



Members Gather to Discuss Mission

Additional discussions to happen throughout summer

Approximately 20 members gathered on Sunday, May 20th to explore three questions related to the Co-op’s identity, in an effort to make sure the Cambridge Food Co-op continues to meet the needs of its members and the community. Facilitated by the Co-op’s Membership Committee, the discussions were wide-ranging and productive, offering insight to the Committee as to the priorities Co-op members have.



Thanks to Steve Schnell for the photo.

In the first minutes of the workshop, participants examined the current mission, and compared it with the pre-workshop survey feedback. Participants generally agreed—and the survey data supported—that the current mission, “wholesome, affordable foods in a spirit of respect for each other and our world,” would not work today, as the Co-op cannot compete with the low prices of the large grocery store chains. But what to replace it with?

Why does the Co-op exist?

The first question asked of participants explored the Co-op’s reasons for existence. The answers to this question will eventually form the basis of a

mission statement. Answers ranged from “to support a green lifestyle” to “to offer an anti-corporate alternative” to “to provide bulk food offerings,” and were fairly specific. Ultimately though, a mission statement is a *general* statement of purpose. So although the coop can’t incorporate these types of specific suggestions within the mission statement itself, the staff can act on those suggestions that support the mission and are financially feasible.

What do Co-op members believe in?

As a member-owned and managed organization, it is critical that its member-owners agree on a few shared or “core” values. While these have never been specifically stated in Co-op documents in the past, the Membership Committee felt it was a good time to consider adding a Statement of

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What is the Member-Worker Pilot Program?

Last February, the Co-op rolled out a new Working-Member Pilot Program and we want to give you all the information you need to stay active in this new system. The idea for the pilot program was born out of the need to enhance store efficiency while finding a way to better engage our current and prospective members.

Why are we considering change?

Many members have expressed concern about shift times being too long at 3 ¾ hours; shift times not being frequent enough to retain information/skills; lack of confidence on the register; interest in contributing in a more meaningful way; and members losing their influence in store decisions and operations as many tasks are taken over by staff.

On the staffing side, the Co-op needs more specific jobs for each member and better training up front, workers to take ownership of their responsibilities; workers to feel confident

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SAVE the DATE

August 19, 2018, 5:00 PM

Back by Popular Demand, Our Co-op Picnic Fundraiser Tickets on Sale now at the Co-op

Last year’s picnic was so much fun and so popular, we were asked repeatedly to make it an annual event – one the entire Cambridge community can enjoy. So of course we buckled under the pressure. Argyle Brewing Company and The Cambridge have again agreed to host us in Railroad Park and the Depot Tasting Room so we’re going to call it:

The Picnic @ Railroad Park

We want to honor the agricultural bounty of our beautiful Southern Washington County. Our outreach committee has assembled a hardworking team of planners and chefs and we would love to have you join us. The more help, the more fun.

Also back by popular demand:

- A beautiful mild evening on the Cambridge green
- A big white tent and party lights to scare away any drop of rain
- A menu to tempt every palette - locally sourced, prepared by our talented Co-op chefs
- Silent Auction featuring treasures for all: arts, crafts and exceptional experiences
- Music by Big Stone Gap
- The same bargain ticket price as last year, with the offer of an early bird discount for members.

Tickets:

Suggested Donation: Adults - \$40. Children under 12 - \$10.
Members Only Before July 15: Adults - \$35.

Tickets are for sale at the Co-op. They will also be on sale soon at Argyle Brewery Depot Tasting Room. Please join us this year to celebrate our Co-op, our community and the generous bounty of the beautiful hills and valleys we call home.

Questions? Can you help out? Can you donate an item or service to the Silent Auction?

Contact Susan and Aila at: cfcpicnic@gmail.com

All the Best from,
Aila, Mike, Lane, Susan, Peg, Isaac, Claire, Donna, Heather, Ashley, Jayne

August 19, 2018 | 5:00 pm
6 BROAD STREET | CAMBRIDGE, NY

Picnic @ Railroad Park

SPONSORED BY
THE CAMBRIDGE FOOD CO-OP & ARGYLE BREWING COMPANY

Join us for a fabulous feast celebrating our local food producers!
PLUS: live music & silent auction

ALL ARE WELCOME!

suggested donation:
\$40 adults | \$10 kids under 12
reserve at the Cambridge Food Co-op and Argyle Brewing Company



Staffing Update From the Personnel Committee

Dear Co-op Members,

Following the major turnover in staff during the last quarter of 2017, the Cambridge Food Co-op personnel committee has worked to rebuild. Prioritizing stability for a business that was facing significant financial problems, we sought to promote from within the co-op's talented remaining staff. We asked our assistant manager, Melissa Carll, to serve as acting manager. With calm perseverance Melissa trained and shaped a new staff team. She worked to build new relationships with the board and collaborated with our finance team to develop new efficiencies and strategies to address financial pressures. In the meantime, the personnel committee has researched the best way forward. We interviewed every staff member, and studied examples of personnel models within the co-op sector and within the history of our own Co-op.

