

Alfalfa House Members Council Meeting - Minutes of Meeting

Date: Tuesday 25 October 2016

Time: 7pm

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

Facilitator: Katherine

Minutes: Andrew.

Timekeeper: Katherine.

**Meeting opened at: 7pm**

**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: (Full names with roles.) Andrew McNicol (MC), Jonathan Green (MC), Katherine Lustig (MC), Maurice Cabrera (MC), Renata (MC).

Apologies: David Begg (MC), Stevie.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

That the agenda be approved.

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

**3. Consent Agenda**

**3.1. Adoption of Previous Minutes**

That the minutes of the September 2016 meeting be adopted.

**3.2. New members and cancellations**

That 66 members with the following membership numbers: 11766-11848 with 17 skipped and blank records (11768, 11782, 11783, 11794, 11798, 11800, 11804, 11805, 11807, 11810, 11815, 11816, 11817, 11818, 11835, 11837, 11839) be accepted as new members.

That 83 members with the following membership numbers be cancelled: 2914 2927 2942 3431 3576 3904 3971 4612 4642 4650 4685 5142 5470 5487 5655 5746 5798 5826 5837 6082 6123 6517 6523 6782 7035 7206 7320 7490 7615 7865 8022 8027 8077 8290 8301 8676 8694 8727 8734 8777 8939 9037 9082 9103 9104 9241 9354 9383 9426 9428 9445 9468 9484 9518 9774 9775 9783 9897 9911 9930 9941 9963 10010 10030 10038 10041 10043 10056 10057 10058 10062 10066 10070 10072 10073 10075 10077 10079 10081 10082 10083 10091 10095.

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

### 3.4. Reports from Working Groups

#### 3.4.1. Governance (Andrew, Katherine, Renata)

##### Carried over actions

- Draft a policy on developing policies. - outstanding
- Draft a new Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures. - outstanding
- Create hard and electronic folders with index for all policies. - outstanding
- Conduct and document a quarterly site audit based on the WH&S report. Bring in additional group members to help. - outstanding
- That a WHS safety and risk management system be prepared in line with the recommendations of the report not later than August 2016, including a documented WHS induction program, updated incident reporting and emergency procedures. - outstanding

#### 3.4.2. Premises Solutions (David) - NIL

#### 3.4.3. Building Website and Other IT (Stevie)

Website build is now with Marketing WG.

#### 3.4.4. Marketing (Cath, Celine, Suzie)

##### Carried over actions

- Look into proposing a story to 2SER - Maurice has taken this on.
- Consider optimal time for sending newsletters - not achieved. Not urgent, taking off action items for future meetings.

**Report:** Website site map is being drafted. A WordPress developer is standing by to start development of the website.

The Working Group has received a new offer for hosting (\$599.00 from Giga Media) through the WordPress developer which is cheaper than the current one (\$770.72) and allows us to keep all domain names together (they are currently separate) and to get assistance

from two people in website development as part of the deal, plus access to an image library.

**3.4.5. Affordability (Maurice) - NIL**

**3.4.6. Sustainability (Celine, Katherine) - NIL**

**3.4.7. Volunteer Engagement (Adam, Emily) - NIL**

**3.4.8. Community Outreach (Adam) - NIL**

**3.4.9. Staff Liaison (Jonny, Renata) - NIL**

**3.5. Staffing (appointments and resignations)**

Ran De Silva has join staff as a casual.

That AH accept the appointment of Ran De Silva effective from [date].

**3.6. Deferred Matters / Business Arising**

**3.6.1. Innerwest Courier piece**

- Maurice to contact them and see what they can do. - **DONE, article has appeared.**

**3.6.2. Manager / Coordinator position**

- Catherine to Re-draft JD and send to staff and MC this week (the week of last MC meeting) for final discussion. - **DONE**
- Staff and MC to offer final feedback so it can go out ASAP with a view to hire someone within two months. - **in progress**

See separate item in main agenda for next stage, now called Team Leader.

**3.6.3. Membership fee / fundraising**

- MC to draft 'comms' (~5 ways people can help us) by THURSDAY. - **DONE**
- MWG send MC a final copy by SUNDAY for approval and action. - **DONE**
- MC approve MWG's final copy by SUNDAY. Get it out to members by TUESDAY. - **DONE**
- Staff to investigate how to do online crowd-funding campaigns and report back to MC. - **DONE**

**3.6.4. Vision and Mission statement**

- MC to prioritise Vision and Mission statements to have them ready for fundraising and membership campaigns. Send a response to Celine, Cath and Suzie ASAP - **outstanding**

#### 3.6.5. Staff hiring

- Renata to represent MC on the interview panel for shop coordinator and volunteer positions. - **DONE**

#### 3.7. Food Grants - NIL

#### 3.8. Workplace Health and Safety

That the Consent Agenda Items be approved.

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

#### 4. Treasurer's Report (standing agenda item) (5 min)

[September 2016 Treasurer's Report](#)

[September 2016 Dashboard](#)

#### 5. Manager's Report (5 mins)

[HERE](#)

Carried over action items

- Organise a line item in POS for donations. - **DONE**
- **Move on EFTPOS minimum proposal. (Proposal wording in September minutes.)**
- Advertise the volunteer coordinator position as per policy, pending changes made by SLWG to ensure it is in line with other AH JDs, at the shop co-ordinator rate following consultation with staff. (Old Simon action.) - **DONE**

#### 6. Team Leader JD (20 min)

Viewable [here](#).

