

SHANTI Mandir

Constitution & By-Laws

April 16th 2024

CONSTITUTION OF SHANTI MANDIR

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Indian origin (the term “Indian” referring to India of the Asian continent), having made our home in Central Pennsylvania, recognize the need to preserve and enhance our time-honored values of religion and culture. To this end, we have organized construction of Hindy Temple for which we establish this Constitution.

Article I. Name

The name of the organization and the Temple shall be Shanti Mandir, hereinafter referred to as SM.

Article II. Place

The principal place of congregation of the SM shall be in Danville, in the commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This place shall be located at:

649 Jersey Town Road
Danville, PA 17821

Article III. Language

The official language for the business transaction of the Society shall be English.

Article IV. Objectives

Clause 1. The primary objective of the SM is to establish and maintain a place of worship for the people, who have religious persuasions of Indian origin, namely Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. SM shall strive to preserve and cherish the rich traditions of the Indian subcontinent and to foster and enrich the same in all aspects of the religious, cultural, social, and educational life of the community

Clause 2. Dissolution: In the event of dissolution of SM, the Board of Trustees shall, after paying and making provisions for the payment of all liabilities of SM, distribute all the assets of the organization exclusively for the exempt purposes of the organization and/or to one or more organizations dedicated to religious and/or charitable and/or educational purposes and which have been recognized as 501 (c) (3) organizations by the Internal Revenue Service.¹

Article V. Membership

Clause 1. Eligibility: The membership will be open to all individuals, groups, and organizations subscribing to the objectives of SM and meeting all the requirements as specified in the By-Laws of this Constitution.

Clause 2. Classes of Membership: There will be four classes of membership:²

- a. Family
- b. Individual
- c. Patron
- d. Grand Benefactor

Article VI. Organization

SM shall comprise of the General Body, governed by the Board of Trustees (Directors) and the Executive Council. Only the members of SM are eligible to serve on the Board, the Council and any standing or ad hoc committees.

Clause 1. General Body: The General Body will comprise of all members of SM, in good standing, and shall meet at such times as prescribed in the By-Laws to elect the Board of Trustees and the Executive Council.

A member in good standing eligible to vote and seek election is a member holding one of the classes of membership defined in Article V, Clause 2. Members holding individual and Family Memberships are eligible to vote and seek elections if they have paid their membership dues during the calendar year preceding the year of elections. Patrons and Grand Benefactors have the privileges of Life Membership as per By-Laws Section IV, Clause 3.

The General Body shall meet at least once a year to conduct the business of SM. The President and the Secretary of SM shall serve as the Chairperson and the Secretary, respectively, at the General Body meeting.

Clause 2: Board of Trustees (Directors): The Board of Trustees shall consist of nine members of SM in good standing. Eight members are elected by the General Body as prescribed in the By-Laws. The President of SM shall serve as ex-officio voting member. The Board of Trustees may invite ex-Chairperson and ex-Presidents, who are currently members of the Society, to become non-voting members of the Board.

The Board of Trustees shall be responsible for formulating the policies and determining the priorities of SM. The Board of Trustees shall also oversee due execution of the programs and the policies of SM. It may appoint committees it deems necessary.

Dedicated and sincere members, who have demonstrated record of selfless service to SM should be encouraged to serve on the Board of Trustees.²

Clause 3: Executive Council: The Executive Council shall consist of thirteen (13) voting members including the Bal Vihar Director. The General Body shall elect twelve (12) members of the Executive Council. The Executive Council shall appoint the Bal Vihar Director. The thirteen (13) voting members of the Executive Council shall be:²

- a. President
- b. Vice President
- c. Secretary
- d. Treasurer
- e. Program Director
- f. Editor
- g. Bal Vihar Director
- h. Community Relations Director
- i. Five members at large

The Executive Council may appoint ad-hoc committees to assist the Council in specific tasks.

The Executive Council shall be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Society and shall function within the guidelines and broad policies established by the Board of Trustees.

