

TPSS Board of Representatives Meeting

Date: October 27, 2013

Time and Place: 6:00pm, TP Store Community Room

Present: Tanya Whorton (TW), Emily Townsend, (ET), Ken Firestone (KF), Dan Robinson (DR), Bill Rodgers (BR), Kahlil Yanes (KY), Matt Hersh (MH)

Absent: Steve Dubb (SD), Erin Gabrielson (EG)

Others Present: Abdi Guled (AG), Marilyn Berger (MB), Claire Taylor (CT), Sonya Parker (SP), Meghan McCoy (MM), and Mary Rooker (MR)

Minutes submitted by: Solveig Mortensen (SM)

RESOLUTIONS:

- The Board added a review of the product selection guidelines to the meeting's agenda.
- The Board accepted the September 22, 2013 Open Session minutes; ET moved, DR seconded, and approved by consensus.
- The Board accepted the TPSS Co-op Product Selection Guidelines by consensus with the following amendments: under the heading of *supporting community and local products* indicating that applying the phrase "TPSS Select" is a work in progress and under the heading of *Wholesome Foods* modifying the second line to read that *the Co-op will **strive** not to see products containing synthetic additives...etc.* (APPENDIX A)
- By consensus, the Board accepted the October 22, 2013 "Ends and Indicators report" as complete.
- The Board tabled the proposal to address the revised L-3 policy and the decision on CBLD.

Open Member Forum: MR thanked the Board/management for the decision to close the SS store; as a former Board rep., she knew the decision was painful and unavoidable and feels for *everyone* involved.

SP identified herself as a member of the SS Co-op and community and presented the Board with the following comments: she thought that in order to close, the Board/Co-op had to follow a protocol with a ballot vote; she wondered when the Board had the closure vote; she commented that she and others did not receive a closure letter and felt that there should have been better dialogue with the members—updating the website, sharing the problems earlier, and providing notification that was not so sudden.

DR reflected that the monetary problems at the SS store have been shown in the financials for some time and said that the decision was rather recent, but that the Board/Co-op did not want to draw out the closure. The Board verified that the Co-op had a consultant focusing on the SS store for a year.

TW explained that the TPSS Co-op by-laws give the protocol that the membership needs to vote if the Board/Co-op pursues closing the Co-op as a whole and thus, has to return its assets. She stated that most of the conversations re: the SS store were considered closed session material and occurred in closed session.

In regards to members not receiving a letter about the closure, ET relayed that, presently, the Board is asking members to update their contact information with the Co-op and noted that the Board is aware that incomplete member records is an issue right now.

SP also stated that many SS store employees seem to be missing already and asked if they were being retained and, specifically, if they were being retained through the store closure date. MB responded that the Co-op (TP store) is bringing on as many of the SS store employees as they can and that some absences could be explained by how, presently, the Co-op is still having employees work at both stores. She confirmed that the remaining employees will be on the payroll through closing.

Another member commented that the SS store's closure did not come as a surprise; she learned of the store's issues at the Annual and Member-Owners meetings and saw information on the Co-op's website.

Product Selection Guidelines: Meeting participants gave feedback on the updated draft of the "TPSS Co-op Product Selection Guidelines" document, which now incorporated the Co-op's former lead buyer's revisions. The Board evaluated the line re: "*not selling products containing synthetic additives and/or artificial coloring, preservatives, and flavorings*" and whether the Co-op is able to do this at all times. They compared its wording to that of the aim re: GMOs and decided to include the word "strive."

AG noted that a presenter, who is part of the Co-op's coming educational series, will receive these guidelines.

Meeting participants further discussed the issues with selecting and distinguishing products. Describing the goals of the *TPSS select* products, MR explained that she wants to support local but does not want foods treated with pesticides and would like there to be a way to distinguish amongst local products. ET noted how some co-ops identify their local sellers who may not hold the organic certification, but grow organic. The dilemma of product selection was also raised in regards to carrying seasonal products for all seasons. One rep. cautioned against dropping products that would lose market share even if they were not considered the healthiest. She described the way other co-ops use the good housekeeping seal of approval to scale how "green" a product is deemed. She suggested that the Co-op use a similar system. Another rep. talked about better, explanatory signage. MM suggested that the PSG Committee could address these issues and, possibly, recruit members to research local farms. **The GM requested that the PSG Committee review and research a rating system for the various products sold at the Co-op.**

GM Report: AG shared that he rescheduled a meeting with the OTBA representatives. He also reported that the generator is working well and ran effectively during several brief power outages.