Discussion about whether staff can have two representatives on the hiring panel.

Monika: This discussion has happened a few times previous. It has been proposed as a policy but never officially accepted.

Renata proposed that we have 2 MC and 1 staff, but that this be revisited for policy inclusion, to be discussed at a future meeting. We will add this to the agenda.

**Catherine will take on rewriting the policy, in consultation with various.**

We discussed the initial description and decided to include the following about the salary: "up to [\$xxx] depending on skills and qualifications".

Proposal: That we **advertise the JD with the above change**. There will be 2 MC (Katherine and Catherine) and 1 staff (delegated by staff) on the panel, who will choose successful candidate(s) using consensus decision making.

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

#### 7. **Food Grants (5min)**

Given the financial stress under which Alfalfa House finds itself, it is proposed that Food Grants be temporarily suspended.

**Recommendation** That the food grants be temporarily suspended until further notice, apart from honouring existing grant commitments.

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

#### 8. **AGM Planning (10 min)**

We discussed timing of the AGM.

Only 2 weeks' notice is required because we have no major changes.

Renata proposes that we hold the AGM event on Sunday 27 November 2016, with pre-event happening from 4pm.

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

Social media and email requests need to be worded more strongly. We need to be better at advertising what exactly people get out of donations.

**ACTION: Maurice to get in touch with the 2SER marketing manager to advertise our crowdfunding campaign.**

We can extend the chuffed campaign. **ACTION: Julia will extend it to the end of the AGM.**

#### 9. **Blue Mountains Co-op discussion**

The co-op manager (Halin), the stock manager (Mike) and the former treasurer (Gren) want to make themselves available, tonight and at other times, for support.

Some notes from Q&A session follow:

BMC have been going for 36 years. After moving to a slightly better location turnover doubled! It was new shoppers who made the difference because of the slight upgrade of convenience. BMC have a second shop with a few items (mostly personal care, accounting for ~10% sales) and better space to facilitate discussion. \$3.6 million turnover last year! Volunteers, but don't rely on them. School kids working!

Membership fee \$35 annually. Slowly, slightly increasing every 2-5 years. Received well by membership, perhaps because they've always had it.

(Options for 3-6 month memberships, not advertised.) This is essentially the co-op's net profit for the year. Members get 10% discount. Volunteers get 30% discount, capped at \$200.

25% stock is produce, all organic. Groceries roughly 70% organic / 30% conventional if there's a reason. Maybe 250 suppliers total.

2300 paid up members, but only 8 spend over \$200 per week. 72 \$100-\$200. 212 \$50-100 (bulk spend).

Jonny: How do you account for your success, especially because of increased competition?

Halin: Woolworths (very close) didn't have much in terms of organic produce, and they provided a great parking area for shoppers! Incredible loyalty from members. People shop because of food, but also because of the 'vibe', because it's a hub.

Halin: Conflict nearly killed the co-op a few times. Boards had conflict with staff or with each other. This was helped with carefully facilitated meetings with an outsider.

Board members are targeted for skills. People nominate specifically for positions (chair, secretary, treasurer). "Not a fully democratic process because of bad experiences in the past."

Currently have a manager, and are still working out scope of manager and board roles/responsibilities.

For members: drygoods 50% markup, produce 30% markup.

Staff wages: 350 hours each week - ~\$20k fortnight, ~19% sales.

Halin, re moving: "**You've got to be where people go to buy food.**" Also to make it a social experience, there needs to be space nearby to hang out.

"Don't do any marketing at all." Outreach/community engagement has increased now 'Kat' is there to help with it. Focus on looking after existing shoppers, making it more attractive to them and trying to make it easy for them to do a bigger shop.

4 trolleys for big shops, people fight over them!

90 square feet in main shop, possibly about the same in the second location.

Constantly review product lines.

\$10k per day average! 2 people start 8am. 3rd person 9.30, 4th person later in morning. 3 on floor at all times. Open 9-6. Organised workload into 'zones' (zone 1 till, zone 2 sink/veg, zone 3 deliveries/coolroom etc.) which helps focus/contain workload.

Office upstairs, plus small area at the back of the shop used by Mike.

15 hours admin on top of Halin's role. Board support role additional, paid, does a lot of secretary work.

"Have you considered not having a shopfront and just doing delivery service?" Our demographic is very different, they want the community.

Blue Mountains membership catchment is wide. Alfalfa has local members but we are losing them when they move away and don't return.

No conscious decision to put high selling items at specific areas in the shop etc.

Some co-ops have made a strong push to prepack foods to compete with other stores that have convenient organic items. Possible to sell both bulk and prepack! (Space permitting...) Discount on bulk items?

"Greg Patmore" Usyd, degree in co-op management. May be useful to get in touch with?

**Meeting closed at 9:20pm**

Notes for future meetings:

- Keep Treasurer's report as a standing agenda item.
- Keep AGM planning as a standing agenda item. Sunday 27 November.
- November MC meeting to be held Tuesday 15.

OH&S - shoulder issues occur far too frequently - look into it ASAP!



