

Alfalfa House Members Council Meeting - Minutes of Meeting

Date: Tuesday 28 June 2016

Time: 7pm

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

Facilitator: Katherine

Minutes: Andrew and Renata

Timekeeper: Andrew

Meeting opened at: 7.05pm

Acknowledgement of Country

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendance: Andrew McNicol (MC), David Begg (MC) arrived 7:55, Jonathan Green (MC) via Skype, Katherine Lustig (MC), Maurice Cabrera (MC) via Skype, Renata (MC), Simon Holmes (Manager), Stevie Bee (Member).

Apologies: Emily Mierisch (MC)

2. Approval of Agenda

That the agenda be approved.

Moved: Katherine Seconded: Renata. CARRIED by consensus.

3. Consent Agenda

3.1. Adoption of Previous Minutes

That the minutes of the Tuesday 31 May 2016 meeting be adopted.

3.2. New members and cancellations

That members with the following membership numbers: 11495 - 11555, excluding 11504, 11517, 11539 (skipped) and 11506 (blank) be accepted as new members.

That members with the following membership numbers be cancelled: 2803, 3022, 3194, 3479, 3780, 4243, 4533, 5019, 5466, 5540, 5865, 6242, 6265, 6288, 6348, 6379, 6635, 6727, 7028, 7333, 7339, 7344, 7637, 7794, 7864, 7907, 7918, 8014, 8068, 8149, 8305, 8361, 8508, 8666, 8667, 8681, 9019, 9051, 9214, 9278, 9328, 9355, 9500, 9546, 9563, 9583, 9605, 9608, 9613, 9621 (blank), 9625, 9633, 9634, 9640, 9649, 9655, 9656, 9662, 9668, 9673, 9682.

3.3. Out-of-Session Decisions / Proposals

STOREROOM FRIDGE REPAIR

On Friday June 10 a compressor broke in one of the storeroom fridges and required immediate repair. As we need these fridges for our core operations, Jonny and Katherine approved the expenditure in consultation with Simon.

The total cost was \$1650.

Please note, that some after the fact research showed (i) the compressor (or like) sold on gumtree at \$1430 and (ii) a very rough estimate from Refrigeration Connect/Anycool came in at between \$1,000 to \$1,500. So, I (Jonny) think this expenditure was reasonable.

3.4. Reports from Working Groups

3.4.1. Governance (Andrew, Katherine, Renata)

Carried over actions:

1. Draft a policy on developing policies - **not completed**
2. Draft a new Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures - **not completed**
3. Create hard and electronic folders with index for all policies - **not completed**
4. Conduct and document a quarterly site audit based on the WH&S report. Bring in additional group members to help. - **not completed**
5. 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. - **not completed**
6. Katherine - need to look through and work out which jobs need volunteers and how we will get them. - **not completed**
7. Katherine to contact Emily from volunteer engagement working group and Maurice. - **not completed**

3.4.2. Premises Solutions (David) - NIL

3.4.3. Finance

[May 2016 Treasurer's Report](#)

[May 2016 Monthly Report](#)

[May 2016 Dashboard](#)

- 3.4.4. Building Website and Other IT (Stevie) - NIL**
- 3.4.5. Marketing (Cath, Celine, Suzie)**
Carried over action: Consider optimal time for sending newsletters. Liaise with Simon. - **not completed**
- 3.4.6. Affordability (Maurice)**
Carried over action: Create a brief on “Competitive pricing and profitable trading” before the next MC meeting. (Time frame is 6 months.) - **not completed**
- 3.4.7. Sustainability (Celine, Katherine) - NIL**
- 3.4.8. Volunteer Engagement (Adam, Emily)**
Emily and Renata to create a Position Description for the Volunteer Coordinator role. - **drafted**
- 3.4.9. Community outreach (Adam) - NIL**
- 3.4.10. Staff Liaison (Jonny, Renata) - NIL**
- 3.5. Manager’s Report - found [HERE](#) - note Sales up by 2% on previous month; number of vollies static; vollie hours up by 8%; Facebook engagement up by 8%; daily transactions static; average daily sales down by 5%**
- 3.6. Deferred Matters / Business Arising**
 - 3.6.1. October 2015 Fundraiser Report**
Past action item: Adam to produce and distribute an October 2015 fundraiser report to MC. - **not completed**
 - 3.6.2. Agenda/minutes publication**
Past action item: Andrew and Katherine to send out an email to MC (+ Stevie, Adam, Monika and any others interested) to clarify the agenda/minutes publication process. - **done**
 - 3.6.3. Storage**
Storage of old documentation has been completed. Further storage of 6-8 boxes from the shop being discussed between Renata and Simon. - **not completed**
 - 3.6.4. Waste**
Renata to discuss waste removal with Simon. - **not completed**
 - 3.6.5. Volunteer Coordinator position**
Renata draft volunteer coordinator JD for approval next MC meeting. Simon ask staff about interest in volunteer coordinator position at the next staff meeting. - **Completed. Further discussions ongoing.**
 - 3.6.6. Internal front shop fitting**