Following up on a previous member's inquiry, ET asked for an update on 401K plans as options for employees. AG confirmed that a retirement planning representative spoke to employees. MB relayed that, however, currently, the Co-op is not offering contributions to 401Ks. She explained that, in the past, the fees on the plans cost more than the contributions, and the Co-op wants to explore better options.

Ends and Indicators: The Board reviewed the "October 2013 Ends and Indicators Update." They discussed how "shrink" or lost product is handled. AG confirmed that compostable items are set aside to be brought home and composted by members. MB explained that, currently, the debt to equity is showing as higher than .5, mainly, because of the losses at the SS store. AG shared that he met with Jim Johnson and is waiting for a proposal on reconciling and correcting the membership list.

The Board and GM discussed how to further streamline the processing of new memberships; AG described the logistical challenges posed: currently employees must use two different machines and keep membership funds separate from purchases. He stated that he will follow up with Jim Johnson of the Common Market; their store uses the same POS system.

The Board understood that at this time, a member survey is a higher priority for the Co-op than an employee survey. Management estimated that the employee survey will occur next year.

SP asked if this Ends and Indicators document could be shared with Co-op members: the Board and management discussed how it was composed under the assumption that it is an internal working document. **They suggested doing a summarization; MB planned to write a summary of the “October 2013 Ends and Indicators Update” for the newsletter.**

Report from FAC: DR reviewed the August Combined Profit and Loss statement and noted that the TP store generated a net income of \$8,722 and the SS store lost a net amount of \$1,361. Furthermore, he said, in August, the TP store allocated \$8,500 for the expansion and the SS store allocated zero. DR confirmed that the entire cost of the audit is \$45K, but the installment payments are \$10K. **He shared that the FAC planned to have the Co-op’s Finance Manger talk at the next Board meeting.**

Report from Expansion Committee about meeting with CW Architects: KF reported that AG, MB, and he attended a meeting with CW Architects, where they strongly advised the Co-op to devise a preliminary business plan with 5 year projections and meet with the City and decide on directions. KF emphasized the importance of doing an accurate customer survey and focus groups to help learn what direction the Co-op wants to take and to get feedback on, such things, as products and priorities.

KF shared other important considerations for the expansion: following up with the new city manager about public-private partnerships; determining where the City wants the Co-op; having a meeting at City Hall and pointing out that the Co-op keeps this area from being a food desert; considering more space and doing more price points and/or having a multipurpose room with an area for cooking and classes; and finally having a conversation with the Turners about the building.

Report from Nominations/feedback “TPSS Board of Representative Election Ballot Counting Procedures for 2013” KY shared that this document modified the procedures to include electronic voting: five people will count the votes and electronic votes will be printed and counted with paper ballots. She stated that the Nominations Committee (NC) will inform the Board if they pursue offering *only* electronic voting.

TW commented on the new method in the case of multiple votes from one member, which is to count the first vote found. TW explained that the last group of elections volunteers were usually able to determine what the member intended in the case of multiple ballots. KY explained that for questionable votes the NC planned to discount them, but contact the member to inform them for the next election. KY also explained that they want to give responses within twenty-four hours and they have kept all the nominees up to date in terms of events and tried to keep them informed throughout this process.

Board Office Continuity: TW read the Co-op guidelines regarding officer replacements and asked Board reps. to think about continuity for the next year. The Board noted that CBLD will be holding an event on expansion in November 2013.

Meeting adjourned at 8pm.

Future agenda items:

Revised Policy L-3

CBLD

Release of the “Oct. 2013 Ends and Indicators Update” document

Term 2013:

<u>Rep.:</u>	<u>Dec.</u>	<u>Jan.</u>	<u>Feb.</u>	<u>Mar.</u>	<u>Apr.</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Jun</u>	<u>Jul</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sep</u>	<u>Oct</u>
Dubb	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	*	
Firestone	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Gabrielson	*	*		*	*	*		*	*	*	
Hersh		*	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*
Robinson	*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Rodgers	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Townsend	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Whorton	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Yanes	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*

APPENDIX A:



TPSS Co-op Product Selection Guidelines – Approved 10/27/2013

Takoma Park Silver Spring Co-op promotes healthful living by offering wholesome foods, high quality products and community resources in a clean, friendly and cooperative grocery store ... that you own!