Dedicated and sincere members, who have demonstrated record of selfless service to the Society should be encouraged to serve on the Executive Council.²

Clause 4. Removal With Cause: The Board of Trustees shall have the power and authority to remove with cause any member of the Board, the Executive Council, and/or any office bearer or director. Removal is effective only if it occurs at a Board meeting called for that purpose. For positions elected by the General Body, removal requires two-thirds of the full Board voting for removal. For all other positions, whether appointed or elected by the Board, Executive Council, or any committee, subcommittee or association, removal requires a majority of the Board

members present to vote for removal. Written notice must be sent to all Board members at least 30 days in advance of the meeting that a purpose of the meeting is removal of an individual with cause and the notice must specify the position occupied by the individual at issue.¹

Article VII. Bal Vihar

There shall be a Bal Vihar, dedicated to the religious and cultural education of the young people of the age group five to fifteen years. The Bal Vihar shall be administered by a Director, who shall be appointed for a period of three years by the President of the Executive Council subject to confirmation by the Board of Trustees. It is recommended that, in the appointment-confirmation procedures, the opinions of the parents of the young people of Bal Vihar be properly assessed and taken into account. The Director, so appointed and confirmed, shall be assisted in the discharge of his/her duties by a teaching staff. He/she shall report to the President about the various activities of Bal Vihar at least once a year and more often, if necessary.

Bal Vihar Director shall be a Voting Member of the Executive Council.²

Article VIII. Hindu Youth Association

There shall be a Hindu Youth Association dedicated to the cultural, social and recreational activities. This Association shall function within the guidelines set by the Executive Council to promote the objectives of SM. This Association shall elect its Director, who will be a non-voting member of the Executive Council for a two-year period.²

Article IX. By-Laws

This Constitution shall have a set of By-Laws for the enforcement of its Articles. The By-Laws shall be approved by the General Body. The final authority for interpreting the By-Laws will rest with the Board of Trustees.

Article X. Amendments

Any Article of this Constitution may be modified, amended or annulled by adopting either of the following two procedures:

1. The recommendations for a change may be initiated by the Board of Trustees, or the Executive Council with the approval of the Board of Trustees. The recommendations are to be finally approved by a formal vote of at least two-thirds of the voting members present at a General Body meeting. The quorum for such a meeting for this purpose is at least 10% of the General Body membership.

By-Laws of the Hindu Temple Society

Section I. Offices

1. The registered office of the Society shall be at Shanti Mandir, 649 Jersey Town Road, Danville, PA17821.
2. SM may also have offices at such other places as the Board of Trustees may decide from time to time.

Section II. Seal

The organization's Seal should have inscribed thereon the name of Shanti Mandir, the year of its organization, and the words: "Corporate Seal, Pennsylvania."

Section III. Dietary Regulations

Shanti Mandir shall not prepare, serve or consume meat or alcoholic beverages or any intoxicants during any of its sponsored events. Meat, alcoholic beverages, or any intoxicants shall not be prepared, served, or consumed on any properties owned, operated, or leased by Shanti Mandir.

Section IV. Members

1. The membership of the Society shall be open to all individuals and institutions, who show demonstrated interest in the aims and objectives of the Society. An application for membership should be made to the Society. The Executive Council shall review the application and forward the same to the Board of Trustees for its approval.
2. The following shall be the kinds of membership and their dues.²
 - a. Family \$ 251.00
 - b. Individual \$ 100
 - c. Patron \$ 5,000.00
 - d. Grand Benefactor \$ 25,000.00

For categories (a) and (b), the dues are based on the calendar year, which begins on January 1 and ends on December 31.

For categories (c) and (d), payments may be spread over a specified number of years (1-5) as determined by the Board of Trustees.

These dues may be periodically reviewed, and changes recommended by the Board of Trustees for approval at the General Body Meeting.

3. Definitions and Privileges of Membership:

a. Family Membership:

A family consists of a married couple with its legal dependents. The family membership gives the husband and wife a right to cast one vote each.

b. Individual Membership:

An individual, twenty-one years of age and over, may seek individual membership and is entitled to cast one vote.

c. Patron Membership:²

A family/individual may seek Patron Membership status by paying the dues defined in Section IV, Clause 2.

The family Patron Membership entitles the husband and wife all the rights and privileges of membership for life, including the right to cast one vote each at the General Body meetings. The individual Patron Membership entitles the individual all the rights and privileges of membership for life, including the right to cast one vote at the General Body meeting. Their name(s) shall be recognized in the society newsletter, the Annual Report, and as appropriately determined by the Board of Trustees.

d. Grand Benefactor Membership:²

A family/individual may seek Grand Benefactor Membership status by paying the dues defined in Section IV, Clause 2.

