

Note: In reading the summary of comments below, please keep in mind that these are suggestions made by the members who attended the World Cafe. They have not been analyzed or sifted by Board or Staff. They do not include thoughts of Board members, who, for the most part, served as scribes and facilitators. The attendance at the World Cafe represented less than 10 per cent of the total membership of the Co-op.

Energy and Sustainability

Management and operations need to be adaptable to the changing environments (climate, peak oil, business) in which the Co-op exists.

Reduce the Carbon footprint of the coop (**Building, Local**)

Decisions of the Board and Management Collective are based on “green” perspective. (**Building**)

We should strive to sell products that are grown, raised, manufactured, transported in the most sustainable ways available. (**Local**)

See also Transition Town ideas under **Community**

- Place a sign in the parking lot regarding the Plainfield ordinance about idling car
- Institute a library and/or sell books on alternative economics and other sustainability issues (ED)
- Educational programs about how to live with less (ED)
- Work with the Plainfield Energy Committee (CC)
- Join and work with the Vermont Energy and Climate Action Network (CC)
- Offer a Ride Board. Partner with Go Vermont (CC)

Building and Grounds

Handicap accessibility for Community Center (note: this is a pre-condition for many of the items under **Community**)

Create outside spaces for people to sit, chat, eat, drink. Consider developing riverbank. (**Welcoming**)

Create inside spaces for people to sit, chat, eat, drink. (**Welcoming,Community,Local**)

Legal Kitchen for preparing food that uses local ingredients (**Local, Welcoming, Community, Affordable, Education**)

Create a more approachable, welcoming entranceway and outside appearance for community members who are not familiar with the co-op. This could include lighted

parking, lighted sign, more welcoming entryway. (**Welcoming**)

Switch to renewable energy sources (solar panels, solar water heater). (**Energy**)

Bulk storage space (freezers, coolers, warehouse, root cellar) (**Affordability, Local**)

- Energy audit (**Energy**)

Welcoming to Community/Member Involvement

Clear locus of responsibility for member involvement, whether a designated staff member, or a board/staff committee. (**Board**)

Aim to be Plainfield's Community Market. (**Community**) Adopt ways for the Co-op to feel less "foreign" to people used to shopping at conventional groceries and convenience stores (**Building**) through layout, outside appearance, staff welcome, and products offered.

- Dynamic use of Suggestion Box -- Welcome and respond to suggestions
- Have a web tool or periodic web survey (a la Pete's Greens) for members to provide feedback about Co-op products.
- Have a meet the farmers/vendors event (**Local, Education, Community**)
- Build on the potential of the Community Center -- Free to more groups, more classes, more publicity about CC events. Announce how to use the space at CC events. (**Community**)
- Chalkboard and/or rotating art in bathroom
- Take down the "Smile it confuses people" sign (sounds cynical)
- Customer service training for staff
- More intermediate ways for members to contribute to short-term projects
- Put up a chart with work needs for short term projects. People could bid on a job with their discount (I will do job for a 8% discount for 2 months). Job goes to lowest bidder.
- Don't make members feel guilty for being "just a member."
- Have a quote or inspiration of the day.
- Holiday party
- No smoking zone
- Monthly potlucks consistent and well-publicized. Use potluck as a time for co-op updates. Board members participate in potlucks. (**Community, Board**)
- Have a pamphlet for New Members -- the basics about the Coop. How it works, role of the board, discounts, mission, etc. (**Education, Board**)
- Regular (annual?) World Cafe events with different questions (**Board**)
- Bulletin Board behind cash register as a dynamic place for customer communication/education (**Education**)
- Lots more publicity about things that are happening at the Co-op through Facebook, web, mailings, etc.

- Have an introduction process for new members
- Have a process for introducing new staff to the members
- Member appreciation day with discounts
- Co-op birthday party celebration
- Use visible action plans for showing how projects are getting done and to keep on track.

Affordability

Define affordability as good for my body and good for the planet

Redefine affordability to include true and externalized costs. Staff and consumers need to understand the costs of *nonorganic*, *nonsustainably* produced and transported food when deciding whether a product is affordable. It may be cheaper but we pay with our health and with the costs to the environment **(ED)**

- Provide chart/pamphlet comparing prices at Pfield Coop with Hunger Mt, City Mkt.
- Support and recipes for cooking with bulk foods **(ED)**
- Lots of people on Food Stamps (SNAP) shop at the co-op. They could share their strategies about how they do it **(ED)**
- Provide visuals/questionnaires about members' rating of importance of axes of cost: organic, local, staff compensation, sustainably produced, fair compensation of vendors. (which of these are you willing to pay more for?) **(Welcoming)**
- Pursue affordable purchasing through NFCA, NCGA **(Co-ops)**
- More shelf space and more prominence to low-cost items
- Offer option of trading work for food
- Co-operate with other co-ops on truck sales (**Co-ops**)
- Offer discounts on products most people buy. Promote them extensively to increase traffic.
- Use a poster or questionnaire to ask customers what specific items they would like to see more affordably priced **(Welcoming)**
- Solicit markdown, damage, discount items for sales.
- Facilitate bulk orders. Have a Bulletin Board or a place on the web where people can hook up for group orders. **(Welcoming)**
- Staff call attention to good opportunities for bulk orders.
- Schedule sales and discounts for the end of the month when people are short of \$\$

Education

Expand the scope of the Newsletter Committee to include the broader mandates of member and community education.

