

Alfalfa House Members Council Meeting - minutes

Date: 27 June 2017

Time: 7pm

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

Facilitator: Katherine / David

Minutes: Catherine / Victoria

Timekeeper: David

Meeting opened at: 7.02pm

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: Lucy Williams Moore (staff), Stevie Bee (member), Victoria Taylor (MC), David (MC), Nathan Wratten, Katherine Lustig (MC), Catherine O'Keefe (MC), Renata Field (MC, by Skype), Maurice Cabrera (staff), Janne King (staff, arrived 7:30pm), Julia Gove (staff, arrived 7:30pm)

Apologies: Matt McMillan (MC), Jonathan Green (MC); Emma Lees (member)

Absent: Matt McMillan (MC), Jonny Green (MC)

2. Approval of Agenda

That the agenda be approved.

Moved: Victoria; seconded David. Passed by consensus.

3. Consent Agenda

3.1. Adoption of Previous Minutes

That the minutes of the May 2017 meeting be adopted.

3.2. New Members and Cancellations

That members with the following membership numbers: 11620, and 12245 to 12314 with 7 skipped/blank records (12266, 12269, 12275, 12281, 12288, 12292, and 12304) be accepted as new members.

That members with the following membership numbers be cancelled:

2233, 2579, 3218, 3413, 3467, 3813, 4377, 5108, 5135, 5288, 5323, 5530, 5542, 5875, 5971, 6111, 6511, 6780, 6799, 6829, 6900, 6960, 7121, 7425, 7692, 7693, 7887, 8093, 8378, 8420, 8447, 8514, 8574, 8583, 8596, 8671, 8724, 8752, 8769, 8837, 8862, 9006, 9074, 9137, 9458, 9469, 9517, 9565, 9567, 9619, 9659, 9733, 9750, 9767, 9786, 9940, 10025, 10106, 10117, 10190, 10317, 10362, 10366, 10376, 10400, 10508, 10524, 10528, 10569, 10592, 10635, 10639, 10643, 10646, 10652, 10656, 10657, 10659, 10660, 10661,

10662, 10663, 10666, 10667, 10668, 10673, 10674, 10677, 10678, 10682, 10685, 10695, 10701, 10723, 10728, 10731

3.3. Out-of-session Decisions/Proposals

3.3.1 Food grant

Food grant of \$100 awarded to Camdenville Public School. Approved with one stand-aside (Victoria Taylor).

3.3.2 Altered opening hours

There was out of session discussion about changing the opening hours as follows -
Opening hours to become as follows: Monday 10am-7pm, Tuesday 10am-7pm, Wednesday 10am-7pm, Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday 10am-7pm, Saturday 9am-6pm, Sunday 9am-6pm.
In addition, 10% discount to be offered to non-members on Thursday 7-8pm, Saturday 9-10am, Sunday 9-10am.

The proposal was withdrawn.

3.4. Reports from Working Groups

3.4.1. Governance

The governance working group met on Monday 29 May 2017. This was a policy review meeting. Policies come up for review because they are out of date, clearly incorrect/not in line with current practice, or have been marked for review.

Policies currently up for review include -

- rules for members attending the co-op
- telephone internet and email
- music
- hours of work
- office staff reserves
- food and drink.

Outcomes: There will be two policy review outcomes from this governance working group meeting -

- the rules for members attending the coop; and
- the music policy.

There was also useful knowledge-sharing between members and within the wider community.

The next meeting of the governance working group will be in August 2017, and is likely to be a rules review meeting. The date and time will be confirmed in the newsletter in due course.

3.4.2. Shop Development - Maurice Cabrera

See report following Consent Agenda.

3.4.3. Sustainability

NIL

3.4.4. Volunteer Engagement - Julia Gove

NIL

3.4.5. Community Outreach - Nathan Wratten

[Click here](#)

3.4.6. Staff Liaison

NIL

3.4.8. Marketing

NIL

3.4.9. Website - Jenny Millman

We are very pleased to announce our new website has gone live. This has been a major achievement and would not be possible without the countless hours and intense effort by James Templeman and the Website Working Group, with a special shoutout to Jenny Millman who joined the WWG last week and got us over the line.