The following product selection guidelines were approved by the TPSS Board of Representatives to promote healthful eating, healthful communities and a healthful environment. They are meant to guide staff as they exercise judgment in making decisions about different product lines.

Members are invited to give input on purchasing decisions, as well as the evolution of these guidelines through the suggestion box, interaction with our staff, or proposals to the Board for amendment of these guidelines.

Quality

The Co-op will make every effort to provide its members with reliable sources of fresh, high-quality, organic or sustainably grown food, supplements and body care products.

The Co-op considers quality to include purity, freshness, taste, desirability as well as the considerations outlined throughout this document.

Wholesome Foods

The Co-op will prioritize foods with a minimum of processing and refining, but does not prohibit items solely due to processing.

The Co-op will strive to not sell products containing synthetic additives and/or artificial coloring, preservatives, and flavorings.

Organically Grown

The Co-op will emphasize organically grown food products. We will carry organic products while keeping in mind the following factors that may tip the balance in favor of carrying non-organic products in addition to, or instead of, organic:

- 1) Locally grown or sustainably produced;
- 2) Lack of availability of a comparable organic product, yet consistent with the rest of the product selection guidelines.

Genetically Modified / rGBH

The Co-op will seek to diminish products that contain genetically modified organisms (GMOs). We will make every effort to provide customers with a full range of products that, to the best of our knowledge, do not contain genetically engineered ingredients, such as products that are certified organic, or are explicitly labeled as non-GMO.

The Co-op will prioritize carrying fish, poultry, and meat products that are organic or free of growth hormones and/or antibiotics. We will give preference to dairy products that are organic or free of growth hormones and/or antibiotics.

Environmental

Types of foods or products: We will prioritize those foods and products with the smallest carbon footprint.

Amount and type of packaging: We will prioritize goods sold in bulk or minimal packaging, limit the number of products sold in non-recyclable or energy-intensive packaging, encourage recycling and use of recycled and biodegradable containers, and encourage manufacturers and distributors to make products available in recyclable packages.

How the food or product was made: The Co-op will prioritize organic, biodegradable, compostable, non-dyed paper products, and low and no-phosphate detergents.

Where the food was made: The Co-op will consider “food miles” impact, prioritizing those products that require the least transportation and result in the least pollution.

Truth in advertising: The Co-op will strive not to carry products that make false or misleading nutritional, environmental or ingredient claims on the package.

Animals

Eating Animals and Animal Byproducts: Sale of animal parts and byproducts is limited to naturally- or organically-raised animals with some consideration also given to quality-of-life issues in the raising and slaughtering of the animals.

Laboratory Testing on Animals: The Co-op will carry primarily health and body care products that are not tested on laboratory animals.

Supporting Community and Local Products

In order to support community endeavors and locally-produced goods and produce:

The Co-op will prioritize local products that are grown and produced within a 50-mile radius of the store and regional products that are grown and produced within a 250-mile radius of the store.

The Co-op will promote local sustainable farming by maintaining a network of growers who do not use pesticides and sell produce directly to the Co-op. These growers will be selected through a stringent selection process to ensure healthful, sustainable and pesticide-free agricultural practices, regardless of whether they have attained “organic’

certification. The phrase “TPSS Select” will be applied to alert customers to produce that is local and has gone through this selection process (Under Development).

The Co-op will support and encourage other cooperatives and community endeavors.

Social consideration /Fair Trade

The Co-op will prioritize products that are certified fair-trade and products produced and distributed by companies whose practices promote safe and fair working conditions and the welfare of communities. For products that are being boycotted, please see the boycott policy.

Special dietary needs

The Co-op will attempt to meet the needs for healthful living of those with special dietary needs such as vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, kosher/hallal, raw, and those with food allergies.

The Co-op will strive to provide wholesome foods that appeal to the dietary preferences of our culturally diverse community and meet product selection guidelines.

Economic Accessibility In order for good food to be more accessible to all, regardless of financial status:

TPSS will carry a selection of low-priced foods which satisfy basic nutritional needs, yet still meet the product selection guidelines.

TPSS may choose to stock foods otherwise excluded by product selection guidelines if they are required for participation in WIC or similar food-access programs.

When evaluating and selecting food items, consideration shall be given to providing the best nutritional value for the most affordable price.