The family Grand Benefactor Membership entitles the husband and wife all the rights and privileges of membership for life, including the right to cast one vote each at the General Body meetings. The individual Grand Benefactor Membership entitles the individual all the rights and privileges of membership for life, including the right to cast one vote at the General Body meetings. In addition, the family/individual will hold honorific status for the year they have paid the Grand Benefactor Membership dues. Their name(s) shall be recognized in the society newsletter, the Annual Report and as appropriately determined by the Board of Trustees.

e. Recognition of Members:

In addition to recognition given to Patron/Grand Benefactors, recognition may also be given to other members, who have rendered extraordinary beneficial service to the Society as determined by the Board of Trustees and the Executive Council.

Section V. Board of Trustees

1. The members of the Board of Trustees shall serve for a term of two years following their election.
2. The Board of Trustees shall have three officers with the following duties:
 - a. Chairperson: The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board and over the joint meetings of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Council. The Chairperson shall present a brief report at the Annual General Body meetings.
 - b. Vice Chairperson: The Vice Chairperson shall, in the absence of the Chairperson, perform all duties and assume all responsibilities of the Chairperson. In the case of a vacancy arising in the office of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson shall become the Chairperson for the remainder of the term.
 - c. Secretary: The Secretary shall inform the members of the Board of all the meetings. He/she shall inform the Board of Trustees and the Executive Council of the joint meetings. He/she shall record and send the minutes of the above meetings to all members of the Board and the Council.
3. The Chairperson of the Board shall appoint the following four standing committees with the approval of the Board. Each of these committees shall be chaired by a member of the Board. The members of each of these committees shall be appointed by the chairperson of the respective committee within the guidelines set below. The membership in each committee may include members from the Executive Council or members of the General Body. The terms of the committees shall run parallel to the term of the Board.
 - a. Finance Committee: This committee shall consist of a minimum of five members, one of whom shall be the treasurer of the Society. The primary functions of this committee shall be:
 - i. To devise ways and means to raise funds.
 - ii. To participate in the annual budgetary process of the Executive Council before it is finally submitted by the President to the Board of Trustees for its approval, and
 - iii. To oversee the management of the long-term investment of the funds of the Society.
 - b. Planning and Project Committee: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three members, one of whom shall be a member of the Executive Council selected by the President with the approval of the Executive Council. The primary function of this committee shall be to plan and oversee the execution of major projects related to the physical facilities, such as renovations, expansions, new constructions, and acquisitions.

- c. Education Committee: This committee shall consist of a minimum of five members. One them shall be the Director of Bal Vihar, and another a member from the Executive Council selected by the President with the approval of the Council. The primary functions of this committee shall be to formulate and coordinate policies pertaining to:
 - i. Religious education given by Bal Vihar, seminars on religious discourses, etc.
 - ii. Cultural education in language, history, dance, music, drama etc., and
 - iii. Physical education such as: yoga, suryanamaskaras, sports, games, and other athletic programs.
- d. Audit Committee: This committee shall consist of a minimum of three members. The primary function of this committee shall be to audit periodically the accounts of Shanti Mandir. A comprehensive statement of these audits shall be incorporated in the report of the treasurer for the presentation at the Annual General Body meeting.

Section VI. Executive Council

1. The members of the Executive Council shall serve for a term of two years following their election.
2. The Executive Council shall have eight officers with the following duties:
 - a. President: The President shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Society. He/she shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Council and the General Body. He/she may call special meetings of the General Body, if and when necessary. He/she shall be an ex-officio (non-voting) member of all committees, standing or special, appointed by the Executive Council. The President shall prepare the budget in consultation with the Executive Council and submit it to the Board for its approval. He/she shall perform such other duties as are required of this office.