Reach out to the community with education about the hidden costs of standard food and the true costs of organic, fair trade, sustainably produced food.

Reach out with education and support for how to prepare whole foods. Biggest barrier to people using costly, bad-for-you foods is lack of knowledge and experience in how to cook whole foods.

Education about the benefits of co-operatives and the history of the co-op movement (**Co-ops**)

Create higher awareness in the community about food and agricultural issues

- Put a food tip of the month in Field Notes to educate people about health food and sustainability (e.g., why bananas/eggs cost more at the Coop).
- Education about using high cost foods, such as meat and cheese, as “condiments.” (**Affordability**)
- Recipe cards in envelopes on bulk containers (**Affordability**)
- Draw in teenagers to eating healthy food with healthy snacks (**Building**)
- Classes and demonstrations on “cooking from scratch”
- For people who want/need to be more aware of where their food comes from, have a digital catalogue of products and what we know about where they come from. Include prices so people know price before they shop. (**Local, Affordability**).
- Post signs when we are selling non-organic produce
- Education about what the Organic label does and does not mean.
- Create awareness of exploitation of some of the farmworkers who produce food we eat

Co-op as a Community Member

Advance Plainfield as a Transition Town (looking to a future where we are not dependent on oil, and have a resilient local economy with an enlivened sense of community well-being) (**Energy**)

Become a hub for Town-related endeavors now that Town Hall is closed (Accessibility is a pre-condition.) (**Building**)

Community Center as a center for the arts. More events. More involvement of arts community. Open Mike night. Link to Goddard (limited by inaccessibility) (**Building**)

Deepen the mission of the co-op to be a center of communication for the area

Support community composting. (**Energy**)

Support community gardening. (**Energy**)

- Prepared meals for elderly
- Become a drop-off point for the Food Bank
- Be part of Community-building efforts such as Front Porch Forum, VT Hometown Help
- Spread the work (Field Notes? other ways?) about the availability of the Community Center, how to reserve, fees, etc. (**Welcoming**)
- Community Center free to more groups
- Push for a local laundromat
- Local sponsorships
- Publish calendar of Community Center events in Field Notes (**Welcoming**)

- Support undocumented and other agricultural workers

Local Products

As we look toward the end of peak oil, prepare ourselves to be much more local. (**Energy, Building, Community**)

Continue to work with farmers on extending the season for locally grown products (**Building, Affordability**)

- Give priority to products grown locally or produced with local ingredients (as opposed to manufactured locally with products from away -- such as peanut butter)
- Encourage information about local farmers and farm tours (so people realize that it is easier to find out whether local products are really grown sustainably) (**Education**)
- Accept that sometimes the best local option is not certified organic
- Only sell organic, even if it is not local
- Be a drop off point for CSAs (**Community**)
- Link with Pfield Farmer's Market. Be a drop off for food the vendors don't sell
- Prices paid to local farmers have to be high enough so farmers and farmworkers can afford good food too.
- Support production of food outside the regulatory restraints of the system
- Sustainably grown and organically grown are not the same. Both are important

Growing the Co-operative Movement

Help others form co-ops (e.g., energy co-op). Be a co-op incubator (community greenhouse, truck share, tool share). Work toward a co-operative economy

More dynamic relationship with other co-ops in central Vermont for education, joint actions, testimony at legislature, joint support. (**Community**)

Change to member equity structure so members are truly owners. (**Member Involvement**)

- Facilitate dialogue with other co-ops.
- Co-op link to other movements in a non-polarizing way
- Active in NFCA and NCGA, which are co-ops of co-ops

Board/Member Relationship

Develop Planning Committee/ grant research committee to develop resources for betterment of the co-op

Define our role in creating a more just and sustainable world (cf. be cautious about bring politics into the co-op) (**Energy**)

(All the following items also pertain to Welcoming/Member Involvement)

- Post minutes online and in visible places at co-op
- Visible calendar with board mtgs. staff and committee meetings.
- Make use of allotted space in hallway. Board member bios. Other news.
- Use space in hallway for a poster about how the co-op works -- Develop a chart about how decisions are made at the Co-op.
- Make members aware that board meetings are open
- Let members know they can use the Suggestion Box for Board items as well as for the MC
- Get back to people with the results of the World Cafe.
- Education for members and staff about Policy Governance (**Education**)

MC and Staff

Living wages and benefits for staff

In planning, keep in mind that plates of staff are already full