Staff and Ben to discuss installation, volunteers and timeframe.

3.6.7. Thursday closing hours report

Simon to update the report with additional information, and send to MC to decide online. - **provided for current meeting**

3.6.8. Volunteer hour tracking

Simon to remind volunteers of how to record hours

MC hours to be tracked from meeting to meeting, volunteer book to be brought to MC meetings by Simon. - **ongoing**

3.6.9. Cleaning expenses in April

Simon will check with KC why cleaning expense is so high. - **done.**

This had to do with the timing of invoices (one paid early and one paid late, brought two extra invoices into the month's numbers).

3.7. Workplace Health and Safety - NIL incidents

That the Consent Agenda Items be approved.

Moved: Katherine Seconded: Andrew CARRIED by consensus.

4. Book-keeper (Finance Working Group, 20 mins)

Discussion/Decision: Should we employ a new book-keeper or stick with our current one? See FWG Report for details.

Keeping Company (KC) vs Sustainable Numbers (SN).

Jonny: FWG didn't have consensus about recommendation. Jonny and Simon lean toward keeping with KC for 3 months. Maurice and Stevie lean toward going with SN. Difference of opinion relates to changing bookkeepers headache and whether good offer numbers would be available later on.

Stevie: We've gone pretty far with an engagement letter - we may look bad for canceling.

Maurice: We were clear with KC about looking for others. Before that we were given a reduction of \$2500. Their \$1800 offer after the due date was okay, but don't go toward fixing the issues we have with them - responsiveness etc. We originally engaged them for 3K when there was a lot of work and we were desperate, but now there's not that much work. A recent report took 9 months and wasn't overly useful.

Jonny: They couldn't give us what we want at \$2500, so how will they do it for lower? Skeptical, but willing to give them a chance if it's no cost for us. More on the fence than pro-KC.

Maurice: Two juniors would come in to replace the previous person working for us. Introduces unknowns (may be worse, could be better). Need a clean rate, but a 3 month trial might mean SN don't want us any more.

Renata: Requests clarification about level of service about SN? Simon: seems good so far, and references were good.

SN is \$1650, but the benefit with sticking with them is less staff work in transitioning to to a new a system.

Simon: SN seem good, but if KC lift their game that would be ideal for us.

Katherine: Concerned about staying with anyone we think need to “lift their game”. KC may also be more expensive because they’re more well known?

Andrew: Only thing preventing me from strongly recommending we go with SN is that Simon, who deals with them, isn’t totally in favour of the switch.

We decided to stick with the original agreement so we don’t need to do anything.

Jonny proposes that MC approves the engagement letter with Sustainable Numbers. And that Jonny as treasurer is authorised to sign on behalf of MC.

[\[Engagement Letter\]](#)

Renata proposes that the finance working group helps simon with the transition, and that they let the rest of MC know if there’s any more support they need from MC.

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

5. Audit (Finance Working Group, 20 mins)

At the last AGM it was agreed that a financial audit would be conducted at least every three years, but that any additional audit required at least ten members to direct MC to conduct one. Full details are [HERE](#).

No financial audit is set to be conducted for the 2016 Financial Year. If we do want one we can talk about it here.

Maurice: Sustainable Numbers (new bookkeepers) may request that we do have an audit. Given we’ve gone with a bookkeeper that’s more economical, it’s quite possible they will be happy with our old numbers.

Jonny: Strongly against auditing because it will cost us money. Any new bookkeeper would be in favour for extra caution, but Jonny is against it.

Simon: Stephen J Miller (SJM) (company) may wish to come in for our stocktake later this week.

Action: Simon to tell SJM that we will not be auditing this year.

Katherine closed this item. We won't have any further discussion until we hear back from the new bookkeeper.

