

# Leadership Groups in the Eno River Buddhist Community

The Eno River Buddhist Community (ERBC) has three principal leadership groups: Practice Leaders, the Program Committee, and the Guiding Committee. Each group serves and is guided by the ERBC Mission Statement. Each group conducts its process as a form of practice, congruent with the teachings of the Buddha. Mindful presence, caring and compassionate intention, and honest, non-divisive speech are needed both within and beyond group meetings. All ERBC leaders are asked to work with the guidelines described in the document, *Guidelines for Serving as a Leader in the Eno River Buddhist Community*.

## Practice Leaders

Practice Leaders are responsible for leading ERBC's study and practice of the Buddha's teachings. This leadership can take many forms, including but not limited to: bell-ringing, offering readings, introducing recorded Dhamma talks, leading chants, facilitating recitation of the precepts, guiding *mettā* meditation, presenting programs, and providing meditation instruction to newcomers. An individual need not be comfortable leading all of these forms of study and practice in order to serve as a Practice Leader. Practice Leaders are asked to participate in periodic meetings as a group, to be arranged and facilitated by the Program Committee. Practice Leaders serve ERBC with the guidance and support of the Program Committee.

## The Program Committee

The Program Committee is responsible for all aspects of ERBC's study and practice programming, including but not limited to: selecting topics and developing program content; choosing sources and teachers to be drawn upon; structuring practice; and selecting, supporting and supervising Practice Leaders. Members are chosen annually, or as needed, by the Guiding Committee from among Practice Leaders with greater than one year's experience leading practice. Program Committee members should have a well developed commitment to the guidelines described in the document, *Guidelines for Serving as a Leader in the Eno River Buddhist Community*. Program Committee members should also be prepared to work with Practice Leaders to help them develop their practice and cultivate skills for leading.

## The Guiding Committee

The Guiding Committee (GC) of the Eno River Buddhist Community has ultimate responsibility for community stewardship and for setting the community's course. The Committee meets monthly. All ERBC participants are welcome to attend and observe any meeting of the Guiding Committee.

The function of the Guiding Committee is to perform all ERBC planning and decision-

making other than as specifically delegated by this document, or by the Guiding Committee, to other committees, groups or individuals. In general, decisions are made by consensus; however, the group may choose to modify the process when deemed appropriate. Matters the Guiding Committee is empowered to undertake and decide include but are not limited to: allocating and spending funds; planning retreats; cultivating leaders and leadership; developing opportunities for individuals to deepen their involvement in the community; consulting with teachers and other outside resources regarding the welfare of the community; selecting members of the Program Committee; and forming or approving committees and other groups as needed to accomplish specific purposes.

Additional specific responsibilities with which the Guiding Committee is invested include but are not limited to: attending to the safety and well-being of ERBC participants individually and as a group; skillfully addressing disagreements and conflicts both within leadership groups and in the community as a whole; cultivating diversity at both the leadership and community levels; adhering to the Guiding Committee's procedural framework (as set out below, or as formally revised); and furthering transparency by regularly identifying Guiding Committee members to community participants, inviting attendance at upcoming Guiding Committee meetings, and reporting on decisions reached.

The Guiding Committee is composed of three to seven members, each of whom is asked to commit to two years of service on the GC. (The Guiding Committee may continue to function if its membership drops below three, but will take steps to increase the number of its members to three or more.) The process for adding new Guiding Committee members is as follows: Annually (or semi-annually if the number of Committee members falls below three, or if the GC otherwise deems appropriate) ERBC participants are notified that the Guiding Committee is seeking new members. Guiding Committee members then assist interested ERBC participants in considering whether the needs of the individual and the needs of the Guiding Committee are in alignment. The document, *Guidelines for Serving as a Leader in the Eno River Buddhist Community* serves as a framework for guiding this process. The Guiding Committee (or a subcommittee acting as a GC Membership Panel) may then invite prospective members to begin attending Guiding Committee meetings on an exploratory basis. After three months of exploratory participation, the Guiding Committee selects new GC members to serve as full members from among the prospective members who wish to commit to a full two-year term. (The start of new GC members' terms begins with the first exploratory meeting they attend, although selection of new full members is made during or after the third such meeting attended.) During this three-month exploratory period, prospective members may participate in Guiding Committee discussions, but not final decision-making. Also during this exploratory period, a full member is assigned as a resource for the prospective member, addressing questions or concerns, and assisting the prospective member in reflecting on the experience. At the conclusion of any two-year term, Guiding Committee members may continue to serve, subject to approval by the other Guiding Committee members.