

## **Alfalfa House Members Council - Minutes of Pre-Meet and Meeting**

### **Pre-Meeting Discussion - Minutes**

Date: Tuesday 22nd December 2015

Time: 6:30pm

Location: Meeting Space, 8-10 Brown Street, Newtown

#### **1. What is pre-meet for?**

There is confusion about the purpose of a pre-meet, and how useful it actually is.

David proposed we abolish the automatic pre-meet, and include it after the meeting proper at 9pm (or another time if predetermined) only if it meets one of three proposed criteria:

1. Where MC considers there is a need to protect the right of privacy of staff members, Alfalfa House members, or others.
2. Where "commercial in confidence" matters are being considered.
3. When other issues are to be discussed and MC considers that keeping their details confidential is in the best interests of the co-op.

Items would be able to be proposed during and before the meeting.

Renata proposed that the wording ensures a pre-meet is used sparingly, and only with consensus agreement. Jonny expressed concern about discussing in-confidence issues at the end of the meeting when we may be tired and unable to give these items proper consideration. Andrew suggested we still schedule our regular, open meeting for 7pm and arrange to meet at 6.30 if we decide beforehand that there is something we need to discuss in confidence. We can still choose to move a confidential item to the end of the meeting.

David's proposal, along with Renata and Andrew's changes, were approved with consensus. It was agreed that the process and criteria for confidential discussions would occur at the MC Induction.

**ACTION:** Add this to the list of items to go through during MC Induction.

#### **2. Induction - Wednesday 27th January**

Confirmed for 7pm that day.

**ACTION:** All to add to our calendars

#### **3. Consent Agenda - how it'll work**

Katherine clarified that there are two distinct scenarios for dealing with items on the Consent Agenda that require clarification or discussion:

1. An MC member wishes to ask a question or receive clarification on a matter before s/he votes on it. In this scenario, the question(s) must be asked **before** the meeting commences, with enough time to receive an answer. The clarification should be sent to all MC so everyone has the same information. Thus the item can remain on the Consent Agenda for voting, provided that there is no disagreement that it should be approved.
2. An MC member disagrees that an item should be approved OR believes that discussion on the matter is warranted. In this scenario. the item can be pulled from the Consent Agenda at the start of the meeting when the facilitator calls for any amendments to the Agenda.

## **Alfalfa House Members Council Meeting - Minutes of Meeting**

Date: Tuesday 22nd December 2015

Time: 7pm

Location: Meeting Space, 8-10 Brown Street, Newtown

Facilitator: Katherine

Minutes: Andrew

**Meeting opened at:** 7.05pm

**Acknowledgement of Country:** Before we begin the meeting, I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners, both past and present, of the land we occupy and upon which we meet — the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. It is also upon their ancestral lands that Alfalfa House is built.

### **1. Attendance and Apologies**

Attendance: Andrew McNicol (MC), David Begg (MC), Emily Mierisch (MC), Jonathan Green (MC), Katherine Lustig (MC), Renata (MC), Simon Holmes (Manager), Stevie Bee (Member)

Apologies: Maurice Cabrera (MC)

Absent: NIL

### **2. Approval of Agenda**

That the agenda be approved.

Moved: Renata. Seconded: Jonny. CARRIED by consensus.

### **3. Consent Agenda**

#### **3.1. Adoption of Previous Minutes**

That the minutes of the November 2015 meeting be adopted.

#### **3.2. New members and cancellations**

That members with the following membership numbers: 11047 - 11108 with 5 skipped records (11054, 11057, 11059, 11095, 11106) and 1 blank record (11099) be accepted as new members.

That members with the following membership numbers be cancelled: 3097, 3895, 4331, 4351, 4487, 4635, 4841, 4875, 4937, 5115, 5696, 5959, 6235, 6396, 6853, 6972, 7467, 7474, 7540, 7571, 7592, 7773, 7829, 7957, 8127, 8206, 8215, 8337, 8358, 8428, 8489, 8586, 8695, 8751, 8876, 8894, 8915, 8922, 8929, 8938, 8949, 8980, 8981, 8991, 8995, 8997, 8998, 9011, 9012, 9020, 9026, 9028, 9030, 9034, 9039, 9040, 9041 ( blank), 9044, 9045 ( blank ), 9049, 9060 ( blank ), 9075, 9077, 9079, 9080, 9081, 9083, 9084 ( blank ), 9091 ( blank ), 9093 ( blank ), 9094, 9109, 9110 ( blank ), 9111, 9112 ( blank), 9123, 9130, 9131, 9148 ( blank ), 9152, 9156, 9159, 9163, 9168 ( blank ), 9169.

