

Plainfield Co-op Board Minutes
April 19, 2016

Present: Board members Bob Fancher, Joseph Gainza, Gail Falk
Former Board member Art Chickering
Links Chloe Budnick and Dawn Fancher

Absent: Board members Karla Haas Moskowitz and Giordano Checchi

(The order of the agenda was adjusted because of Joseph having to be late)

Building. Bob shared the Elevation Certificate prepared by Gayle Burchard along with the survey map that establishes that our building is outside the flood plain. He gave the document to Chloe to have filed with Co-op permanent records.

When we go to the Design Review Board, we will need to request a variance allowing us to build closer than 10 feet from adjoining property. (We are already closer than 10 feet on a couple of sides of the building).

Bob explained that the River Corridor rules will be on the ballot for the November election. He has spoken with Karen Storey and the plan is to go to the DRB in the early fall, rather than this spring as originally planned, with the hope of getting the permit in September or October. This will give us more time to plan and get ready for the hearing, and also will mean we don't need to start construction until the spring.

Bob is going to follow up on getting the FEMA map changed to reflect the Elevation Certificate information, and also will look into what is entailed in getting a waste water permit (if we need one).

Chloe read an email from Kathleen describing what has been done to date to comply with the Fire Marshal inspection Here is what she read:

Basement: Insulation paper backing is removed, so it is in compliance. There is some white plastic sheeting that should be stapled on for other reasons.

Electric Panel. Is no longer blocked. in compliance

2d Floor: insulation in Gamellon Rm has paper backing. This backing should be removed. The insulation is ok.

Emergency exit repairs were completed by Sam. It should be in compliance now.

Fire alarm

I was hoping to have more information by now, but folks have been slow responding.

Current info on the fire alarm is that we need 3 manual 'pull stations (one for each door) and a central box they link to. It does not need to remote anywhere, it just makes lots of noise if pulled. there is a smoke alarm linked to the central box (in case the fire is there).

The primary purpose of this system is to protect people in the building, which is all that is required. The system we have now should sense fire and warn the monitor company when it is unoccupied, but the central box for it is not code compliant and (I think) would be absurdly expensive to upgrade it. Probably more cost effective to put in a compliant manual system and operate them in parallel.

The pull stations are about \$50, and the central box should be under \$400, from what I can tell. Plus installation, of course.

I think this is about it.

I am still trying to get estimates for the actual installation, and will keep you posted. Feel free to pursue this from there, but don't let anyone oversell it.

In Kathleen's absence, Nancy is going to follow up on that. The Board asked the Link how the MC is going to handle responsibility for building repairs during the upcoming year when Kathleen is on leave. Dawn and Chloe said that they will let us know at the next Board meeting.

Bob had a preliminary conversation with Betsy Black from the Cooperative Fund of New England, who said they would be very open to lending us money for the addition. Gail reported on a conversation with Lisa Ryan, who gave suggestions about people to talk with about potential grants. After discussion, it was agreed that we will need a Fundraising Committee, with MC, member, and Board representatives. This will be put together after the Strategic Planning Committee finishes its report -- which will be recommending a couple of other committees as well.

Treasurer. Bob reported first quarter results show sales 3% behind budget, Cost of Goods and Services also 3% below budget, and gross profit 3% below budget. As always, the first quarter was very slow. Bob shared other details, which will be reflected in the upcoming B1 Financial report. Dawn mentioned that the MC has refrained from any discretionary purchases this quarter, waiting for sales to go up, and cannot continue to do so.

The Financial review is still in process. Dawn and the reviewer need to connect.

Dividend Bob will prepare the letter to people who get a dividend check. We will also send the letter to people whose dividend is less than \$10, telling them that their dividend is in the form of a register credit. The letter will tell people that the check must be cashed or the credit used within 90 days; otherwise, reverts to the Co-op. People can donate their register credit or their checks to a fund that will be split 50 - 50 between Onion River Food Shelf and Twin Valley Senior Center. Gail will get information about the two groups to be available at the register.

Membership List There was a discussion about the problems caused by having individual expiration dates for membership, yet most memberships expiring on March 31. Chloe will check with COPOS and see if they can create a notice that appears when a person checks out with a

30-day notice of the date their membership will be due. Dawn and the MC are working on this so it will be easier to count the members at Annual Meeting next year, and will also think about whether to send a postcard or email notice to people when their membership is due for renewal.

Reflections of outgoing board member. Art Chickering shared his thoughts as an outgoing board member, and everyone at the meeting expressed appreciation to him for his years of service on the Board. Art said he thought the upcoming conversation between the MC and the Board was very important; that it was time now that the Co-op is stable to look at what the most effective management system is.

Reflections on Annual Meeting. Joseph suggested, and others agreed, that next year we could forego the potluck (it may actually discourage people from coming because they think they have to cook); the snacks that the MC provided were great. The location seemed to work well. Next year be sure to avoid school vacation -- aim for early April.

Strategic Planning Surveys. All agreed there is a wealth of information in the surveys and we need to devote time to learning from them. Chloe is going through the surveys and referring individual requests or suggestions to the relevant buyer. She is hoping to set up a system where, when a person makes a request, the answer will appear in their account, and the person at the register can tell them how their suggestion has been answered -- this in addition to continuing to post the answers on the bulletin board.

Link Report Chloe asked for clarification about when to send communications to the whole Board and when to send them to the president, There was agreement that the Links will send items meeting notes and monitoring reports to the whole Board and more single item requests/clarifying questions/random thoughts to the Board President to forward and/or place on agenda and/or answer directly.

Meeting about MC Evaluation. Approved Judy Cyprian's fee of \$400 for the partial day of mediation, plus she will get a 7% working member discount for a year in exchange for all the prep work she will do for the mediation.

Board/staff training on Policy Governance. Chloe asked whether Gail's proposal that PG training be done jointly by a member of the MC and Gail from the Board was supported by the other Board members. They said it is.

Incident There was a brief discussion about an incident of vandalism and harassment that occurred in March.

There was also a clarification about what incidents/situations the Board wants to hear about from the Link. The Board wants to hear about (1) situations that involve law enforcement, the courts, or public officials (such as the Select Board), (2) situations involving public attention to the Co-op (both good, such as newspaper publicity, and bad, such as last year's "cemetery")

situation), (3) issues of conflict between a member/customer and a staff that have gotten to the point where the MC is considering barring the member from the store, or where the customer/member may be making public complaints about the co-op. (Note. The Board has discussed with the Link in the past that the Board needs to hear about and issues of conflict with a vendor where the MC is going to be barring the vendor, or the vendor may be so upset that he or she may be making public complaints about the co-op. GF) The purpose of notifying the Board, is not for the purpose of having the Board intervene in these actions, but rather they are things that the public would expect the Board to know about.

Monitoring End 5 -- Awareness of quality and source of food. Found in compliance. There was a discussion about the need for clearer benchmarks for the Ends. Gail said that in the coming year she hopes to have MC/Board discussions about benchmarks for the Ends.

There was a discussion about shelf labeling. The MC was of the impression that the Board wanted signage to be of consistent color in every department, and have deferred shelf labeling because printing new labels will cost \$4-500. The Board does not remember saying that the labels have to be the same color from department to department. Gail said she thought the Bulk and Produce labels were clear and sufficient the way they are -- no need to reprint. The Board would particularly like to see progress in adding shelf labels that indicate that a product is Local. Joseph noted that selling local products is an area where the Co-op can excel.

Agenda for May meeting (deferred from April)

Board Monitoring C3 Agenda Planning

Format for Board meetings

Board officers for the coming year