

Alfalfa House Members Council Meeting - minutes

Date: 25 July 2017

Time: 7pm

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

Facilitator: Jonny Green

Minutes: Victoria Taylor

Timekeeper: David Winterton

Meeting opened at: 7:00pm

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.

Acknowledgement was also made of the passing of Simon Holmes, former Manager.

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendance: Jonny Green (MC), Victoria Taylor (MC), Katherine Lustig (MC), Catherine O'Keefe (MC), David Winterton (MC), Bruce Diekman (member), Emma Lees (member), Nathan Wratten (member), Renata Field (MC, via phone), Matt McMillan (MC), Julia Gove (staff), Rosanna Zettel (member), Stevie Bee (member), Jenny Millman (member), Ran de Silva (staff), Melissa Cox (member), Janne King (staff), Mariko Everett (member)

Apologies: nil

Absent: nil

2. Approval of Agenda

That the agenda be approved.

Moved: Katherine Seconded Victoria, approved with consensus

3. Consent Agenda

3.1. Adoption of Previous Minutes

That the minutes of the June 2017 meeting be adopted.

3.2. New Members and Cancellations

That members with the following membership numbers: 12315 to 12372 with 4 skipped/blank records (12333, 12334, 12351, 12353) be accepted as new members.

That members with the following membership numbers be cancelled:

2434, 3987, 4108, 5352, 5447, 5849, 5874, 6340, 8261, 8339, 8516, 8724, 9132, 9319, 9578, 9598, 9820, 10260, 10286, 10417, 10586, 10655, 10730, 10739, 10740, 10741, 10744, 10745, 10750, 10752

3.3. Out-of-session Decisions/Proposals

That the sign on Enmore Road read "Organic & Natural Grocer": Approved by consensus.

3.4. Reports from Working Groups

3.4.1. Governance

NIL

3.4.2. Premises Solutions, Shop Development and Affordability

See proposals below.

3.4.3. Sustainability

NIL

3.4.4. Volunteer Engagement

NIL

3.4.5. Community Outreach

NIL

3.4.6. Staff Liaison

A 3 month review was held with Renata, Julia and Manager in June.

- Julia to begin working 10hrs/week.
- Julia to report monthly to Manager for inclusion to his report to MC.
- Julia to create a workplan
- Review again in 3 months

Maurice is planning to do reviews with all staff. Jonny and Renata available to sit in if requested by staff.

3.4.7. Marketing

[Marketing WG report](#)

3.4.8. Finance

June 2017 Treasurer's Report

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1yR4-OWEPVxWdojwv7cWpT0PfY8kT1toHub_1JXs6LnY

June 2017 Dashboard

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B2CzrZkqx6HpNXhCcDNoLVFmZXc>

3.5. Staffing (appointments and resignations)

That AH accept the appointment of Mariko Everett effective from 3 July 2017, and of Lara Ottington effective from 10 July 2017.

3.6. Deferred Matters / Business Arising

- **Catherine:** Provide contact details to Maurice for Bass Floors **DONE**
- **Maurice:** Confirm with FTD if there will be shelf space for groceries to be put at the till to make checkout easier. **NOT DONE**
- **Maurice:** Ensure that freezer running costs are included in the costed proposal. **NOT DONE**

- **Marketing Working Group:** Present alternative sign wording to MC for approval. **DONE**
- **Victoria:** Investigate specific case of member organisation which has a single membership number used by multiple staff for shopping. **COMMENCED, NOT YET COMPLETE**
- **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. **NOT DONE**

3.7. Workplace Health and Safety

That the Consent Agenda Items be approved.

Carried by consensus

4. Upgrade to phone system and mobile phone plan (Maurice, 10 mins)

In February we consolidated our internet and faxline (this runs our ADSL2+) to single service provider 'Commander' after engaging a broker to compare various packages in the market (current cost is \$100 per month). At the time we were unable to migrate our landline with MyNetPhone (VOIP service) due to the fact it was a residential plan and we have a business account.

Over recent months, we are experiencing issues due to call quality as well a lack of a messaging/directory services and customers are becoming increasingly frustrated. Staff are also having to resort to using their personal mobiles to text customers and make calls when the single landline is in use.

I have now confirmed with Commander that we are now able to port across our existing landline and move to an improved service. The cost of this improved system is \$77.80 per month, we are currently spending \$20 per month. The new system will allow us to record detailed information and direct callers to shop, groceries or office (manager). Given our new website, we will be able to direct customer to information on our website to reduce questions over the phone.

