

DRAFT MINUTES
Weavers Way Cooperative Association
General Membership Meeting
Sunday, May 15, 2011

Welcome and Introduction

Eighty-three member households enjoyed the ‘eat and greet’ at The New Covenant Church.

The meeting began at 6:00 PM. Board of Directors Vice President Margaret Lenzi welcomed attendees and reviewed the agenda.

Approval of Minutes from Fall 2010 General Membership Meeting (GMM)

The minutes of the Fall 2010 GMM were approved by general affirmation.

President’s Report

Board president David Woo welcomed all present, including the speaker, Drew Becher, President of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS). David acknowledged and thanked all candidates running for the Board of Directors: Nwenna Kai, Brian Maher, Nathea Lee, Linda Shein, Joe Pientka, Ian Zolitor, Dave Tukey and Angela Griffiths; and he thanked the co-op’s professional staff.

David updated members on the three stores and Weavers Way’s other activities. Chestnut Hill store has been open for a year and is exceeding expectations; Mt. Airy store continues to do well; and West Oak Lane sales have increased but the store still faces challenges. Our farms are up and running for the year, and our committees are active. The Board is working with other cooperatives in the area through the Mid-Atlantic Food Co-op Alliance (MAFCA) to strengthen our local economy. David mentioned that 2012 has been designated by the U.N. as the International Year of Cooperatives, and U.S. Representative Chakka Fattah is looking at legislation to support co-ops. David acknowledged the efforts of Board members Cat Niallon and Cynthia Potter, who are not running for re-election, and he presented them with certificates.

David explained the by-law amendment allowing for the option of internet voting.

Drew Becher, President, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Margaret introduced Drew Becher, President of PHS, who is working to make Philadelphia the greenest city. David explained that the PHS goal is related to Weavers Way’s goal (or “end”) that the local environment will be protected and preserved.

Topic: Making Philadelphia the Greenest City in the Country

Drew Becher, the 36th President of the PHS thanked the Board for inviting him to speak. He shared some interesting facts about his youth: he won “best yard” in his town when he was 12 years old; he has been gardening since high school; and he transformed the University of Cincinnati into the “most beautiful and green campus.”

Before coming to Philadelphia Mr. Becher worked in for the Mayor's Office in Chicago, where he put a "green" roof on City Hall, which started the green roof movement there. He was instrumental in various other public space and public art initiatives in Chicago, including putting plants in the street medians and the Cow project (where artists painted large cow sculptures which were then displayed in public places and subsequently auctioned).

He then went to Washington D.C., where he worked on the Green Space Plan, and then on to New York City, where, with the help of Bette Midler, he started the New York Restoration Project, preserving public spaces and creating parks and gardens in less affluent neighborhoods. He noted, "trees are the great equalizer."

Mr. Becher said PHS motivates and transforms communities through horticulture. He spoke about a variety of projects, including the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, the Flower Show, City Harvest, the "Plant 1 Million" campaign, and a new app for smart phones. He concluded with a quote from Abraham Lincoln: "We can complain because rose bushes have thorns or we can rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."

In response to audience questions, Mr. Becher pointed out that Philadelphia's Tree Tenders program is one of the best tree stewardship programs in the world. Philadelphia trees have a "die rate" of only 5.5%. He also indicated that green roofs are part of the overall greening plan for Philadelphia. General Manager Glenn Bergman noted that Weavers Way partners with PHS on farm projects at Awbury Arboretum.

Committee Showcase

Education committee: Larry Shofer explained that this committee develops programs to educate members about issues related to Weavers Way's purpose. He noted that the Shuttle was originally a project of this committee. He asked for suggestions on how best to communicate the committee's activities, particularly to members in Chestnut Hill, as the store is laid out very differently. He also announced that there will be a three-day seminar next spring focusing on the environment and sustainability.

Environment Committee: Bonnie Hay said this committee arose out of a need for recycling at the co-op, as part of the co-op's mission. However, since the City now offers curbside recycling, the committee has evolved somewhat. Egg cartons and Brita filters are being recycled at the store, and there will be an electronics recycling event on June 25. Over the years the committee has given \$100,000 in small grants to community groups and would like to continue with its grant program. Bonnie asked for ideas to grow their funds and welcome donations.