### **3.3. Out-of-Session Decisions / Proposals**

- 3.3.1.** THAT a Consent Agenda format be adopted for Members' Council Meetings, to initially include the following items: (a) adoption of previous minutes, (b) new members and cancellations, (c) out of session decisions / proposals, (d) staffing (appointments and resignations), and (e) working group reports.

Further, that a policy be prepared to determine which items can be included in the consent agenda and that the draft policy be brought back to the Members' Council for adoption.

### **3.4. Staffing (appointments and resignations)**

That AH accept the appointment of Rosie Pajmans (Casual Shop Coordinator) effective from 23rd November 2015.

### **3.5. Reports from Working Groups**

#### **3.5.1. Finance (Jonny)**

Report: Finance Report [HERE](#); Treasurer's Report [HERE](#)

#### **3.5.2. Risk management (Maurice)**

Report: NIL

#### **3.5.3. Shop Development (David)**

Report: NIL

#### **3.5.4. Communications/Marketing (Stevie)**

Report: NIL

##### **3.5.4.1. Website**

Report: Verbal report being presented. (Section 4.1.)

##### **3.5.4.2. Social Media** on hold until after website launched

Report: NIL

#### **3.5.4.3. Marketing (Celine as member)**

Report: Brief for the working group presented by Celine - [draft HERE](#)

Recommendations: That the brief for the Marketing Working Group be adopted.

#### **3.5.5. Affordability**

Details: Maurice to propose a rename of this working group (Pricing & Products) for 2016 with a formal proposal to be submitted to MC and/or the 2016 Strategy session for discussion/approval.

#### **3.5.6. Operations (Adam)**

Report: NIL

##### **3.5.6.1. Planning (New convenor/contact point required)**

Report: NIL

#### **3.5.7. Compliance and Governance (No convenor/contact point)**

Report: NIL

#### **3.5.8. Sustainability (Katherine/Celine)**

Report: NIL

#### **3.5.9. Community & Membership (Adam)**

Report: NIL

##### **3.5.9.1. Membership Development**

Report: NIL

##### **3.5.9.2. Volunteer Engagement (Emily / Adam)**

See details in Other Business

##### **3.5.9.3. Community Outreach (Adam)**

Report: NIL

#### **3.5.10. Staff Liaison (Jonny)**

##### **Actions taken / details:**

- Jonny and Renata completed an exit interview with Monika. Notes from Monika's interview for MC only, will be distributed under separate cover. Monika is looking at the notes to see if she would like anything amended before giving a copy to Simon.
- Exit interview with Elizabeth to be conducted in the new year.
- SLWG discussed the stock coordinator roles with Simon, and the process for obtaining opinions of staff.

##### **Recommendations:**

- That Simon be offered a performance review in the beginning of 2016 by MC.

- That MC ask Simon to conduct performance reviews of current staff, in order to provide an opportunity for feedback, support and discussion.

#### 3.5.11. Product/Supplier (Adam, Katherine as a member)

Report: NIL

That the Consent Agenda Items be approved.

Moved: Jonny. Seconded: Andrew. CARRIED by consensus.

### 4. Other Working Groups

#### 4.1. Website (Stevie)

Stevie presented a brief verbal report.

Stevie hopes to have a more detailed plan by next meeting, after looking more deeply into various options. He believes we will not need an e-commerce system straight away (more expensive), but we can probably institute a base level system that can be ported into one later if needed.

### 5. Business Arising (Action Items from previous meetings) including any deferred agenda items

#### 5.1. Hiring of Stock Coordinator

- Simon to ask staff to continue in the temporary roles of Stock Coordinators until the end of February. **DONE.**
- MC to determine if a single stock coordinator position will be created by the January MC meeting
- Simon to canvas views from staff and MC and report back. **Staff and Simon will provide MC with a report two weeks before next scheduled MC meeting with comments and recommendations.**

David suggested that two weeks before our MC meeting, a subset of MC review the Manager's proposal and come up with a recommendation based on that report. Jonny suggested that MC should discuss it together at the next meeting. Concern was raised that, even if a recommendation was approved at the February 2 meeting, the trial period may need to be extended to allow sufficient time for hiring and training. It was decided that the trial period should extend until March 14.