In addition, we have recently been gifted a Apple iPhone 4S hardware, we are now seeking approval to purchase a \$30 monthly mobile plan to provide added functionality in the office to communicate via voice/text to our volunteers, vendors and customers. As well as use the phone to take pictures and post to our social media accounts. The use of personal staff mobiles is not sustainable.

Quote from Commander

Proposal: That the phone system be updated at an additional cost of \$57.80 per month for improved functionality. Further, that a \$30 mobile phone plan be purchased for the office.

Discussion: Renata asked for clarification about whether there is a cheaper system. Maurice explained that the old phone system has problems and that staff are starting to just use their

personal phones, which they would prefer not to do. Maurice would like a new Commander system plus a new mobile phone for the shop. A business plan is required - a \$30 plan with Commander. Lock in contract 24 months. Cost = \$30 +57; and there are no other comparable providers.

Moved: Jonny. Seconded: Catherine. Carried by consensus.

5. Penalty Rates (Maurice, 2 mins)

At previous meetings it was agreed that no change would be made to the pay structure following changes to penalty rates by the government. The Manager has requested that, now that legislative changes have been brought in, the earlier decision of MC be confirmed for communication to staff.

Proposal: That staff be advised that no changes will be made to pay until further notice.

Discussion: MC noted that this has already been agreed and stated, and asked what further clarification was needed. Maurice said that there had been three different proposals on penalty rates plus feedback on EBA, and that they just wanted a clear understanding that penalty rates are not being changed to give certainty to staff. It was clarified that MC have no appetite for changing the rates at this time, and that the existing rates have been changed. Maurice asked if this can be advertised and was advised that he could.

6. Website

[Website WG report](#)

Not explored.

7. Manager's Report

[Manager's report](#)

Jonny noted, on behalf of MC, that, regarding the mention of an EBA in the Manager's Report, that there has previously been a proposal about an EBA but that this is not being explored by MC. Further, in light of the fact that there is no current reduction in the line with penalty rates, it is considered that pursuing an EBA is not a fruitful exercise at this time. Any exploration of this must be undertaken outside paid hours. Jonny noted that our judgement is that an EBA would not be appropriate for Alfalfa House, and that it is not good use of Alfalfa House time to organise it. Jonny asked if this was clear to staff and they agreed it was.

MC invited feedback on the EBA during the meeting or at a later date.

Lucy said that she would like to explore it but is not invested in it.

Ran would like to talk with other staff about whether they want to explore it or not.

8. Annual Subscription Fee (Maurice, 15 mins)

[Click here](#) for report.

MC noted that there were some issues around the process used to get to this point. First, pro-rata ASF was discussed last MC meeting and did not wish to pursue it, and it was not clear what had changed since that time for the report to come back so quickly. Second, it was not clear what the urgency was with this proposal as it's important to involve, not to

exclude, the people who head up the working group. MC asked that people are more careful about the process.

Maurice explained that at the last MC meeting it was just a discussion. Bruce outlined the proposal. Maurice also said that he had asked the pro bono lawyers for opinion on whether it's possible within the Rules; Victoria said that it was never a consideration that it wasn't consistent with Rules.

Victoria explained her concern that this proposal is not consistent with MC previous decision and policy on ASF, and that it is not clear if it adds to the previous ASF decision and policy or replaces parts of it. It appeared to be suggesting two different systems for old and new members. If this is what MC want (contrary to the discussion at the last MC meeting), then Victoria is willing to make the policy consistent with our previous ruling.

Staff claimed that 3 out of every four people were refusing to join because they'd have to pay again in January. Bruce clarified that the proposal isn't looking at existing members, only at new members. Katherine asked how there can be two systems for new versus existing members (who haven't paid their ASF).

Victoria said that the proposal needs to be withdrawn and offered to work on it with Bruce and the rest of the working group. She added that it would have been good to work on it with them. She could have a new proposal ready for the next MC meeting.

Matt noted a concern about granularity, and wondered if we would get down to monthly payments if we start slicing it up like this. Thus we need to draw a line in the sand about the granularity, however, he did not have a proposal about this.

David noted that our responsibility is to the members and staff, and hoped we can deal with this quickly, such as by offering a temporary discount as was done during Plastic Free July. Maurice said that a rolling subscription fee is not possible with the POS, but it is now easier to implement a pro-rata system.

Maurice asked if staff could be authorised to collect \$10 given that MC is willing to look into this concept. It was clarified that this could not occur as our policy is contrary to this.

