

The General Meeting Minutes of the
Common Ground Food Co-op Board
Urbana-Champaign
January 14, 2008

This meeting of the CGFC Board was held in the Illinois Disciples Foundation on Monday, January 14, 2008 at 5:30 PM.

Board members present: Katrina Bromann, Clint Popetz, Richard Antisdell, Ben Galewsky, Lisa Bralts-Kelly

Board members not present: Tim McHenry

Other co-op members present: Phoebe Smith

Agenda Amendments

We switched the order of the third and fourth items on the agenda (location announcement text review and strategic visioning event) because Jacqueline wanted to be present for the latter.

Media Talking Points

Jacqueline attended the meeting to coach the board on how to interact with the media during the relocation, specifically during the press conference. She handed out a sheet that she put together along with Meagan and Laura that addressed issues of choosing our words, the image we want to project, and knowing and understanding our audience. Key ideas include: focus on the positive aspects of the co-op; do not abbreviate (use Common Ground, not CGFC); emphasize ownership over membership; avoid controversy. She gave examples of how to handle difficult questions, and handed out Common Ground business cards so that board members could feel free to refer any questions to Jacqueline, Clint, or Meagan at any time.

Strategic Visioning Event

Jacqueline stayed for this portion of the meeting to recommend rescheduling the strategic visioning event, due to lack of time for preparation and education about the event. Lisa reported not getting too many responses to the Evite online invitation. After consideration, the board decided to reschedule tentatively for March 8, 2008. The location will still be at the McKinley foundation and Ben Lubchansky will cater. We will offer concurrent invitations; roughly 20 seats to specific individuals and 20 open seats for anyone in the membership who is interested in participating. We will be assigning roles and volunteering for tasks at the February meeting. In the meantime, Lisa will write a blog entry educating the members on the event and send out an email about the rescheduling.

The board went into closed session for the discussion of the relocation announcement.

Location Announcement Text Review

Clint drafted an announcement to go out over email to the membership and brought it to the meeting. The board as a whole reviewed and tweaked the announcement, which will be sent out on the 15th.

The board came out of closed session.

Equity Increase Planning

In order to fund our relocation, equity at Common Ground needs to be increased. Our current equity is extremely low for co-ops, and raising it will set an equal bar for entrance into the co-op. We also want to propose a change to the bylaws to allow members to purchase more than one equity share, as an alternative method of funding for the relocation. We decided to take the following actions:

1. Have a two-week comment period in the store, with a sheet Clint will prepare that lists the basic information about why we need to raise equity, how we're making it affordable for folks, etc.
2. Write a blog entry alerting members to the comment period (Clint).
3. Make a decision at February's meeting on the equity issue, with the results from the comment period available at that meeting.
4. Hold a membership meeting at the end of February, which will discuss the equity change, answer questions, and also approve bylaw changes to allow purchasing of more equity shares.

GM Monitoring

Jacqueline provided the board with reports on EL #2a and #2b, Treatment of Customers and Treatment of Staff, Owner Workers and Volunteers. The board recognized a need for external monitoring of staff, and will add that issue to the board calendar to be addressed in advance of this time next year. Otherwise, Jacqueline was found to be in compliance with the policies.

Board Self Monitoring

The Board reviewed its own conduct to determine compliance with GP #2b, Board Job Description. The board recognized a need for stricter monitoring in the future. We also reminded ourselves of our current review of the ends policies to see if they should include notions of local food and economic accessibility. Otherwise, we found ourselves to be in compliance with our job description.

Look Over Donor List for Member Loan Program

Ben provided a member list, and Clint, Richard, and Lisa looked over the list in order to identify individuals who they would feel comfortable approaching to ask for loans.

To Do Re-cap

Lisa—blog entry on strategic visioning sometime this week (Friday 18th)

Clint—blog entry on equity sometime next week (Friday 25th)

Ben—blog entry on member loan program, sometime in between those other two

Katrina—get new member list from Jacqueline and plan member linkage event, Bowling with the Board, scheduled for Monday, January 28th, time and place TBA.

Katrina—will also write a blog entry following the others, on a topic to be decided based on member comments and concerns as they arise in the next few weeks (Friday 1st)

The next scheduled CGFC Board meeting will be held February 11th, 2008 at 5:30 PM at the IDF. If you have time, don't forget something to eat or drink!

Respectfully submitted,

Katrina A. Bromann

Common Ground Food Co-op Secretary