

Notes on Membership meeting 2-12-19

Present: Mike, Leandra, Sawa, Susan C., Sat Jiwan, Bob, Fred

-Neighborhood Sun Bob raised the possibility of the Coop cooperating with Neighbor Sun, a local group promoting solar energy. Mike agreed to discuss this possibility further with Bob.

- Planning for Spring Membership meeting.

a. Agreed the two possible dates for the meeting are April 14 or May 19th. There are fewest conflicts with these two dates. Consensus was April 14th was probably the preferable date. **Leandra agreed to check on availability of the Firehouse** on these two days. Agreed that the date should be finalized at Board meeting next Thursday.

b. Agenda for the meeting

1. Should changes in election procedures be addressed at the meeting?

a. **fixing the “family vote” problem.** Mike said this problem is at least partially solved if electronic voting is implemented that doesn’t accept the “wrong name” for the membership number. The problem would persist if paper ballots are still accepted. Is eliminating paper ballots something we should consider and if so does it require a rule change that would need to be addressed at a membership meeting.

b. Switch to email notification?

What if anything should be done at the meeting about requirements in the by-laws that members be notified by mail about the election and membership meetings. We have talked about eliminating the requirement to notify all members by regular mail if the coop doesn’t have their email. One suggestion is to only use regular mail to notify members who have specifically requested to be notified in that manner. This would require a rule change.

Do we want to address either of these issues at the spring Membership meeting?

Mike suggested one relatively easy change could be notifying members that have not shopped over the past year or two that they will only be contacted by email unless we hear otherwise from them.

It was agreed we needed to read through the by-laws and policies to all the instances in which the method of notifying members is specified and decide what changes if any might be desirable. **Mike and Leandra volunteered to look at the rules and working with the Board election committee, make a proposal the Board could consider.**

2. Do we have a presentation beyond the usual presentations from Board chair and GM (which will include an update from Leandra)? Several possibilities were raised including;

a. Someone from the community could make a presentation about their concerns or suggest how the Coop could better serve their needs. This could be:

-Someone from Essex House

- Someone from Crossroads
 - Discussion of reaching out to other community groups
- b. Other possible presentations considered included:
- Beneficiaries of the chips program
 - Someone from Montgomery County food council
 - I believe other ideas were mentioned

It was agreed we would circulate these ideas to those present at the meeting who could weigh in over the next few days about which of these ideas work best or could propose additional thoughts. The goal is to reach consensus on a program proposal that could be presented at the Board meeting next Thursday.

- SJ Presentation on the Dumpster

SJ showed us pictures he took of what was in the dumpster- Some usable food waste going in dumpster but his observation was it was not as bad as it used to be..... not as much usable food waste is in the dumpster.

It seems the composting and food waste procedures are functioning better than before. SJ will keep monitoring and keep staff posted.

An idea was presented that perhaps there could be some kind of “way station” for food before it goes in the dumpster. Separate out the food that people might take before it gets collected. Liability concerns could be an issue. Agreed to keep talking about this.

Update on Blog/newsletter

People are signing up for slots. Mike and Bob's excellent posts are now up on website. Waiting to get a few more for the “roll out”. Adding photo's are good idea. SJ should do a blog post on dumpster issues. And Sawa should do a blog about what she learned from her conversations with members (see notes below)

Scheduling of lot

Thursday's programming is happening. Slotting people in. People should be thinking about how to draw musicians and other performers to the lot for the Thursday programming. Discussed different ideas about programming, including having a regular music jam. Fred agreed to talk further with Leandra about this. In addition to music or other presentations, food will be available, either food trucks or prepared food for sale. There will be beer and wine tasting in the store. Community groups will be able to table. March 28 will be the first one. The plan is to have something every Thursday through October.

In addition to the Thursday programming:

- Earth day scheduled for April 20th
- Art and wine hop on the lot- April 26-27
- June 1 is truck garden

Report from Sawa

Sawa set up a table in the front of store on a Saturday and stayed for several hours. A lot of people stopped and had extended conversations. Several wrote ideas on paper which Sawa passed around. There were lots of interesting and supportive comments and thoughts including: People think coop is very warm and friendly. Like the music. Like the bulk section a lot. Would like produce to be a bit cheaper. Like customer service. Wish store was bigger. Want a café. They want to spend more time in store. Had a lot of non-members who shop. Sawa said she intends to turn what she learned into blog post.

(Mike said a lot of new people have signed up for membership recently....thinks one new ee in particular is doing a good job of getting people to join.)

Sawa said she intends to talk with members in the store again.

Outreach to the community

Need a hook. Expansion plan might be a hook. Sawa suggested we need a script to talk about to make the community meetings meaningful and interesting. **SJ, Bob and Sawa will develop outreach content and plan.** Possibly the application of grants for WIC and EBT could be part of the content.

Fundraising project for subsidizing memberships could also be part of the script. Thought about different ways to encourage and subsidize membership.