Action: Finance Working group to get back to us if Sustainable Numbers recommends/requests an audit.

6. Annual General Meeting 2016 (5 mins)

Proposal: That the 2016 Annual General Meeting be set for Tuesday 22nd November, and the scheduled November Members' Council meeting be brought forward one week to Tuesday 15th November.

We should be able to get the October financial report by that time. FWG will work with Sustainable Numbers to get this done.

Side recommendation that we would make the AGM a social event. Something simple to get people in

Action: Renata to coordinate and request for volunteers to help plan the social AGM event.

Moved: Katherine Seconded: Renata. CARRIED by consensus.

7. Food Grants (5 mins)

The Women's Library made an application with insufficient lead time, and has been invited to apply again with more lead time.

2SER has made an application for 10-14 food boxes of \$50-\$100 value to be given away as prizes during their two week annual supporter drive in October. A similar food grant was successful last year owing to fewer than expected other food grant applications.

There have been several successful food grants in the current financial year, as well as use of food grant money for the Alfalfa House strategic planning workshop.

Proposal: That 2SER be offered the balance of food grants not awarded in the past twelve month period as at September 2016.

Stevie: What was the result last year? Did any of them sign up as members?

Simon: Unknown, nothing we know about, apart from extra 2SER advertising during the campaign.

Maurice: If we do have grant money available, we should make it work for us. Eg. on-air interview time, advertising, etc. We could use this as a yearly drive for us.

Simon: Interviews are a separate exercise to the food drive, but Simon can ask?

Is the 2SER demographic who we should advertise to?

Simon: Yes! Age, location, education, etc.

Stevie: Can attach this to a relevant event, such as global days, etc.

ACTION: Simon to go back and ask about the possibility of a story, and -mention in a way that does not sound like a bribe- that we will probably be continuing to the campaign again this year.

Jonny: Clarify this is food grant budget and not advertising budget, and slight concern about giving so much of our allocated food grant money to a single entity.

Andrew: Should we be concerned that we aren't giving out grants regularly? (\$300 so far this FY?)

8. Thursday Closing Times (Simon, 10 mins)

At the previous MC it was proposed to close the shop regularly at 7pm on Thursdays owing to low trading in the 7-8pm hour. Further information was requested to assist in the decision-making. This information can be viewed [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

Simon brought new spreadsheets to the meeting that additionally outline "gross profit" and "wages" for each day listed. Sales are trending UP slightly on Thursday evenings and DOWN on thursday mornings.

We are making a profit of about \$9 every Thursday 7pm to 8pm, not including electricity etc.

Andrew: If there are a few specific members who shop at that specific hour, it may be worth consulting with them directly, and see if they specifically want us open then. At least maybe let them know directly if we want to stop trading at this time.

Renata: They will probably shop earlier and on another day.

Jonny: We are a non-profit organisation and if we're open serving the community and actually making a profit, there may not be a good reason to close.

Clarification: This is an issue of staffing hours, as it creates an issue where staff work longer than a standard 9 hour shift.

Renata: Understands there are some benefits to a few members, ...

Stevie: In the past we may get in trouble with members for doing things without consulting them.

Jonny: Here is an hour staff feel is not worth being open. We should all agree on that because serving the community and giving more wages to our staff. Rent also makes up a lesser amount of our opening hours etc. If we give up a 'break even' hour we should think about it a little harder. It may be better to think about breaking up staffing hours better rather than shortening the opening hours.

Renata: Poll members to see if there's a time/day you'd like to shop that we're not open. Maybe Simon

Jonny: Can we open earlier on Thursday to make staff shift splits better? Add hours in the morning without taking away the 7 - 8 pm hour.

Simon: Strong suggestion from numbers that we open earlier. Staff haven't been opposed to this as a hypothetical, though being busy out the back means they may not be active on the shop floor.

Maurice: This is all about members. One aggrieved person can have a loud voice. Second Renata's suggestion about polling members. Small profit, but more important is what the members say. Maybe have 1-on-1 discussion

ACTION: We (Stevie and Simon) look at numbers more, we (Renata and Stevie) do a poll to members about opening hours, Simon brief the staff and come back with an interim report.

9. Volunteer Coordinator Position (Renata, 10 mins)

Draft job description [HERE](#)

Proposal: That the volunteer coordinator position be advertised internally.

Jonny- what is the rate per hour? Should be shop coordinator rate.

David- Stock rate, as it deserves a higher skill-set. Would like to advertise externally.