Membership Committee: Gwen Bailey informed the audience that this committee focuses on specific projects, such as membership appreciation weeks, welcome events, and other programs aimed at retaining new members. The committee also has a mystery shopper aimed at examining customer service.

Leadership Committee: Michele Lempa recently took over as Chair because the previous Chair, Brian Maher, ran for re-election to the Board. This committee handles all the aspects of the election process, from recruiting candidates to counting ballots. The committee has renewed its interest in developing leadership for the co-op.

Product Review Committee: Norman Weiss explained that this committee explores ways to update the co-op's product line, based on values in our mission statement, our Ends, and our

product philosophy. The committee has engaged a company named Scribe to evaluate some of the brands we already carry.

Farm Committee: This committee was instrumental in the creation of the co-op's farms, and continues to support the various farm sites. The committee also advocates for more urban farming in Philadelphia. It is in need of a chair, and members.

General Manager's Report

Glenn pointed out that today is the first anniversary of the Chestnut Hill store and he introduced Kim Spellman-Hall, the manager at that location.

He announced that membership has grown from 2,700 to 4,800 households in the past year, a 77% increase. Sales activity has doubled from \$8.6 million to \$15 million and weekly sales have increased from \$180,000 to \$310,000. As of April 23, 2011, 41.7% (2,022) of the members are working members and 58.3% (2,832) are non-working members, although we are working on changing that.

We have more than 44 new employees as a result of the opening of the Chestnut Hill store (we had planned for 30) and we have 140 full and part time employees in total. All staff start at \$10 an hour, which is higher than the industry standard for smaller businesses. All of our employees receive benefits, vacation and sick days. We are paying \$3.8 million in wages & benefits.

Ned Case urged all members to read the financial report chart in the member packet and he pointed out that sales are higher than expected and we did raise adequate funds to finance the expansion - including \$670,000 in member loans.

Glenn outlined the following membership activities: setting goals to increase working members; focusing on educating new members on cooperative principles; the "we love you more" campaign in which members who pay their entire \$400 in equity receive a \$100 coupon for use in the store; holding membership appreciation events; implementing online orientation; and hiring a new Member Outreach Director, Anne Workman.

Weavers Way has been active in the Mid-Atlantic Food Co-op Alliance (MAFCA), which, among other things, assists local "start-up" co-ops and recently held a conference devoted to start-ups.

Weavers Way Community Programs (WWCP) received a \$25,000 Champion in Action Award from Citizens Bank, Philadelphia Inquirer and NBC as well as a \$25,000 grant for the Stenton Manor Farm.

Glenn acknowledged the challenges of running a multi-store operation and he pointed out some issues we're anticipating in the near future, including improvements to the Mt. Airy store; improvements in data collection and reporting; staff training; and the possibility of competition if the old Magarity Ford site is developed as proposed, with a 20,000 square foot grocery store, which could take away 25% of our business. Finally, we are trying to determine how best to assist in the possible creation of a co-op in Germantown, at the site of the old Super Fresh on Chelton Ave.

Glenn closed by reminding everyone of several upcoming events: Fresh & Local Fair (May 21), Member Appreciation Week (May 15 - 21), Pet-a-Palooza (June 4), Friday Taco Nights in Mt. Airy, the Urban Farm Bike Tour (July 23), the Village Fair in September, and the Farm Festival in October.

Voting Results: Election of Directors and By-Law Amendment

The by-law amendment passed, 177 to 16, to allow for online voting.

Michelle Lempa announced the four candidates who were elected to the Board:

- Nathea Lee
- Brian Maher
- Linda Shein
- Ian Zolitar

Margaret Lenzi thanked the other members who also ran for the Board.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

ADDENDUM: ELECTION RESULTS

There were 271 ballots cast in the recent election for Board of Directors. The exact break-down of votes was as follows:

- Ian Zolitor - 145
- Linda Shein - 138
- Brian Maher - 121
- Nathea Lee - 104
- Dave Tukey - 102
- Nwenna Kai - 82
- Joe Pientka - 59
- Angela Griffiths - 54

There were 193 votes cast on the proposed by-law amendment, 177 in favor and 16 opposed.