

Co-op member meeting notes June 11, 2019.

Present: Mike, Leandra, Sawa, Diane, Fred, Denny, Bob

Reflections on spring membership meeting

Agreement that the program was quite good and showed the strengths of the Co-op and what the store has been up to. Disappointment in the low turnout.

There was agreement that part of the reason was there is currently no controversy motivating people to show up at the levels that have been present in recent meetings.

Discussed ways that we might “re-conceptualize” the membership meeting:

Mike – Maybe good to have fall and spring meetings be different.

Leandra wants to have something that would bring people together like a service project. Or some other opportunity to get to know people. She sees that on Thursdays people are feeling more of a connection.

Bob says we need to do something different. It was hard to find news about the meeting. How can we build on the energy of Thursdays at the Co-op?

Question – do shoppers feel a connection to the Co-op?

Can we do something more to encourage people to be not only at membership meetings but also to shop at the store and participate in Coop activities.?

Denny says every time he goes to the co-op in west Philly they hand out a newsletter.

Fred – we are talking about two topics – a) the member meeting and b) general co-op member engagement or lack thereof.

Fred – As for the membership meeting, what could we do that would engage people and make them more interested in attending? A big picnic? Some kind of community event?

Other ideas that were floated:

- Why don't we make Earth Day the spring meeting? (from Mike)
- We could have a fall festival for fall member meeting.
- We could film talks about big topics.

When should our fall meeting be?

Early October? October 13th?

Proposal – fall meeting should be combined with a special outdoor event, with a tent? Or we could plan a rain date?

General discussion about membership engagement

Denny – Do we have a conception of what co-op membership means?

Fred – That is the right question. The last couple of years the membership has been engaged around the junction. That is an external thing.

Mike – There is a lot of commercial activity. Only 33% of sales is to non-members.

We have upped our onsite event game. Thursday nights are big. Donation programs.

Diane – thinks the Co-op is doing well. Should we as members be communicating that better?

Fred – a big question is should we be striving to get people more engaged besides just shopping here?

Bob – Locally owned community asset, full-service grocery store that is locally owned – we need to make people feel like members. What is different from shopping at Whole Foods?

Could we offer something to members during Thursdays at the Co-op? What makes it different from Trader Joe's?

Could we become a hub for local action on climate change? So many actions are around food.

Sawa – We need to give members responsibilities. What we are doing is enough but we should still continue to do more.

Fred – in my mind what distinguishes from Trader Joe's is that we are locally based and the Coop is committed to a set of principles that include environmentally sustainable healthy food production and consumption.

Mike – At the last board meeting, we talked about doing another member survey.

Denny – three ideas –

- The Co-op used to sponsor talks at Historic Takoma. How about a speaker series?
- How about newsletters to take home? Make them available at cash registers?
- Field trips to other co-ops.

Diane suggests a study group to look at the meaning of co-ops. Denny – IMPACT Silver Spring has a project for setting up co-ops.

Denny volunteers to look into the possibility of starting a speaker's program to make relevant presentations to coop members.

Leandra volunteers to look at relevant NCG materials

Mid-Atlantic Food Co-op Alliance meets a couple times a year.

Report on Community outreach:

Sawa gave an update on community outreach explaining that we now have a list of contacts that came from Village of Takoma Park.

Sawa is going connect with Jarrett Smith about doing pop-ups. Transport residents to come to Co-op. Produce stand?

Denny and Bob offer to help Sawa.

Leandra – Long Branch business district is partnering with park depts. There will be a week-long celebration. Semana de Long Branch. September.

4th of July parade –

We plan on having a contingent marching in the parade. Leandra has been working on it. Might focus the theme of our marching group on Thursdays at the Junction. Push shopping carts.

Diane volunteers to make signs work with Eddie.

Week before the parade– poster event.

Co-op Basics Program

Leandra – Co-op is re-launching Co-op basics program. NCG program where we get special discounted prices on special items – mostly Field Day. Competitively priced.