

Cambridge Food Co-Op Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Meeting held November 20, 2019

Board Members Present: Jayne Stokes, Charlie Reiss, Janet Britt, Edwin Schiele, Kari Bernard, David Bayne, Aila West, Betsy Shiland

Board Members Absent: Fern Bradley

Others Present: Jessica Jones, Steve Schnell, Kathleen Quinn

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Minutes from the October 23, 2019 Advisory Board Meeting were reviewed.

MOTION to approve minutes with no changes: David Bayne

MOTION SECOND: Charlie Reiss

MOTION PASSED

2. Nominating Committee Report

Janet reported that members Bliss McIntosh, Andrew Pate, and Darlene King have agreed to join the Board of Advisors if elected at the upcoming Membership Meeting on December 8th.

ACTION ITEM: Janet will obtain nominee biographies to share with members before the meeting

ACTION ITEM: Janet will check by-laws to determine whether new BOA members will be elected to 3-year terms.

MOTION to recommend the slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee for election the Board of Advisors at the December 8th Membership Meeting: Kari Bernard

MOTION SECOND: Aila West

MOTION PASSED

3. Executive Committee Report

a. Combination of Membership & Outreach Committees

Kathleen reported that the Membership Committee discussed the possibility of combining the Outreach & Membership Committees again. The Membership Committee recommends this, as there is some overlap with committee members and the purposes of each committee are similar. The Board agreed to this change, and the committee was renamed the Community Relations Committee to reflect its work on behalf of Co-op members and the larger community.

A discussion followed about whether this committee would also handle fundraising. The Co-op should learn about its Main Street Grant award (if any) sometime December; if we do not receive the award, some additional fundraising will be necessary. There is a need for fundraising leadership on the Board. It was decided to hold off on making a decision on this until January, after the new Board members have joined.

b. Agenda for Membership Meeting

Jayne lead discussion of agenda items for the upcoming Membership meeting. At this meeting, members will vote on the 2020 budget, the Privacy Policy, and the new Board members. Committee reports can also be given. An introduction/exploration of the Patronage Dividend Model will also be included, presented by Kathleen. This presentation will include the definition of the PDM, costs and benefits of such a system, what other co-ops do, and any next steps.

c. Draft Privacy Policy

Kathleen shared the draft privacy policy with the Board. A suggestion was made to designate only certain staff to have access to the membership database. Jessica explained that “data handling” will be added to the employee policy manual to govern staff handling of member information.

ACTION ITEM: Kathleen will email a copy of the policy to the Board for their comments. Comments should be submitted to Kathleen by Monday, November 25.

4. Managers’ Report

Kathleen shared the following report on behalf of Melissa and herself:

- Because of Thanksgiving busy-ness, please make sure to use the villcoop@gmail address or call if you need a response right away.
- New staff continues to become more comfortable with their roles in the store.
- The staff and some working members recently met with Jessica to prepare for the rollout of the Register Companion. The Register Companion will be in use shortly, hopefully after a brief trial period to enable staff and working member cashiers to get used to it.
- A Hubbard Hall dance group will be dancing in the front window of the Co-op for a brief period during Christmas in Cambridge in December 7th.
- Kathleen summarized her experience at a recent 2-day workshop she attended, entitled “Enhancing Co-op Business Performance Through Cooperative Management Practices.” This workshop focused on highlighting the cooperative advantage, which is in its identity as a values-based entity serving its community rather than private ownership or corporate shareholders. Because of this workshop experience, Kathleen and Melissa have decided to focus on reducing plastic and packaging in the store for 2020 and are planning a series of events to highlight the Co-op’s efforts in this area.
- 2020 Events may include but are not necessarily limited to the following:
 - Film screening, such as Bag It, Plastic Paradise, etc. highlighting the problems plastics cause
 - Panel Presentation with Bennington College speaker(s) on reducing plastics in our community
 - “Biggest Loser” style competition to reduce household waste production (using co-op tools, buying in bulk, etc) over a 30-day period
 - Community Trash Pick Up Day
 - workshops on composting kitchen waste, making your own beeswax wrap etc.
 - Repair Café, hosted in partnership with other community organizations.

- Kathleen is also planning monthly discussions on the 7 Co-operative Principles (1 each month) to help gather member ideas and feedback on how the Co-op can best adhere to the 7 principles. These will be called Co-op Conversations. It is hoped that out of these discussions we can begin the process of examining the Co-op's mission.
5. Other Business
Steve Schnell posed a question regarding ways in which the Co-op could grow a “bigger tent,” possibly by giving membership status away to the community. While the board discussed ways in which such a plan might be difficult, it was agreed that Steve’s suggestion offers great food for thought—how can the Co-op reach and serve more members of our community?
 6. Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen Quinn
Board Clerk