At present the new website is visually a massive leap forward from the previous site, however, in terms of functionality, we are planning to make some further changes over the coming months. We are therefore calling this a soft 'go-live', stay tuned for more updates over the coming months.

3.5. Manager's Report

[Manager's report](#)

3.6. Staffing (appointments and resignations)

That AH accepts the resignation of Rosie Jones effective from 27 June.

3.7. Deferred Matters / Business Arising

Nil

3.8 Food Grants

One food grant awarded (as per out of session approvals, above). See also below for item proposing reinstatement of food grants.

3.9. Workplace Health and Safety

See Manager's Report (above).

That the Consent Agenda Items be approved.

Moved: Katherine L; seconded Catherine. Approved by consensus.

4. Financial Report (Finance Working Group)

[Finance WG report](#)

There were no questions about the Financial Report.

5. Shop Design (Maurice)

For discussion: The shop redesign proposal from Forward Thinking Design is linked below. Costing of building the new units is has not yet been provided. [FTD Shop Redesign Final](#). The proposal has not been costed and needs comments from the MC.

Questions were raised about the ongoing cost of the proposed freezer (possibly \$1 per day), and it was requested that this be calculated and included in the proposal to MC when approval is sought. David has offered to assist with this.

Questions were also raised about what might be sold from the freezer. Staff advised that options included Suzie Spoon packaged products, bulk frozen berries (up to 10kg), tempeh, and ice cream. Katherine asked how this would affect the proportion of packaged / unpackaged items sold in the shop, and how this would affect our long term waste goals. This is still to be determined.

There was some discussion about the new inventory systems being considered, including GPROI and GYPROF.

There was discussion about the fridges. MC were advised that grant applications have been made to update the refrigeration systems, including

- Australian Ethical Super - \$10K grant - Sustainability part of the grant - to improve energy efficiency.
- Clubs NSW - Grant \$10K,
- One other

Renata asked if the fruit and veg unit would be demountable to provide space for events at the shop and was advised it would be on castors.

Katherine asked if there would less shelf space as it appeared that there would be more lower height shelves and was advised that shelf space would not be reduced, but would be used more effectively.

Katherine commented that the design is very close to the previous shop layout from only a few years ago, and asked if there might be reasons we moved away from that, and also if it might look odd going back to that design so soon. Stevie agreed that it looked like the 1990s shop design. Maurice advised that it was a deliberate move to go back to this, as that design was when we were making the most money. (It was clarified that this was based on only three years of financial data.) FTD design have also looked at which items we make most the money on and arranged the shop design accordingly.

David asked if there was scope for re-use of materials. Maurice confirmed there was.

Catherine asked if there will be shelf space to put groceries down at the till? Maurice will confirm this with FTD.

Stevie asked about insulation from window heat for the staff if the till is to be moved back to the window. Maurice advised that there would be a large banner at the till area with the lino replaced.

Catherine will provide contact details to Maurice for the people who installed the floor covering. Not it was a remainder left over after a large building project. Also the owner would not fix the holes in the floor.

Catherine asked if there were plans for takeaway salads and the like. Maurice said that this was not currently planned after MC's decision not to introduce new product lines.

Action (Catherine): Provide contact details to Maurice for Bass Floors

Action (Maurice): Confirm with FTD if there will be shelf space for groceries to be put at the till to make checkout easier.

Action (Maurice): Ensure that freezer running costs are included in the costed proposal.

6. Street Signage (Maurice)

A street signage proposal has been developed by the Marketing WG (Celine, Suzie and Andrew) with costing by Oliver Fity from the Maker Space (who was responsible for the bulk liquids shelving). This new signage is essential to clearly identify our shop now that Taste Organics is on Enmore Road, and will assist greatly in drawing passing foot traffic to our establishment.

[New Street Signage Proposal](#)

Proposal: That the expenditure of \$1,236 be approved for the street signage.

David asked that a piece of aluminum angle, or aluminium channel be placed over the timber sign to stop rain getting in, which would shorten the life of the sign.

Maurice advised that the sign is too narrow to write in bigger letters the part of the sign that says "Alfalfa House Cooperative since 1981"

Catherine raised concern about using the word organic as people will ask for certification, and it is not accurate to use the word in isolation. Victoria suggested that we are primarily organic, though not fully, and possibly entitled to use the word.

