Alfalfa House Members Council Meeting - Minutes

Date: Tuesday 23rd February 2016

Time: 7pm

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

Facilitator: Jonny and Katherine

Minutes: Andrew

Timekeeper and vibe watcher: Maurice

**Meeting opened at:** 7.04pm

**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), Jonathan Green (MC), Katherine Lustig (MC), Maurice Cabrera (MC), Simon Holmes (Manager), Stevie Bee (Member).

Apologies: Emily Mierisch (MC), Renata (MC)

Absent: NIL

1. **Approval of Agenda**

David requested the financial report be pulled out from the consent agenda for separate discussion. Financial report has been moved to section 4.2.

That the agenda be approved.

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

1. **Consent Agenda**
   1. Adoption of Previous Minutes

That the minutes of the 02 February 2016 meeting be adopted.

* 1. New members and cancellations

That 69 new members with the following membership numbers: 11162 – 11246 with 13 skipped records (11167, 11172, 11174, 11176, 11181, 11187, 11190, 11191, 11193, 11199, 11128, 11230 and 111234) and 2 blank records (11177, 11236) be accepted as new members.

That 42 members with the following membership numbers be cancelled: 3484, 4437, 5204, 5749, 5844, 5848, 6151, 6211, 6380, 6912, 7428, 7447, 7487, 7539, 7555, 7772, 8055, 8104, 8292, 8375, 8460, 8567, 8801, 8868, 8972, 8976, 9023, 9117, 9160, 9202, 9225, 9306, 9308, 9314, 9327, 9332, 9345, 9349, 9352, 9356, 9358, 9362.

* 1. Out-of-Session Decisions / Proposals

NIL.

* 1. Staffing (appointments and resignations)

That AH accept the resignation of Anthea Fitzgerald, acting Stock Coordinator (Groceries), effective from Tuesday the 23rd of February 2016.

* 1. Reports from Working Groups
     1. Risk management (Maurice)

NIL

* + 1. Shop Development (David)

NIL

* + 1. Communications/Marketing (Stevie)

NIL

* + - 1. Website

NIL

* + - 1. Social Media on hold until after website launched

NIL

* + - 1. Marketing (Celine as member)

NIL

* + 1. Affordability

NIL

* + 1. Operations (Adam)

NIL

* + - 1. Planning (New convenor/contact point required)

NIL

* + 1. Compliance and Governance (No convenor/contact point)

NIL

* + 1. Sustainability (Katherine/Celine)

NIL

* + 1. Community & Membership (Adam)

NIL

* + - 1. Membership Development

NIL

* + - 1. Volunteer Engagement (Emily / Adam)

NIL

* + - 1. Community Outreach (Adam)

NIL

* + 1. Staff Liaison (Jonny)

NIL

* + 1. Product/Supplier (Adam, Katherine as a member)

NIL

That the Consent Agenda Items be approved.

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

1. **Other Reports**
   1. **Manager’s Report**

January 2016 report found [HERE](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1N9zW8CSyD1WjhTTXpUMkFJOGVTSGdFbmVkaER4SkR5VlJv/view?ths=true).

David expressed concern that we don’t have a time frame for the lease negotiation, to ensure it happens soon.

It sounds very likely that we are to have the “5 plus 5” lease meaning we can soon move on this. More discussion on this in the strategic planning session.

That the manager’s report be accepted.

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

* 1. Finance (Jonny)

[Jan 2016 Treasurer’s Report](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1746FpzfFt8dCIAAViJOif9fRl2P3n6DsT921yDHKvks/edit?usp=sharing)

[Jan 2016 Monthly Report](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1I6t7Gg5cnf7ICFdYe03rSDU9U_a3w7yNe8bU2Cae1CE/edit?usp=sharing)

David is worried about us being down to $13.7k in assets and, as responsible directors, we need to urgently address this.

Our duty is to recognise that we have a problem and demonstrate that we are doing something about it.

Maurice suggests finance should not be a consent agenda item, as it is important and we should be actively discussing it regularly. It was agreed that, though we won’t take it off the consent agenda, the Chair and Secretary will keep the item on the agenda in “Other Reports” until it no longer seems urgent.

