of the building and time frames within which this can be achieved.



Appendix F – Consolidated Analysis

OF QUESTIONS ASKED

	Mobeds	Youth	Seniors	Adults	Open	Total
Concept	7	9	11	19	11	57
Religious	9	5	7	7	2	30
Social	5	8	6	11	10	40
Financial	3	8	7	2	7	27
Other	2	24	8	3	7	44
Total	26	54	39	42	37	198





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ATTENDANCE

Mobeds 10

Youth	20
Seniors	48
Adults	45
Open	20
Total	143



Appendix G – Fires and Structures

ZOROASTRIAN PLACES OF WORSHIP

Traditionally three places of worship have evolved in the Zoroastrian Faith. These are characterized by the type of Fire that is enthroned in them. The term AGYARI or ATASHKADEH refers to a place that houses a fire. Hence any and all places, that house a sacred Fire is an Agyari or Atashkadeh.

The three places of worship that evolved in Zoroastrianism over centuries are:

Atash-e-Dadgah

Atash-e-Adaran

Atash-e-Bahram

WHAT IS CONSECRATION?

Consecration is a process that can declare a place, a fire or any of the requisites used in the inner or outer liturgical ceremony as sacred. There are short and long prayers that are formulated to carry out these consecrations. All the places of worship described above can be consecrated through prescribed prayers. They all hold a sacred fire, however, the fires enthroned in Atash-e-Adaran and Atash-e-Bahram are further consecrated through elaborate procedures.

HOW DO THESE THREE PLACES OF WORSHIP DIFFER IN THEIR CHARACTERISTICS?

In addition to **consecration of the place or structure**, there is a separate process for the **consecration of a Fire**.

DADGAH FIRE:

The fire enthroned in a Dadgah is **NOT a consecrated fire**. This fire has the characteristic of a hearth fire or the one in your fireplace in any household.

This fire need **not be kept burning** or be tended **24 hours a day** or **seven days a week**. It can be protected by ashes over a period and reignited the next morning as needed.

The fire of a Dadgah in principle can be tended by a Zarathushti laity. However, in a communal Place of Worship it is desirable for a Mobed to tend the sacred fire.



ADARAN FIRE

The fire enthroned in an Adaran is a **Consecrated Fire**. The fire of an Adaran is made up of a mix of **four different Fires**.

This fire is kept ignited at all times and must be attended to by a Mobed.

The Adaran fire should be tended through Boi ceremony by the Mobed. This should be performed during the five watches of the Gahs.

The Adaran fire is a composite of those collected from the house of

- 1) *Athornan* – a priestly family,
- 2) *Rathaeshtaran* – a military family
- 3) *Vasteryosan* – a farming family
- 4) *Hutokhshan* – an artisan family

Each of these fires are collected and **purified** three times by reigniting them. Further these purified fires are then consecrated. The consecration of each of these fires requires two priests. Thus eight priests are needed for the process. At this point we have four fires each in separate afringans.

The process of consecration involves reciting Yasna ceremony in the morning and Vendidad after midnight. It is important to note that each **Yasna ceremony** takes **about two hours** and the **Vendidad recital** takes about **six to seven hours**. These rituals are performed on the **first day** with **Khshnuman of Sarosh** and on the **second day** with the **Khshnuman of Ahura Mazda**.

On the **third day** the four fires are **united**. The process of unification involves the fire from the **priestly family** receiving the other three fires. The united fire is further consecrated by the two priests who consecrated the fire from the priestly family. The process involves once again the Yasna and Vendidad ceremony on the **third day** with the **Khshnuman of Sarosh and a Yasna on the fourth day** with the Khshnuman of Ahura Mazda. This concludes the process of consecration of Atash-e-Adaran. In all, the process involves ten Yasna and nine Vendidad ceremonies, requiring eight priests and takes about eight to ten days.

This sacred consecrated fire is now ready to be enthroned in the chamber of Kebla that has been **previously purified, and consecrated**. The process involves a procession of priests who carry the consecrated united fire to the Kebla and transfer it to the main Afringan. The process is concluded by the recital of Atash Niyaesh followed by a Jashan in the adjoining hall.

ATASH-E-BAHRAM FIRE



This is the highest grade of fire in the Zarathushtrian faith. This is known as the 'Fire of Victory'. This fire must be kept burning 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at all times, and must be tended by a priest who has attained the highest grade of purity through a Bareshnum ritual.

The consecration of this Fire is extremely complex and elaborate. This can be seen from the fact that to date there are only nine Atash-e-Bahrams in the whole world, eight in India and one in Iran.

The fire enthroned in this place of Worship is a composite of 16 different fires. These are separately collected and purified before they are consecrated with Yasna and Vendidad ceremony. A total of 1128 Yasna and 1128 Vendidad have to be performed in the consecration of these fires before they are united and made ready for enthroning in the Kebla. This elaborate process involves upto 32 priests and can take well over a year.

ATASH PADSHAH

We often hear the complaint that people of other faith label Zarathushtis as 'Fire Worshipers' and we counter that with the argument that we do not worship fire but offer our devotion to Ahura Mazda.

It is important to recognize that the above fires in our places of worship are in fact **NOT the physical fire**. Through undergoing the process of consecration particularly for -Adaran and Bahram Fires, they are **transformed into the embodiment** of the Supreme Divinity **Ahura Mazda**. Since these processes are highly elaborate, in general, any fire that is used in ritual such as Jashan or the fire in a Dadgah is considered **sacred as the embodiment of Ahura Mazda**. It is therefore crucial to explain to others that while we worship what appears to an outsider as just another fire, it is for us the worshippers, the actual Image of that Supreme Divine Energy –Ahura Mazda. It is for this reason that these fires are addressed as **Atash Padshah** meaning the **Ruler of the Universe**.



Appendix H – Customs and Conduct

WELCOME TO OUR ZOROASTRIAN PLACE OF WORSHIP

Thank you for visiting this Zoroastrian Place of Worship. This is a house of God, a place to feel God's presence, to experience spiritual peace, worship and join a community in prayer. It is expected that conduct in this Place of Worship is appropriately respectful. It is customary that when we attend such Places of Worship we respect certain customs, practices and policies. Anyone is allowed to enter this Place of Worship subject to following these:

CUSTOMS, CONDUCT AND ETIQUETTE regarding usage of this Place of Worship:

1. The inner sanctum sanctorum (Kebla) that holds the fire is restricted to ordained Zoroastrian priests only.
2. The area in which the inner liturgical ceremonies are conducted is restricted to ordained Zoroastrian Priests who have undergone the Bareshnum ceremony.
3. The Fire that is installed in a consecrated area will be attended to using formal rituals by ordained Zoroastrian priests.
4. The consecrated Place of Worship will be designed and used to ordain future Zoroastrian priests
5. The Place of Worship will serve as a nucleus to enhance the development and teaching of Persian and Zoroastrian history to children, youth and adults and act as a repository of information for use by Zoroastrians and non-Zoroastrians.
6. It is expected for Zoroastrian and non-Zoroastrian men and women to cover their heads when entering the Place of Worship.
7. It is necessary that you take your shoes off before entering.
8. To maintain laws of ritual purity, it is a practice for people entering the Place of Worship to wash their hands and face with water.
9. In the interest of preserving the traditional practices of consecrated Places of Worship, women in their menstrual cycle must refrain from entering the building.
10. Please do not use your cellular phone in the prayer room.
11. Please remain silent and join in worship while the prayers are in progress.

Thank you for attending this Place of Worship. We hope you have a spiritually fulfilling experience.