The President shall review and discuss the monthly financial statements prepared by the treasurer in the meetings of the Executive Council. He/she shall summarize the monthly financial statements in the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.²

It shall be the responsibility of the President to ensure that the duly approved Annual Report of the preceding year is mailed to all the members of Shanti Mandir at least 15 days prior to the Annual General Body Meeting. The President shall have the Annual Reports reviewed and approved by the Audit Committee and the Board of Trustees on/or before March 31st.²
 - b. Vice President: The Vice President shall, in the absence of the President, perform all duties and assume all responsibilities of the President. In the case of a vacancy arising in the office of the President, the Vice President shall become the President for the remainder of the term.²

- c. Secretary: The Secretary shall be the custodian of all records pertaining to Shanti Mandir. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of all meetings of the Executive Council and of the General Body. He/she shall send the minutes of the above meetings to all members of the Board and the Council. He/she shall keep a roll of members, issue notices of all meetings of the Executive Council and General Body. He/she shall also perform such other duties that usually pertain to this office or any other duties that may be assigned by the Executive Council.
- d. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of all monies and other financial assets belonging to Shanti Mandir. He/she shall be the fiduciary agent of Shanti Mandir and be responsible to the President and the Executive Council for all the financial transactions. He/she shall make a full report of the details of all receipts and disbursements at every meeting of the Executive Council, and at the Annual meeting of the General Body. A bank account shall be opened for Shanti Mandir in the name of three officers: the President, the Vice President and the Treasurer.

Any two of these officers must sign any check in the amount of \$3,000 (three thousand) or more. Any one of the three officers may sign a check in the amount of less than \$3,000 (three thousand).²

It shall be the duty of the treasurer to give monthly statements of all accounts including but not limited to income, expenses, assets, liability, bank balance etc. to the President with a copy to the Audit Committee. The treasurer shall also prepare consolidated quarterly statement at the end of each quarter and give to the President and the Audit Committee.²

The treasurer shall complete the financial part of the Annual Report along with the detailed donors list before March 15th so that the duly approved annual reports are mailed at least 15 days prior to the annual General Body Meeting.²

- e. Program Director: The Program Director shall plan and organize programs within the general framework of the objectives of Shanti Mandir in consultation with the Executive Council. He/she may form a committee to assist in the execution of the programs.
- f. Editor: The Editor shall be the editor of the Society's publications such as: quarterly newsletters, monthly bulletins and publication of similar nature. The Editor shall form an Editorial Board with the approval of the Executive Council.
- g. Director of Hindu Youth Association (HYA): The HYA Director shall oversee the youth activities of the association. The HYA shall elect a committee to assist the Director in various activities.
- h. Community Relations Director:² The Community Relations Director shall be the liaison person between Shanti Mandir, the Indo American Community, and local civic organizations in Central Pennsylvania. The duties of the Community Relations Director shall include but not limited to the following:
- Coordinate welcome of the newcomers in the area and strive to increase the membership of the Society.
 - Coordinate needed support for the families/individuals in events of sicknesses, deaths, financial hardships etc.

- Coordinate services such as priest services, transportations to and from hospitals and doctors, food supplies, medical help etc.
- Coordinate revenue collection for emergency relief funds in USA and India in cases of natural disasters.
- Coordinate fundraising for needy charitable organizations in India, and organize events for their financial help during their visits Central Pennsylvania
- Coordinate compliance with the requests from local churches, schools, colleges and interfaith organizations for Speakers/Delegates, and other requests such as their visits to Shanti Mandir etc.

To accomplish these objectives, the Director shall appoint a Community Relations Committee. The committee shall consist of a minimum of five members including representatives from the Executive Council, Board of Trustees, and community members comprising of seniors and volunteers.

The committee shall take additional help from the Temple Priest, interested members of the Executive Council, Board of Trustees, subcommittees and interested community members as needed.

Section VII. Meetings

1. The Board of Trustees shall ordinarily meet at least once every three months. The Chairperson of the Board may call additional meetings, if necessary. The Secretary of the Board shall inform the members of the Board of all meetings.
2. The Executive Council shall ordinarily meet once every month or more often, if necessary. The Secretary of the Executive Council shall inform the members of such meetings.
3. The Annual meeting of the General Body shall be held in the month of April. The Secretary of the Executive Council shall decide the date, time and venue of this meeting in consultation with the President. Written notices or announcements of such meetings shall be given by the Secretary at least thirty days prior to the date of the meeting.
4. A special meeting of the General Body may be called by the Secretary of the Executive Council upon a written request of twenty-five percent of the members of Shanti Mandir. Written notices or announcements of such a meeting shall be given by the Secretary at least thirty days prior to the date of the meeting.