- **ACTION:** Simon to send MC a staff feedback report AND Simon's personal recommendation(s) by January 14.
- **ACTION:** Simon to notify staff of the extension until March 14.
- **ACTION:** Jonny to put forward a formal proposal based on Simon's recommendation, and to begin creating job description(s) in line with the proposal.
- **ACTION:** Renata to coordinate MC questions by January 21st, and to ensure responses are available to MC a week before the meeting on February 2. Renata to organise a meeting for us to discuss this issue, if needed.
- **ACTION:** At the next MC meeting on Tuesday February 2 we will decide how to move forward and promptly notify staff.

## 5.2. WH&S Report

- Simon to contact Rhonda (member volunteer) one last time to see if she will deliver her report (or notes) either orally or in writing. **DONE.**
- If Simon does not receive a response within a week, then he will seek bids from three providers for a WH&S review of the shop and its operations. MC move this forward on-line, so that the WH&S review can be performed as quickly as possible.  
**Simon has received two quotes to date and is awaiting receipt of a third, at which point he will forward all three.**

Renata suggested that, because of the urgency of this item, perhaps two quotes is sufficient.

- **ACTION:** Simon to circulate the two received quotes to MC, and the third if/when it is received.

## 5.3. Shop price drops

- To continue the monthly price drops, prominent notices and financial reporting on the effects until the financial information can be digested and acted upon. **ongoing - updated financial information available if required at meeting**

A brief update on the financial effectiveness of the campaign was provided.

## 5.4. Online purchasing via website

- [Old action item:] Stevie to ask two members of the Website working group for advice about how this should progress.

A major problem, according to Stevie, is that we have to throw a lot of money at this in order to get it working, and it may not be economically viable because of the limited use we may see of it in the short term. It may be worth revisiting later if we were to sell at least 40-50 boxes a week, but we are currently doing much less than that.

Stevie recommends that we park this until May, once the new stock coordinator(s) have had some time to consider their focus and better determine the feasibility of this, and until such time as someone comes to MC with a formal proposal. MC agreed by consensus.

## 5.5. Increasing sales using social media

- Maurice to contact the person he has in mind to assist with using social media to increase sales volume. **DONE**
- Simon to work with staff on using Instagram to follow through on staff-determined weekly goals. **Underway: Initial training meeting between staff and Cheree (Instagram contact of Maurice's) to be held in January, having canvassed availability at staff meeting on Wednesday the 6th of January.**

**ACTION:** Simon to include a progress report about this in the Manager's Report.

## 5.6. Open Days at Alfalfa House [5 mins]

- Adam to circulate a written proposal for discussion **DONE** [see HERE](#)

Jonny felt that the proposal sounded encouraging, and good for growing the community. Others suggested the addition to the proposal of a means of determining the effectiveness of the campaign (such as collection of flyers with a discount voucher to count how many were used). Jonny questioned the usefulness of metrics in relation to the effort required to collect them, especially as we would already be getting the immediate benefits (shopping by new people, etc.).

Other MC members felt the metrics were an important part of the process. It was decided that we would leave it up to Adam to discuss with Simon and staff the most appropriate metric. The proposal, with addition of the requirement for a metric, was approved by consensus.

**ACTION:** Andrew to notify Adam that the proposal was approved, and to request regular feedback to MC.

## 5.7. October Fundraiser

Adam to prepare a written report on the Red Rattler fundraiser.

In future we are to “review demographics of areas we target” (Stevie suggestion, no person allocated)

Katherine has requested an update from Adam.

**ACTION:** No written report. Move to next month’s agenda.

## 5.8. Potential MC members

MC to revisit the question of recently resigned staff may join MC.

The matter is being deleted as no one has put forward a proposal.

## 5.9. Affordability WG

Convenor / contact point needed!! - **see proposal from Maurice - name change and new direction being proposed - do not include on future agendas**

## 5.10. Shop closing times before holidays

Emily to research whether we have a policy on these issues and to draft a policy on it if required.

**ACTION:** To be done AFTER induction.

## 5.11. Assistance to hardship case

Renata to liaise with Simon on further alternative assistance that could be found for this Member. **DONE.**

## 6. Manager’s Report

**Report** found [HERE](#)

Katherine expressed thanks to Simon for providing three years' worth of financial data.

That the Manager's Report be accepted.

Moved: Andrew. Seconded: Jonny. CARRIED by consensus.