A number of those present were concerned that the words were not an accurate reflection of what we are, and that words such as cooperative, wholefoods and community were important, as well as the message that we are a grocery store.

It was determined that the people present were not able to decide on the best wording, but that the Marketing Working Group should be asked to come up with alternative wording.

Catherine and Katherine suggested that it could be brought back to MC out of session.

Action (Marketing Working Group): Present alternative sign wording to MC for approval.

7. Annual Subscription Fee (Maurice)

For discussion: Over the last 5 months the implementation has gone very well, during which time only one member has requested assistance by volunteering for their membership. Regular feedback has been received in regards to a 6 month membership, and it is proposed that a six month subscription fee be considered, available to members at a cost of \$10, commencing in July.

- It was clarified that some people have not shopped for 6 months and then want to pay for the remainder of the year only, and have declined to pay for the whole year when their membership will fall due again in six months.
- In the original proposal there was a late joining fee with bonus 3 months.
- Victoria said she was not convinced of the merits of this proposal. The current Annual Subscription Fee has been almost unbelievably successful with very little push back. It was not clear to her how it could be changed to staggered payments through the year.
- Stevie advised that the old system used to provide a couple of months free at the end of the year. Victoria confirmed that the adopted system mirrors that.
- There was insufficient will to progress this. No further action will be taken at this time.

8. Organisational Membership (Maurice)

For discussion: It is suggested that a working group look into the merits of providing an organisational membership. This would address issues where we may have too many members using a single membership, such as those involved with Angel St Permaculture Garden and Green Living Centre etc.

- Victoria asked about the rationale for not having organisational memberships. Stevie advised that it was seen as being inequitable, as companies holding a membership can have many people using it, while our system is based on households with a limit in the number of ordinary members.
- It was clarified that the concept of organisational membership fees would be to have a higher rate.
- The example was provided of one organisation where 10 people can all claim the 25% discount as volunteers because the organisation does something classed as volunteering. At present only one person uses the discount regularly. Victoria was concerned that this is a misuse of the membership and said she would look into it. Maurice advised that this particular organisational membership was approved by MC, however, Stevie clarified that it occurred more than four and a half years ago as he was not involved.

Action (Victoria): Investigate specific case(s) of member organisation(s) where multiple staff may be using the volunteer discount for personal shopping.

Action (Community Outreach Working Group): Review opportunity to bring in an organisational membership / subscription fee for corporates and not-for-profits, and bring a proposal back to MC.

9. Food Grants (Nathan Wratten)

We propose to reinstate the Food Grant program (suspended Oct 16). The food grant program as an integral program to achieve the AH objectives B, E & F. As AH is no longer in the **same state of financial distress** we don't see a need for the program to still be suspended.

We recently had a successful grant for the Camdenville Public School Annual Fundraiser. We are reusing the 10% discount cards (30) so this assuages any concerns of waste associated with this program. Over the coming weeks we will track how many of these come back to ascertain level of success.

Proposal: That the food grants be reinstated.

- Maurice clarified that food grants are made only upon application and always come to MC for approval. Foods grants are budgeted at \$100 per month. Recently if the money doesn't get spent, it accumulates and can be donated as a larger amount, as per the 2SER / advertising deal, but Stevie clarified that this was not in the original policy. The 2SER was really a marketing exercise, but there was no mechanism to figure out how effective it was.
- Catherine said she thought the recent Camdenville project was a fantastic marketing tool to get new customers, especially young women. Maurice advised he was now speaking at another primary school as a direct result of the Camdenville promotion.

Amended Proposal (David): That the food grants be reinstated on a monthly application basis, to be approved by MC in session on a case by case basis. That funds do not accumulate if not spent in food grants, and that the effectiveness of the grants and any associated marketing must be tracked. Further, that the availability of food grants must be promoted, including on the website, Facebook and the member newsletter.

Moved: Victoria; seconded Catherine Approved by consensus.

10. Other Business

10.1 Early shop close for stocktake on Friday at 5pm.

10.2 Stevie asked that someone formally move a vote of thanks to the website working group for their tireless work, and notes that the website looks really good. This was done - Proposed: Katherine. Seconded: David. Carried. Carried by consensus.

Meeting closed at: 8.45pm

Post-meeting check-in

Next meeting date: Tuesday 25 July 2017