Maurice: Some costs have gone up, such as bookkeeping and IT.

Jonny: Need to focus on increasing sales.

Stevie: Need an appraisal of the finance report in the minutes.

David: “Cash flow forecasts” to measure our efforts over the year would be welcome.

Maurice: The finance working group discussed budgets and forecasts. The general consensus at those meetings is that we don’t have good enough data to forecast. The alternative of a “break-even analysis” (what we need to earn monthly to break even) has been discussed.

Katherine: our strategic planning session demonstrates that we are actively trying to address this and related problems, rather than simply acknowledging them.

Jonny: And we are actively addressing these concerns through open days, price reductions, 2SER sponsorship, reviewing book-keeping relationship, reviewing our relationship with IT contractor, and staff being made aware of the situation, etc.

We need to make sure we note that we pay attention to things. But we ALSO need to make sure we look at our levels of success, and if our attempts actually have positive results.

**ACTION:** Finance working group will: examine when we may have to stop trading (i.e., when will we be out of cash); perform a break-even analysis, and; liaise with the accountants about when we stop being a going concern.

1. **Business Arising (Action Items from previous meetings) including any deferred agenda items**
   1. **Strategic and Annual Plans**

**Draft Strategic Plan -** Found [**HERE**](http://drive.google.com/open?id=1wM4mZXJ2erCKeQTJD_14LaNYGAHggvlkRr8m5BCBK5k)- prepared based on workshop Sunday 21st February

**For discussion:**

* Review Strategic Plan (including against our Objects) and draft time-based objectives
* Is the 5 year time-frame appropriate?
* Consider short-term goals for Annual Plan
* Which Working Groups are needed to fulfil our strategic directions?
* What should working groups be called?

We reviewed and as a group revised Katherine’s Draft Strategic Plan. We didn’t get a chance to go through it all in great detail, but we improved it and made initial plans for acting on it. Action items and some of the discussion points are listed below.

David: Ideas are great, but we have had most of them before. Need appropriate processes to make sure things actually happen. And when we have ideas, we need to make sure we actually have the resources to get them done.

Katherine: We need to start putting actions against strategies.

Maurice: We haven't revisited what we've done well and what we haven't done well in the past, so there is concern that we'll do the same as previous years and not properly complete anything.

Katherine: We are obligated to put together strategic and annual plan. Previous attempts did not have end date/goals, and they were more vaguely “we will investigate x”.

Maurice: The UTS report highlighted actions and allocated them to working groups.

David: We don't have a document that clearly sets out what we have/not achieved in the past years, which would be useful to refer to.

Jonny: We have people present from MC in the past year, so their knowledge/experience can be helpful here.

**ACTION:** Katherine, Renata, Andrew, Simon and Adam to meet and work on the Strategic Plan document.

**ACTION:** Maurice to send Andrew (and rest of MC) all details we have about past surveys and the UTS report.

**ACTION:** Andrew (and potentially Sax) to review the 2013 and UTS surveys and report back by May 2016 about how we can best serve our members and the wider community. Primary focus: outline what membership wants and what we are not offering. Secondary focus: find out what the wider community wants and why they may not be joining/shopping.

**ACTION:** Simon to bring the section “Attracting and Maintaining Members” to the marketing working group and, with celine's original brief, request a proposal with steps, targets (KPIs) and a date goal. (Flag as short-term goal.) Deliverable: Date by which you can present to MC a draft marketing strategy for adoption. Include measurable responses. Deliverable: Break down of actions and targets that will be taken to get to that point. (Time frame is 6 months.)

**ACTION:** Maurice to create a brief on “Competitive pricing and profitable trading” before the next MC meeting. (Time frame is 6 months.)

**ACTION:** David to report back to MC on our options for increasing our shop space. This relates to the UTS recommendation of increasing shop space from 55% to 65% of our overall space.

**ACTION:** Once we have the Strategic Plan cleaned up a little, we need to look through the related actions and allocate them as tasks for working groups.

Adam emailed the following to MC. Discuss!