**7. Workplace Health + Safety - NIL**

**8. Policy - NIL**

**9. Food Grants - NIL**

**10. Other Business**

**10.1. Strategic Planning Session**

Proposed details of planning session [HERE](#)

THAT an invitation be issued to all members in the next newsletter to attend a strategic planning event as outlined, on Sunday February 21, and that a venue be booked.

Moved: Katherine. Seconded: Andrew. CARRIED by consensus.

**ACTION:** Katherine will work with Simon and look into venue hire and time recommendations.

**10.2. Volunteer Engagement Working Group**

Note: David has resigned from this working group.

**Shop operating model**

David clarified that the changes proposed do not involve replacing staff with volunteers; rather, it would attempt to better utilise volunteers in locations such as the till with staff members taking on a different role to manage this.

Emily advised her view that the proposal is not a natural progression from volunteers' current roles, making it would be difficult to implement successfully. In particular, the proposal becomes contentious when it can be interpreted by staff as 'replacement of staff by volunteers'. Additionally, Emily highlighted the importance, from a marketing / shopping perspective, of having experienced people on the till, as staff and volunteers can have very different skillsets.

Renata noted that membership does not generally appear interested in this form of volunteering. Jonny pointed out that there is no current formal policy about volunteers not working on the til.



Katherine proposed that we revisit this after our strategic planning session, which will help determine our direction regarding volunteers / financials / staff.

### **Action Plan draft for the working group**

It was agreed that a clear brief for the working group was required. Katherine recommended that the working group go over the long list of recommendations from members regarding improvements to the volunteering experience from the 2013 Members' Survey. Katherine has circulated these to MC via email.

**ACTION:** Emily and Adam will send a new brief for the working group after reviewing the Survey results.

### **Current issues for the group**

It was noted that having volunteers coordinating other volunteers doesn't tend to be reliable.

#### **10.3. Thursday closing times**

Simon will be having a conversation with staff about staffing the folks in the shop on Thursdays. Simon would like us to revisit whether we should be open longer hours on Thursdays. **An agenda item for the next staff meeting. Recommendation to be forwarded to MC for consideration following discussion with staff.**

#### **10.4. Property lease**

The real estate agent (Manny) has advised that Wiseberry's recommendation to the owner would be to see through the existing lease and examine market conditions at the end of term rather than considering a 3 + 5 or 5 + 5 term. He considered it unlikely the owner would want to extend the lease as five year options are too long. He suggested AH ask if we might extend the lease to coincide with the expiration of next door's lease (Macaroni Restaurant, granted a 5 + 5 about a year ago), as this would make sense from the owner's perspective.

Further to previous discussion on the matter, Simon is awaiting a return call from Norton Rose. The primary contact, Tamina, is conferring with Vince Baudile, the lawyer, about whether he recommends the proposed approach.

**ACTION:** Simon to provide further information as soon as it is available.

#### **10.5. MC Meeting Information Availability**

MC discussed how to make the Agenda available to all members prior to the meeting, and the draft minutes afterwards. The aim is to maximise

transparency and to encourage members to attend meetings. It was, however, noted, that at present the minutes are kept confidential until approved by MC, at which point they are published on the website.

It was agreed that we would provide a short summary of what was discussed at MC for inclusion in 'The Scoop' newsletter, and that this would link to the website where members could find minutes and draft agendas for meetings.

In the interests of having an agenda that could be publicised to members, it was agreed that effort would be made to have the draft agenda prepared earlier than is current practice. Stevie noted that current policy requires it to be prepared by the Wednesday before the meeting.

**ACTION:** Andrew, Katherine and Simon will discuss how draft agendas can be cleaned up for viewing by members.

**ACTION / PROCESS** agreed upon:

- The day after a meeting: Minute taker to send draft minutes to everyone (all MC + Simon) to check.
- Secretary and Chair will massage it and send it out again to MC for approval within 1 week.
- Secretary and Chair will provide a 1-2 sentence summary of what happened at each MC meeting for inclusion in 'The Scoop' newsletter.
- The minute-taker will write a sentence summary for 'The Scoop', which will be chased up / finalised by the Secretary and Chair.
- 2 weeks before the following meeting, Secretary will call for items.
- 1 week before the meeting, the draft agenda will be published on the website.
- Minutes will be ratified at the following meeting.

This process was carried by consensus.

**ACTION:** Andrew to write this into draft and template documents, and to otherwise make sure it happens.

**Meeting closed at 9.05pm.**