

NEHTI Lawsuit Update

On or about August 26, 2014, the plaintiffs in this action, K.G. Narayana, J.V. Krishna, Sanjay Kaul, Maha Nangegadda and R. Sreedhar (the “plaintiffs”) filed a lawsuit against the Temple. The plaintiffs are represented by Attorney Sanjay Sankaran. The plaintiffs have asked for judicial intervention for the sole purpose of having the Court “declare” the Temple’s April 27, 2014 Board of Trustee elections “null and void” and “order” the Temple to conduct a new election. The Temple’s position is that if the plaintiffs did not like the results of the April 27, 2014 Board of Trustee elections or the manner in which the elections were conducted, instead of presenting their concerns to the Temple Ombudsman Committee through binding arbitration as mandated by the Temple Bylaws, they are inappropriately asking the Court to circumvent the Temple’s internal organizational rules.

On September 18, 2014, at the request of the Plaintiffs, the Court scheduled a hearing on Plaintiffs’ Motion for Injunctive Relief. Before arguments were made, the parties informed the Court that they agreed to mediate this dispute and the Court issued a Mediation Order. Prior to the mediation, Attorney Sankaran informed the Temple that Plaintiff Maha Nangegadda has withdrawn herself from the lawsuit. On October 24, 2014, Attorney Sankaran along with plaintiff, K.G. Narayana, and 6 Trustees and a Stewardship Council Member along with Attorney Sherring, attended mediation before retired Judge Dolan. After over 3 hours of trying to convince the plaintiffs to resolve this matter before the Temple Ombudsman Committee through binding arbitration as mandated by the Temple By-laws instead of making their grievances against the Temple public through the legal system, the parties were unable to settle the case.

Following the unsuccessful attempt at resolving this dispute through mediation, the Temple’s attorney, Neil Sherring, has filed papers with the Court asking that the Court dismiss the lawsuit in its entirety on the grounds that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the Massachusetts Constitution prohibits civil courts from intervening in disputes concerning religious internal organization. Attorney Sherring is also asking to the Court to dismiss the lawsuit because pursuant to the Temple By-Laws, the plaintiffs, as members of the Temple, have agreed to abide by the Temple’s By-laws that mandate that a “Temple Ombudsman Committee” resolve this dispute through binding arbitration within the constraints of the Temple By-laws. The plaintiffs have opposed the Temple’s request to have their lawsuit dismissed and wish to have the court system instead of the Temple community resolve their dispute. This lawsuit has caused and continues to cause disruption to the Temple operations and administration.

[September 18, 2014 update with the lawsuit details can be accessed from [here](#)]