

Minutes

Tuesday, March 11, 2014

Present: Adrienne Allison, Art Chickering, Joseph Gainza, Bob Fancher, Scott Harris, Sue Chickering, Michael Peabody, Gail Falk

Consent agenda: February 25th minutes approved and the Revised B4 language approved.

MC Monitoring End Report - "More awareness of the quality and source of our food"

Discussion regarding this End led to two categories for the purposes of organizing our thoughts to give the MC some ideas to enrich this report:

Quality might include:

organic, freshness, actual food (not filled with sugar, corn syrup or chemicals/additives), gluten, allergens,

Source might include:

local/regional, GMO free , fair trade workers, treatment of animals, environmental respect, small farm vs industrial corporations, socially responsible, cooperative functioning

Since this End is focused on "awareness" of these attributes, some additional labelling might be helpful for customers so they can readily distinguish one product from another on the shelf. If the products themselves do not have effective, informative packaging labels, there could possibly be color coded stickers or more signage, organized by the issues that customers tend to bring up (local, organic, Vermont made, gluten free, cage-free eggs, etc). Customers might appreciate this if the additional time needed to accomplish this is not exorbitant. Gail is hopeful that the language in this End could be "richer" in terms of addressing the goals in the Strategic Plan and more inclusive of the things that we have taken the time to identify. Art suggested adding "other attributes of interest or concern" (using the qualities we have come up with) to his report. Joseph made the point that the report needed clearer definition and things that were referenced elsewhere be included in the report itself. Since this is an END, it needs to be given more thorough attention and a broader perspective to encompass as much as we can in this report. Raising awareness applies to both the buyers and the consumers/customers. Educating our customers can only result in a richer, more helpful dialogue in our community. Broadening the definition would be good and tying

this end more closely to the Strategic plan. Awareness implies more than just labeling products, or making assumptions regarding what is important to our customers. If we see this as a "work in progress", the MC can bring us what they come up with. Joseph suggested that the Board could run a workshop or educational symposium affording people the opportunity to discuss their ideas about the Ends in more detail.

Building Committee Report: (Alan Banbury, Mike Russell, Joe John, Sam Clark, Joseph Gainza)

This past Saturday there were several members of the committee who met and went through the entire building. Sam Clark will be writing up the findings in a report for us after some more further investigation this coming weekend. There was some concern about a few structural issues that may have been caused by the activity in the community center. The back wall is truly a mess and needs attention right away. Lead paint can be painted over to remedy some of these problems. But there are clapboards that are falling off, openings in the wall. The stairs lead down to the alleyway that is filled with snow making it unsafe for people to exit. The good news is that the roof is in good condition. The idea of a bridge across to the town building elevator would be cost prohibitive.

Customer/staff concerns:

The MC wants to make sure that they have accurate board contact information if they cannot sufficiently address the concern raised. Joseph volunteered to be the contact person if there is a complaint that the staff cannot readily answer. The main concern that we want to address is that our members feel heard by whomever needs to address the issue. The MC will have to make the judgment call about whether it is an operational concern or if it rises to the level of Board intervention. Art suggested adding language that explains that our goal is to have people feel heard, and add the language to differentiate between the kinds of concerns that are raised and how and by whom the complaints will be dealt with.

Retreat:

We are all set for a retreat for Saturday, April 5th from 9-12 at Sue's house (1013 Chickering Rd, East Montpelier). Jamie is willing to facilitate this meeting and as a board we agreed that we should pay her \$250 for her time. Our goal of this retreat would be to hone in on our Ends to gain clearer definitions of our goals and purpose.

C-2: The Board's job:

Since we are in agreement that we don't really "Create and sustain a meaningful relationship with member-owners", we will address this at our retreat to see if we can come up with some ideas of ways to improve this and measure this. Mike strongly urged us to strike the language in #2 regarding the Board's hiring or firing staff members "if called upon by the MC". The board respectfully declined to strike this language.

Restricted funds: We unanimously approved the language that Gail drafted for this policy.

Personnel Policies: We reviewed these operational policies. We agreed that the board will not be involved in grievances, but grievances will involve either mediation and/or arbitration. We are accepting the language in the Personnel policy, with the exception of taking the Board out of the Policy regarding the grievance policy.

B4 - Membership rights and responsibilities: MC reports compliance with this policy, except the Global. We accept the report, and the plan for compliance from the MC. As a board we will extend the time to be a member to March 31st for this year and we will put it on the agenda to change the Bylaws to reflect this in the fall.

Art suggested changing the language in the Policy heading to read "The Management Collective will not fail to inform or will not misinform members of their rights and responsibilities." We decided to adopt this language in the B4 policy. Copies of the By-laws will be provided to any member-owner who asks for them. Does the member brochure include the rights and responsibilities? It includes the benefits and their rights as member-owners. The responsibilities may not be as clear as we would like. It seems to make sense that when a member joins or renews their membership, it would be good practice to give them a brochure explaining these things. New member orientations would be a good idea and maybe we should set up a committee. The Membership committee might be the best entity to take this on (Gail Falk, Amy Lester, Jodi Villardi, and Scott Harris). Scott will set up a meeting to look at some of these issues.

Link report: Mike has been sorting through and organizing archived reports that have until now been kind of all over the place.

The NFCA is having its annual meeting in Putney on March 29th. Gail and Adrienne are interested in going and it is a wonderful opportunity to learn what other co-ops are doing.

Our next meeting (besides the retreat) will be on April 8th at 6:30 pm