

March 29, 2010

Islamic Center of Maryland  
19411 Woodfield Rd., Gaithersburg, MD 20879  
301-840-9440  
www.icomd.org

## Update from the Board of Trustees

M. Nadeem Ahmad, Chair | Abdullah Shamim, Vice Chair  
Iqbal Yousuf, Secretary | M. Sujjat Khan, Treasurer  
Abu Waheed Khan, Trustee | Maged Sharaf, Trustee | Sayed Naved, Trustee

### MASTER PLAN

Work on Phase 1 of our Master Plan is continuing with full force. We estimated the ground breaking for land development to happen in March 2010 but things have been delayed due to various permitting requirements including the requirement to have our revised Forestation Plan approved by the state Park and Planning Board.

#### Forestation Plan:

On March 11, the Maryland Park and Planning Commission reviewed our revised Forestation Plan application to remove the condition to grow and maintain 1.5 acre of category one forest (fenced and undisturbed) on ICM property. This condition was placed as part of the ICM Master Plan approved some years ago. To address this restriction, ICM opted for the alternate forestation plan. Under this option, ICM would purchase and grow an equivalent area of forest in a County-approved location through a County-approved forestation contractor. This decision was based on the long-term cost to the community and the price of the ICM land versus the other property.

Alhamdulillah, our application was approved with a couple of conditions. Based on a five page letter from a neighbor objecting to the removal of the forestation plan, the Commissioners put the condition to allocate a 25 feet wide area on the Eastern (back side) and the Southern (ICM access road side) property lines for plantation to serve as a barrier to noise and lighting pollution that may affect the residential neighbors. We

were already going to put some landscaping along these sides, however now this landscaping will need to be approved by the Planning Board. We would have liked to get rid of this condition but removing 1.5 acre of preserved forest on our land was far more important than fighting against this condition at the risk of having our application rejected altogether. The other condition inserted by the Park and Planning commission is that we purchase the forest at 1:2 ratio. That is, to free up 1.5 acre of forest on ICM property, we must purchase 3 acres of forest elsewhere. We are currently working on an appeal to get this condition removed as it is not supported by the County laws that serve as the basis for alternate forestation option. While we will do whatever it takes to get this additional burden removed, whether the ratio is 1:1 (at roughly \$35,000 for 1.5 acre) or 1:2, paying the price to free our land for future purposes is the obvious way to go.

#### Design Progress:

All of the architectural layouts have been finalized and the detailed design documents are coming to completion also. Parts being worked upon include mechanical, electrical, and low voltage (A/V-LAN-SEC) designs. The whole process of finalizing the architectural layouts went through a rigorous process involving several meetings with the Architect and his team. Multiple design review meetings were conducted in the presence of the community members as well. Updated schematics and building elevations have been posted in the ICM lobbies and on the ICM website. More updates to be posted soon, insha Allah.

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Next Steps:

The next steps involve obtaining the Land Development Permit (already filed) and the Construction Permit. We expect to have the Land Development Permit issued within the second quarter with the ground breaking to occur, insha Allah, no later than the third quarter of 2010.

Funding Situation:

Master Plan funds are closing in on \$1 million. So far, we have made a little over \$118,000 of payments (capitalized cost) towards Master Plan specific activities and roughly \$36,000 through December 2009 for Master Plan fundraising activities (facility rentals, food, supplies, printing, etc.). Insha Allah, we are very close to meeting our estimated target of \$1.2 million for the ground breaking. Recently, one organization (Idara-e-Jaffaria) has committed to purchase between 500 to 1000 burial sites at Al-Firdaus Memorial Gardens through ICM. The lots will be purchased over the next few years and the total amount could be between \$375,000 and \$750,000.

The road ahead is tougher though. Once the work starts, the task to meet the cash flow requirement during the land development and construction phases is enormous. In order to address this, fundraising has now been divided into multiple areas each with its own team. These include Fundraisers, Grants/Permissible Loans/Sale of Burial Sites, and Qard-e-Hasanah (in-kind loans)/Major Sponsorships. Each team has been assigned a lead who, in consultation with the team members, will develop a plan and a set of objectives to meet within a specified period of time.

**FINANCES**

At the end of February 2010, our total bank balance stood at just under \$1.1 million with a

little over \$950,000 in the Master Plan account, over \$54,000 in the operating account, just over \$46,000 in Zakat-ul-Maal, and a little over \$23,500 in Sadaqah account. Our direct debit stands at a little over \$14,400 per month as of February 2010.