Jonny- Do we have a policy to offer jobs externally? No.

Katherine- Policy says we have to hire externally.

Jonny- We are running at a significant loss, should be shop coordinator rate. We can get someone to do the job at that rate, I think. We don't have the money to spend.

Andrew- Hours could be extra. How do we factor in an external person when it would be useful.

David- Not ethical for us to advertise a job that we know is more hours.

Renata- Not saying it is more hours, just that it would be better if the person were well established within the coop.

Proposal: that the volunteer co-ordinator position be advertised 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.

Moved: Katherine Seconded: Andrew.

10. Under-18 Volunteers (Katherine/Simon, 10 mins)

Proposal: That children under eighteen years be permitted to volunteer, but that staff make parents aware that insurance covers children at only 10% of the compensation rate at which adults are covered in the event of accident or emergency.

That staff are encouraged to exercise discretion by speaking with members if their children are hindering work at the shop, creating a nuisance or other issue.

Further, that the Code of Conduct Policy include details relating to children volunteering when drafted.

David- could get a quote on the premium to incorporate 14-18 year olds.

Katherine- make parents aware of the situation.

Simon- currently do accept volunteers under 18, however, Simon has been letting volunteers know that MC are discussing it.

Renata- I disagree that young children hinder. Important that parents sign something to inform them.

Jonny- 1. Will parents be allowed to leave their child in the shop to volunteer by themselves? Will we end up babysitting? 2. No additional insurance costs are acceptable to me. need to state that we don't take children under a particular age, as they are too much of a liability and too difficult to manage. We can still be on the hook for additional costs, even though insurance won't cover it. Against children volunteering without their parents.

Katherine- understands that young people do currently volunteer, that we are a community organisation, and that that includes young people.

Stevie- have had 15 and 16 year olds, and this was not an issue. Case by case basis. Insurance is a concern, worth looking into the premium. Doesn't want children on their own, but young people would be fine.

Katherine- if you can work legally, why couldn't you volunteer?

Andrew- Like the idea of under 18's volunteering.. 1. Find out about insurance 2. Find interim solution.

David- No under 18's volunteer until we have finalised this. It's not safe for them to volunteer without this.

Renata- Asked Simon if there are any teenagers volunteering.

Katherine- 1. Unsupervised children = no

2. Supervised children= should be fine, however would they be insured at all? Could they be covered as a member/shopper?

Renata- due to the risk, need to be no kids until we get legal advice and an insurance quote.

Jonny- unsupervised work, should be same as legal age for work.

If the child is accompanying the parent, then invitee status, as opposed as to volunteer status. They aren't accumulating hours, therefore not a volunteer. Also, don't want to pay anything additional in insurance.

Action- Simon to ask insurance company about under 18 people volunteering, particularly from the legal age of working and the cost of any change to our premium.

Interim policy- Children accompanying parents can be there with them, supervised by the parent and not officially volunteering. Children under 18 cannot volunteer alone. If staff have any concerns about the child, to let Simon know.

Action- Andrew to look at the membership age and rules within the constitution

Jonny left the meeting 9.01

11. Next Members' Council (Katherine, 10 mins)

Brief discussion - what skills and experience are desirable for an effective MC? - do we wish to target anything / anyone in particular before the next AGM?

David- Should look to the members of the working groups, as they have experience of governance.

Katherine- asking who would like to stand next year:

Katherine- will

David- won't

Andrew- thinking remain

Maurice- wants to stay.

12. Officially note the resignation of Emily Mierish as of 28.6.16.

Action: Katherine to talk to Suzy about the casual vacancy.

Action: Simon to put the vacancy into the next e- news

13. Post-Meeting Check-In

Renata- Think it's been a good meeting, despite Skype.

Stevie- happy that we had decent discussions, and that we are diligently looking at the issues with good process. Good vibe. Didn't feel too rushed.

Maurice- Thanks for being so accommodating re Skype, i was very glad to be part of some important discussions and Skype made it possible.

Andrew- relaxed time-keeper, which might have added to the relaxed feeling. Have a draft for next meeting already, will be prepared earlier.

Simon- effective meeting

Suzy- good meeting, also effective.

Katherine- was concerned that it was a long agenda, think it went well. Not here next month- will be in Bangkok. Need another facilitator. If Renata can't make it, other 4 members need to be able to attend.

Meeting closed at 9.13 pm

Agenda items deferred this meeting - NIL

