Clearance Panel Report & Recommendation to the Auroville Council

September 2019

Members: Alain B., Amy, Jaya, Klara, Rajavelu, Tineke, and Tomas

Report:

The team started meeting, once weekly, at the beginning of February 2019. It was agreed that we would work together as a full team for each Aurovilian situation. Individual members would do fact-finding and report back. The first Aurovilian was met on 2 May. This meeting was attended by the entire team. One site visit was conducted with a majority of team members. A second meeting with the Aurovilian included the entire team.

From February to May we worked together on process, expectations, and finally on gathering information in regards to the first review. From the beginning we had questioned the term “clearance” and spent a lot of time deliberating upon what it means.

Once agreed-upon, our aim was to engage the Aurovilian in an exploration of what action could be taken that would support ‘clearance’. What did they feel was an appropriate action? It was during this exploration (and subsequent individual reflections and collective deliberations) that it became evident this approach was not sufficient. Considering this further and more deeply, the members started to realize that ‘clearance’ would not be established by a small group. It is our sense, after this initial experience, that the residents of Auroville need to be involved in deciding if they trust an individual (to represent them in a working group, for example) or not. [Note – the participatory selection process provides the space for residents to demonstrate their collective level of trust of an individual.]

At this point we’ve come to a general agreement that only the community, collectively, can ‘clear’ an Aurovilian; ie regain trust in the individual’s sincerity, capacities, etc. Since this question normally arises in the public sphere we feel it is obvious that the collective ‘clears’ the Aurovilian. This will be evident in the residents’ readiness to ask the individual to serve in a working group on behalf of the Residents Assembly.

Recommendation:

However, there is a firm acknowledgement that rumors and gossip are still prevalent in our community and a presentation of facts, or as factual as possible, is needed. Therefore at this juncture we recommend to change the operation of the panel to that of “review” [ie Review Panel]. We propose the Review Panel will report on the facts, and perceptions, concerning the Aurovilian and those involved (ie feedback giver, directly impacted Aurovilians, involved working groups). The information will be compiled in a report that will be available for review as needed (during working group selection, for example). It will not include a judgment, nor present a solution.

Further with regards to a “Review Panel”, it is acknowledged that Aurovilians who have been excluded from participating in the working group selection process feel hurt, and or wrongly judged and over the years have had no one to go to to be seriously listened to.

A Review Panel can listen to what the concerned Aurovilian has to say. This in itself may give him/her some sense of healing because they have been heard objectively. The Review Panel can collate together as many relevant facts as possible, or as factual as possible, about the situation and write a report. This report can then be discussed with the Aurovilian, and other directly impacted Aurovilians (ie feedback giver); the ‘accused’ Aurovilian can add comments, as needed, to the final report. It is envisioned that the Panel would submit a report that is satisfactory to all concerned. In this way a more complete, objective picture is provided. (However there are often gaps in the material available, especially if many years have passed.) This can be seen as a technical form of ‘clearing’ since the Aurovilian, at present, can take part in any selection process. The final report will present the situation if and when it comes up in the future.
With the expectation of “clearing” removed, the Review Panel will only review and report; it will function quite differently from the Clearance Panel concept.

Again, the real “clearing” can only happen with the support of the community and when the Aurovilian proves him/herself a positive and constructive community member.

With a Review Panel report, the residents will have access to verified information and can make an informed decision during the selection process.

**Note:**

There might be cases where the Review Panel re-initiates the process with an Aurovilian and working group where new arguments are brought to bear and actually clear the Aurovilian.

The Review panel concept goes with the premise that all Auroville residents are eligible to participate in a working group selection process, and can be selected as a member. Whatever list of Aurovilians who have been ineligible in the past should be discarded. When a resident has substantial feedback he/she can request, it would not be mandatory, to have a Review Panel process where all facts will be presented in the best possible way and all Aurovilians participating in the process are fully responsible for the outcome of the selection.

**Another consideration:**

The Clearance Panel was established and selected for a certain purpose. If there is quite a drastic change in the scope of work, membership may have to be reviewed as qualities and capabilities required might be significantly different.

**Additional recommendation:**

Based on the current information provided, and since the majority of reviews will involve Aurovilians of the bioregion, it is strongly recommended to have 1 more regional Aurovilian on the team to connect easier to the local culture and values.