You can review details posted on the bulletin boards in the main lobby of ICM. New reports are posted every month. We are also working on creating a summary information page on our website. Additionally, we will also have an audit conducted of the ICM finances this year. In many cases, this is required for grants and donations offered by the government and private organizations.

**OTHER AREAS**

Facilities:

Repair and maintenance work for the existing facilities is continuing. Recently the ICM Library has been renovated. Insha Allah, some new furniture and bookshelves will be installed soon to make this space presentable and hospitable for holding educational and informational events. As you may have noticed, the recent snow storms have damaged the trellises in some areas. We are looking into repairing them with the least cost to ICM as these structures may need to be demolished as part of the Master Plan construction. The unpaved road around ICM was badly hit by the snow storms. Several pot holes made driving around the property rather adventurous. This u-shaped road has been filled and tamped down with recycled asphalt. We will continue to keep an eye on it. We are also working on fixing and expanding audio addressing capabilities to meet the needs of Ramadan as well as our Sunday school public announcement requirements.

Given the cost associated with the repairs and maintenance of ICM facilities to keep them in

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shape and in usable condition throughout the year, we need your help. Please expect to receive a letter soon in your mail asking for \$100 commitment per family towards repair and maintenance cost for 2010. Insha Allah, we expect your full support on this effort.

#### Education Programs:

By the grace of Allah (SWT), our biggest operation Sunday school is running quite well. A little over 300 students are currently enrolled. The numbers has gone down from Fall 2009. School closure due to extreme weather took three teaching Sundays away from the School calendar. However, with the help and dedication of the staff and the parents, all material for this semester and for the school year will be completed as planned. Spring 2010 registration renewals continue to be a problem in spite of several reminders to the parents. Roughly \$4,500 of tuition still remains to be paid. This is on top of over \$4,400 waived as part of financial aid. Needless to remind that the Sunday school pays for itself through tuitions and does not take any assistance from ICM.

Evening Quran classes offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays are going well and have grown in strength.

#### Youth:

Our newly launched Youth Committee has been doing a wonderful job. A recent and very well attended program introduced by this committee is the ten weeks workshop on the Stories of Prophets offered on Friday evenings. The Committee is about to resume regular educational activities on the first and third Fridays of every month. The first educational activity will be on Friday April 2 for both brothers and sisters. A social activity with BBQ is scheduled for May 1 at ICM.

Umee and Me - Mother and Child resource program for kids 6 and under offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays - is another program that continues to be strong in its substance and services.

#### Masjid and Dawah:

A new lecture series Islam 101 has been started for new Muslims, people of other faiths, and anyone interested in learning about Islam. The lecture is held on the second Sunday of every month. We ask your help in promoting this activity by encouraging your neighbors and colleagues to attend.

Several Dawah events including hosting interfaith group meetings at ICM continue with the help and assistance of our Dawah committee. Recently, the committee also helped in sending material on Islam to Haiti. The committee continues to provide copies of Quran and material on Islam to local organizations, prisons, and interfaith groups who request for such material.

#### By-laws and Governance:

ICM Arbitration procedure was approved by the General Body at the 2009 Annual General Body Meeting. However, getting qualified members to agree to serve on the Arbitration Panel turned out to be a very tedious task. Alhamdulillah, not long ago we finally had five names of qualified brothers who have agreed to serve on the Arbitration Panel. These are Br. Javed Bhaiyat, Br. Altaf Taufique, Imam Yahya Hendi, Imam Faizul Khan, and Br. Yusuf Khan.

Additionally, as informed during the last General Body Meeting, the By-laws Committee is working hard on coming up with the most suitable recommendations for expanding the ICM's governing body structure. Not only is this badly needed to support our fast growing organization and the exponentially growing

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administrative and strategic responsibilities, but it will also encourage more participation and will help in making ICM a better place for all. Insha Allah, we plan to present our recommendations at the 2010 Annual General Body meeting scheduled on May 15.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Our most critical task ahead is to get the construction started on the Master Plan. ICM's exemption from the 8% rule (County regulation limiting construction to only 8% of the land owned), second in a row, will expire in January 2011. If we fail to start construction before January 2011 then it may become tremendously difficult to get another three year exemption from

the County. So, each one of us has to do his/her part. Let's take ownership of this project. Keep it in your mind and make dua'. Inform others. Take every opportunity to donate. You can donate online as well by visiting the ICM website. Note that the entire story of our Master Plan is available on ICM website – just click on the Master Plan button and follow the trail.

May Allah reward all those brothers and sisters, young and old, who keep ICM in their dua' and continue to donate their time, effort, and money to make it a better place for generations to come.

Jazakum Allah Khair.

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