Section VIII. Election

1. All members of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Council of the Society shall be elected (except for the Youth Director) by the General Body at its Annual Meeting in April.
2. Elections of the Board of Trustees shall be held in odd-numbered years and of the Executive Council in even-numbered years. The term of the Board and the Executive Council shall be for two years.
3. A Nominating Committee of three members shall be formed by the end of January every year. The selection, composition and duties of the Nominating Committee shall be different for Board of Trustees elections versus Executive Council elections as described below. Members of the Nominating Committee shall be members, who have demonstrated record of selfless service to Shanti Mandir.²

- a. Board of Trustees: The President, with the consent of the Executive Council, shall select the three members of the Nominating Committee, which shall be charged with the responsibility of preparing a list of candidates for election to the Board of Trustees.

The membership of this Nominating Committee shall consist of:

- i. One member from the Executive Council, and
- ii. Two members from the general membership of Shanti Mandir.

The President shall appoint one of the two members of the General Body as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

- b. Executive Council: The Chairperson of the Board, with the consent of the Board of Trustees, shall select the three members of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be charged with the responsibility of preparing a list of candidates for election to the officer positions on the Executive Council.

The membership of this Nominating Committee shall consist of:

- i. One member from the Board of Trustees, and
- ii. Two members from the general membership of Shanti Mandir.

The Chairperson of the Board shall appoint one of the two members of the General Body as Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

4. The membership of the Nominating Committee shall be announced by the end of February to inform the General Body, and to invite suggestions for the nomination of candidates.
5. Only persons, who have been members of Shanti Mandir for at least one year can be nominees. They must give prior consent to serve, if elected. The relevant list of nominees, and the position for which each person is being nominated, shall be announced, through mail, at least two weeks prior to the date of election.
6. The Chairperson of the Nominating Committee shall present the list of nominees, and the position for which each person is nominated, at the Annual Meeting and shall serve as Election Officer.

7. Additional nomination(s) may be made from the floor at the meeting. Only persons, who have been members of Shanti Mandir for at least one year can be the nominees. They must give prior consent to serve, if elected.
8. The voting shall be by secret ballot. Members present at the Annual Meeting shall be entitled to vote.
9. In the voting for each of the officers of the Executive Council, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes for the relevant office shall be declared elected to that office.
10. In the voting for the five members at large of the Executive Council, the five candidates, who have received the highest number of votes in that category shall be declared elected.²
11. In the voting for the ten members of the Board of Trustees, the ten candidates, who have received the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. After the election, the members shall meet to elect their officers such as: the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson, and the Secretary.
12. The members of Shanti Mandir shall have the voting rights as described in Section IV, Clause 3. There shall be no absentee ballots.
13. If a vacancy arises in the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson is empowered to fill such a vacancy, for the balance of the unexpired term, with the consent of the Board of Trustees.
14. If a vacancy arises in the Executive Council, the President is empowered to fill such a vacancy, for the balance of the unexpired term, with the consent of the Executive Council. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the Director of the HYA, a new Director shall be elected by the HYA.

Section IX. Parliamentary Authority

Robert's Rule of Order shall govern all proceedings of the meetings of Shanti Mandir when any procedural problems are encountered in the Constitution or the By-Laws of Shanti Mandir.

Section X. Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by a vote of approval of a simple majority of the members present and voting at a General Body meeting. The proposed amendments and changes to the By-Laws shall be mailed to the General Body members at least thirty days before the scheduled General Body meeting.

Section XI. Removal with Cause

The Board of Trustees shall have the power and authority to remove with cause any member of the Board, the Executive Council, and/or any office bearer or director. Removal is effective

only if it occurs at a Board meeting called for that purpose. For positions elected by the General Body, removal requires two-thirds of the full Board voting for removal.

CERTIFICATION

Lokendra Thakur, President of Shanti Mandir, and Zankhana Mehta, Secretary of Shanti Mandir certify that foregoing is a true and correct copy of the bylaws of the above-named organization, duly adopted by the initial board of directors on _____ 2024.

I certify that foregoing is a true and correct copy of the bylaws of the above-named organization, duly adopted by the initial board of directors on _____ 2024.

By: _____
Lokendra Thakur, President

Date: _____

By: _____
Zankhana Mehta. Secretary

Date: _____