Simon and I are working through the open day for Feb and its starting to come together. One of the concerns that has arisen is the need to ensure that members don’t feel slighted by having non-members getting the same discount that they are. I don’t think this is a huge risk or anything, but I was thinking maybe to mitigate that issue, we should propose a regular, member appreciation day in the same consistent way. Maybe we add an additional 5% discount for members, do something nice for folks like a bbq out the back…I don’t know. Seems like the right thing to do anyway but the open days def make me think we should consider it sooner rather than later. A monthly member appreciation event would be fun and nice, and hopefully might make people want to engage with the co-op at least once a month

* 1. **October 2015 Fundraiser Report**

Past action item: Adam to produce and distribute an October 2015 fundraiser report to MC.

Return to this next month.

* 1. **Volunteer coordinator position**

Past action item: Renata to prepare a formal proposal for a volunteer coordinator position for this meeting, in consultation with others who may be able to help. (Address the major concerns about how this will affect our current dire financial situation.)

Return to this next month.

* 1. **Holiday closure policy**

Past action item: Emily to research whether we have a policy on shop closure around holidays and the issues related to this. Draft a policy on it if required. Talk with Monika about this.

Return to this next month.

* 1. **Agenda/minutes publication**

Past action item: Katherine to send out an email to MC (+ Stevie, Adam, Monika and any others interested) to clarify the agenda/minutes publication process.

Andrew will assist. Return to this next month.

* 1. **Consent agenda**

Past action item: Katherine to prepare report and recommendations on what exactly can go into the Consent Agenda.

Return to this next month.

1. **Workplace Health + Safety**

NIL.

1. **Policy**

NIL.

1. **Food Grants**

NIL.

1. **Other Business**
   1. **Discount for Members at Strategic Planning Day** [5 mins]

That those members who attended the Strategic Planning event be given a one-off 25% discount shop

**ACTION:** There is an existing policy regarding strategic planning (and similar) events awarding volunteer hours to participants. Simon will make sure this happens.

**Meeting closed at 21:35pm**

**Agenda items deferred this meeting**

Deferred until May meeting - Online purchasing via website. Refer minutes from December 2015 meeting.

Action items

* Adam: Produce and distribute an October 2015 fundraiser report to MC.
* Renata: Prepare a formal proposal for a volunteer coordinator position for next month’s meeting, in consultation with others who may be able to help. (Address the major concerns about how this will affect our current dire financial situation.)
* Emily: Research whether we have a policy on shop closure around holidays and the issues related to this. Draft a policy on it if required. Talk with Monika about this.
* Katherine: Prepare report and recommendations on what exactly can go into the Consent Agenda.
* Katherine (and Andrew) to send out an email to MC (+ Stevie, Adam, Monika and any others interested) to clarify the agenda/minutes publication process.
* Finance working group will: examine when we may have to stop trading (i.e., when will we be out of cash); perform a break-even analysis, and; liaise with the accountants about when we stop being a going concern.
* Katherine, Renata, Andrew, Simon and Adam to meet and work on the Strategic Plan document.
* Maurice to send Andrew (and rest of MC) all details we have about past surveys and the UTS report.
* Andrew (and potentially Sax) to review the 2013 and UTS surveys and report back by May 2016 about how we can best serve our members and the wider community. Primary focus: outline what membership wants and what we are not offering. Secondary focus: find out what the wider community wants and why they may not be joining/shopping.
* Simon to bring the section “Attracting and Maintaining Members” to the marketing working group and, with celine's original brief, request a proposal with steps, targets (KPIs) and a date goal. (Flag as short-term goal.) Deliverable: Date by which you can present to MC a draft marketing strategy for adoption. Include measurable responses. Deliverable: Break down of actions and targets that will be taken to get to that point. (Time frame is 6 months.)
* Maurice to create a brief on “Competitive pricing and profitable trading” before the next MC meeting. (Time frame is 6 months.)
* David to report back to MC on our options for increasing our shop space. This relates to the UTS recommendation of increasing shop space from 55% to 65% of our overall space.
* Once we have the Strategic Plan cleaned up a little, we need to look through the related actions and allocate them as tasks for working groups.
* There is an existing policy regarding strategic planning (and similar) events awarding volunteer hours to participants. Simon will make sure this happens.