

THE STUDY of PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Property ownership has long been a topic of interest and polarizing opinions in our Al-Anon Family Groups fellowship:

1. The Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees have studied property ownership by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc based on Motion 34 passed by the 1991 WSC.
2. The motion read as follows: In regard to the relocation study World Service Conference believes ownership of property by AFG, Inc. is consistent with our traditions (72-Yes 21-No 8 abstentions)
3. Motion 34 was questioned by the minority at the 1992 WSC. Concept Five –The Rights of Appeal and Petition Protect Minorities and Assure that they be heard. Out of respect for minority opinion plus a desire for unity and certainty often prompt the WSC to debate important questions of policy even in cases where a majority could easily be obtained.
4. Because of high costs and a disproportionate amount spent on the WSO the BOT and the Long Range Study Panel began to consider the relocation of the Office including the possibility of buying as early as 1980.
5. They reported and held discussion at the 1982 and 1983 World Service Conferences and the 1984 WSC expressed the opinion by consensus vote only, not formal motion, that it was against the spirit of the Traditions to own property for the World Service Office.

6. The 1991 WSC however, gave permission in Motion 34 to study ownership as consistent with the Traditions in conjunction with relocation of the WSO in 1996. It was made clear at the time that the WSC did not authorize purchase of property only that the possibility be considered. The BOT gave annual reports on relocation at the 1990, 1991, and 1992 WSC.
7. Some interpreted property as mentioned in Tradition Six as real estate only. Therefore ownership of real property doesn't seem consistent with Tradition Six.
8. Al-Anon Family Groups refers to all groups and service arms including the World Service Office. Owning a building would set Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. apart from the groups and could exempt it from adherence to Tradition Six.
9. Some of the fears or objections were: Some groups see the purchase as a violation of Tradition Six. They thought the purchase could impact upon the unity of Al-Anon – Some felt in order to protect our investment the WSO would need to get involved in community affairs thus diverting us from our primary spiritual aim and involving us in outside issues –Some were afraid of “The seat of perilous wealth or power which concept 12 cautions against. – Others were afraid that the ownership and maintenance of our building might constitute a heavier financial burden depending upon Literature sales and contributions. Some thought groups might withhold funds as a protest against property ownership therefore causing financial hardships.

10. The World Service Office is an Al-Anon Service Arm as well as a business entity and spiritual leader by example. We can therefore look at ownership of property by the WSO as affecting the fellowship locally, nationally, and internationally. International Services and General Service Offices could look to WSO for leadership. It could encourage them also to do the same by example.
11. Majority Opinion That Traditions and Concepts are consistent with property ownership. Tradition Six is the only one that mentions the word property. Its meaning seems to be one of the issues. "Ownership of a possession does not say real estate". The lease at 1372 Broadway, computers, office furnishings and inventories of literature are ownerships of property that can be bought and sold. Owning a building or land to house the WSO could be an extension of its service operations.
12. Tradition 9 sets Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc apart from the groups in structure and purpose. Groups not organized – to help families of alcoholics, WSO - is organized, employs special workers, and is responsible for assisting the Group in their primary purpose. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is not a group. It is a service center, the clearinghouse of the fellowships activities.
13. In the Concepts the founders made provision for changes that may be necessary in the original methods of operations and structures. Service needs and problems will occur that may make structural changes necessary. When structural change is needed

its advocates need only to present a strong case for such change to both the Trustees and the WSC for consideration

14. Concept Six – The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative Responsibility of the Trustees
15. A Special Corporation Could OWN Property – A separate corporation could be formed. The World Service Office would lease from the newly formed corporation, which would own the building. Thus Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. would be leasing from the other corporation. Monies from Reserve Fund could be used for initial acquisition costs.
16. One structure does not get involved in the day to day operations of the other.
17. New Corp would have a separate Board and be accountable to the Board of Trustees. It will eventually be established in this process that the new Board will be called the Executive Committee for Real Property Management and they will report to the Board of Trustees.(See motion #5 1995)
18. The Board of Trustees must report every three years to the Conference regarding whether or not it believes the Traditions are being broken or disunity is taking place.(Per Motion 12 (1994) which is a contract between the Board of Trustees and the Conference.)
19. The trial period for this process is fifteen years with triennial reporting throughout. This is called a Pilot Project
20. Finally, “common welfare and unity depend upon our willingness to agree with what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. The hope is that ownership would strengthen our unity by providing a sense of home and stability for the fellowship”.

Bob C. – Immediate Pat Delegate