



SIMS Dreams of the Future

Barbara Erwine

Search for a New Home Continues

As articles in the past two newsletters have noted, SIMS's lease at our current space ends in June of 2019 and we are currently searching for a new home. To kick off this search, the SIMS board set up two task forces - one to look for potential property to purchase (Site Search Task Force) and one to dream big and envision the ideal future home for the sangha (Pre-Design Task Force).

These two tasks are, of course, connected. So we asked the Pre-Design Task Force to move as quickly as possible through a visioning process to determine the sangha's priorities as we search for property to purchase or lease. The Pre-Design group enthusiastically accepted the challenge and worked through the early fall to do phone interviews with other sanghas across the country to understand what they find important in their centers and to craft a series of visioning questions for our sangha members about the kind of sangha that SIMS wants to be and the spaces we need in a new home to support this.

Highlights of Outreach to Other Sanghas

The outreach to other sanghas indicated that nearly all were open 7 days a week and some had open sit times. Kitchens turned out to be one of the most important attributes of the centers, although garden space was equally valued. They all had various rooms in addition to their meditation halls for use as break out rooms and offices. No one's space was ideal or perfect, but everyone loved their center.

Highlights of SIMS Outreach

The survey of SIMS sangha members was accomplished through a series of all-sangha meetings in late October and an online survey for those who could not attend in person. In total, 123 people participated in the survey and reassuringly the online and in-person responses were similar.

Some of the survey questions were open-ended to encourage discussion and open up the freedom of a true brainstorming session. Since it's difficult to represent results from open-ended questions, the task force used the technique of creating word graphics to highlight the words that commonly appeared in responses to the four open-ended questions in the survey.

same email address to let us know if you see a vacant or available property that you think we should take a look at. As they say ... it takes a village!