Maurice and staff are concerned about losing potential members.

David asked if the way the Plastic Free July promotion is being done could be extended.

Ran clarified that the PFJ promotion has certain conditions, such as people having to bring their own bags etc., so the problem would not necessarily be solved.

Stevie asked Victoria how long it actually takes to write policy and procedure and offered to help Victoria on it.

Ran suggested that if it was generally agreed to pursue pro rata, perhaps members pay the \$20 but get \$10 back if we pass the change.

Proposal: That MC agrees that in principle, quarterly scaled subscription fees be introduced for new members. Should agreement be reached to pro-rata the subscription fees, new members who have been signed up would then be issued a credit refund. NOTE: The detail of this proposal is NOT agreed; Bruce, Stevie and Victoria will bring forward the detail, in one consistent framework by August MC.

Moved: Matt. Seconded: David. Carried by consensus.

9. Putting proposals to MC (Katherine, 10 mins)

In order to ensure MC is making good decisions, individuals or groups putting proposals to MC must ensure that all relevant information is presented. A complete report will ensure minimal time is spent clarifying what is being proposed so that more time can be spent debating the merits of the proposal.

Proposal: That reports to MC requiring a decision include all relevant background information such as (and not limited to): cost to implement; running costs; financial and other payback; how works are to be funded (grant, existing budget, fundraising, etc.); evidence to support the proposal such as expert advice or formal survey results; alternatives considered (and why rejected); number of members canvassed; staff views and the like.

Catherine offered to bring a template that will assist people to write a full proposal. Stevie offered to help.

It was clarified that having all the information doesn't mean that a proposal will be passed, and agreed that a template would be developed.

10. Outdoor Shed (Maurice, 15 mins)

As previously tabled as part of the Shop Development WG and plans tabled at the May MC meeting. We (Joh Caley, Ben Charlton and myself) have been working with The Bower to source as much recycled material for the outside shed. To date we have sourced all wooden plywood cladding, 3 solid wood doors and a stand-up freezer. We are struggling to source material for the structure to be built, as it has now been 2 months of following up with The Bower for the required materials. In order to move the project forward, we have cleared the area in the garden to commence work on the foundations and build the structure.

Earlier this week we received contacts from Catherine O (3 contacts) and Katherine L (ironwood), John Caley reviewed these suppliers and none of them currently have the material we require.

We are seeking approval to purchase the remaining material, see quote attached [here](#). [May MC Minutes](#) - for previous background and detail

Proposal: That approval be given for the purchase of the materials not yet sourced to construct the outdoor shed.

Additional information provided by Maurice included that Gumtree materials also entail delivery costs and no one has a truck for this. He explained the shed is important to continue flow of the shop to the garden and include workshops. Electrical volunteers are available, and one of them may be able to source leftover materials. Maurice has not costed the electricals in case they are not available for free.

David suggested that at least two power points will be needed. Maurice disagreed.

Maurice clarified that roofing materials are included in the costs. David said he has an alternative proposal for this which he will discuss with Maurice separately..

Maurice clarified that insulation is included in the proposal, coming from the Bower, comprising excess leftovers.

Bruce suggested there are some good eBay suppliers in Sydney that he has used who supply decking and native timbers.

Katherine said she was surprised and disappointed that so much is needed new instead of second hand.

Catherine asked if locks are costed and Maurice said that locks not needed as the shed would be used for early deliveries, requiring access by many.

Rosa asked if the council needed to know about the proposal and Maurice said that approval is not needed.

Moved: Jonny. Seconded: Catherine. Carried by consensus.

11. Other Business:

Maurice raised a question about the grant opportunity from Jenny Leong's office with a deadline of 9 August. Katherine said that she has previously advised Maurice that grant application ideas need to be consistent with overall shop strategy that has been agreed upon by MC. David said he was concerned about how the three ideas put forward relate to each other and whether they can be separated. Maurice clarified that the fridges are just replacements and that the freezer is not included. Maurice also advised that he has a meeting with Jenny on Friday to understand what would be likely to get up. Jonny noted we would be doing this on the fly, but hopes we will not miss an opportunity. He suggested that we come up with a response in a couple of days. This was agreed to though David noted that the items most needed by AH are not necessarily those most likely to get a grant, which would be the visible things.

It was also noted that we could modify the grant details if we are successful and need to change the detail.

David was nominated to attend the meeting with Maurice.

End of meeting check-in

Meeting closed at: 9:35pm

Next meeting date: 22nd August 2017