Managing a co-operative grocery with as many as 100 working members, a cooperative board, a part-time staff of seven, a stock of some 3,000 items and a customership drawn to friendly, personalized service cannot be "just a job." It demands fierce devotion, endless patience, resourcefulness and respect for every person who walks through the door. The demands of such a job can rapidly burn out one person working 40 hours per week. For these reasons and out of a strong belief in the power of collaboration, we suggest a return to a model of co-management from our co-op's history: two co-managers on equal footing and skilled in cooperative technique, each with his/her own specific responsibilities and each able to stand in for the other.

We are working with staff to construct job descriptions and work-flow strategies for a co-management model. We hope to deliver a well-developed plan to the board and membership soon. Two outstanding candidates have emerged from within the staff team and we are working with them to develop and test guidelines for work sharing and division of labor. The plan will include methods for ongoing and periodic evaluation during an initial probationary period. The intention is to review, revise and finalize during the summer and fall and present the final results and proposal to the board before the Fall Membership Meeting. Within the restraints of confidentiality required in personnel matters, this committee will periodically describe the process to the membership as we progress.

As ever, thank you for all the support you have given Melissa, the staff and your co-op. Stay tuned and be well.

The CFC Personnel Committee *Susan Sullivan, Jayne Stokes, Janet Britt, Betsy Shiland, Jessica Jones (consultant)*

Working-Member Opportunities!!

For information about these positions please chat with Shannon or Melissa in the office.

*Cheese Specialist (needs to be filled ASAP)

Fish List Assistant

Stock Associate

Produce Specialist

Maintenance- Floors

Samples Assistant

Social Media Associate

Inventory Associate 1- Scales & Scanner

Inventory Associate 2- Data Entry

Education Coordinator

DUES REMINDER!!

Renewal notices are sent out each month to those members whose "anniversary" of Co-op membership falls during that month. If you receive a Co-op Membership Renewal notice, please remit your payment as soon as possible. If you are having a hard time affording the dues, please contact the staff right away—they can help.

This year, renewals are coming in at only 69% of budget, meaning we are about \$1500 short so far for this year. The Membership Committee is exploring the reasons for the drop off and will make recommendations in the next few months, but in the meantime, please get those renewals in! Thank you!



(Mission, continued from page 1)

Core Values to the Co-op's literature. The second question was designed to get at some of those values, and responses ranged from "the member-worker concept" to "a culture of food education" to "valuing local ownership." Ultimately, any Core Values will be presented as a list, and will help direct staff and board in choosing the right products, activities and events to offer at the Co-op.

What kind of future do Co-op members want?

This is the question about our dreams, our vision, for the Co-op. What do we want the Co-op and our community to look like in the future? "We heard from a lot of members about the need for continued financial stability," explained Committee member Kathleen Quinn. "It was the number one answer to the question of our vision of the future, and it is clear that finances were very much on the minds of our participants during the workshop."

Answers to this question ranged from the aforementioned "financially stable" to "more year-round local produce" to "more bulk offerings" to "a generator." "All of these are important goals," explained Quinn. "As a vision for the future, we may want to expand on this, and consider the role a financially healthy, vibrant Cambridge Food Co-op might be able to play in our local community while still meeting the needs of its members."

Next steps

The Membership Committee plans to hold at least 2 more informal discussions regarding the mission during the summer months, and hopes to have draft statements for member review in September. Any official changes will need to be voted on, and the committee hopes this can happen at the membership meeting in the fall.

Whatever additional events are scheduled, it's important to get input from as many members as possible. "We need to hear from many more members on these questions before making any changes," explained Committee member Susan Sullivan. "Only twenty members participated in the workshop, which is a small fraction of current membership. For something as important as our mission, we need to hear more voices."

(Pilot Program, continued from page 1)

each time they walk through the door and to feel satisfied each time they leave; and more efficiency in store operations. The eventual goal is to help each member find a position within the Co-op store and/or community where their skills are best utilized.

Possible Changes to Expect in the Future

While we test out this revised system, we will be constantly evaluating the effects on the existing working-member system and store operations as a whole. We ask for your trust and patience, as we cannot completely anticipate all that is to come. Some changes you *might* see in the near future include that the calendar may start having more open time slots as current members find themselves in a new role with a new way of keeping track of shifts; some calendar shift times may vary as we adjust to the before-mentioned change; workers pop in and out of the store as they complete tasks that have an altered time expectation than what we are used to; some general confusion as members attempt to find their place within the system; heavier training requirements for members working the register and /or more restrictions on who/when members take register shifts; and "recruiting" by staff members as we try and match our wonderful members with some new, wonderful positions.

Available working member opportunities can be found in three locations: printed on the side of the cheese cooler (above the calendar); on our website; and listed in the monthly newsletter. And as always, we are available for any questions you may have!