

**Draft Minutes
Weavers Way Cooperative Association
General Membership Meeting
May 20, 2012**

Welcome and Introduction

One hundred and fifteen member households attended the Spring General Membership Meeting at 7165 Lounge in Mt. Airy. The “eat and greet” before the business meeting featured entrees from Geechee Girl Rice Cafe and General Cluster IPA from Earth Bread and Brewery.

Vice President Margaret Lenzi called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. She welcomed everyone, reviewed the agenda, and then introduced a video entitled, “Cooperatives Build a Better World,” which was produced to celebrate the International Year of Cooperatives.

Approval of Minutes from Fall 2011 General Membership Meeting

The minutes of the Fall 2011 General Membership Meeting were unanimously approved.

President’s Report

Outgoing Board President David Woo reminded those gathered that the board is here to serve their needs, and thanked them for their patronage and commitment to the co-op.

David reported that Weavers Way continues to do well. He noted that a number of neighborhoods within and outside the city are looking to form co-ops because they are hungry for the Weavers Way experience. He remarked that the current economic doldrums may be responsible for the renewed interest in co-ops.

David also noted that the introduction of online voting this year boosted participation in board elections to 500-600 households. He encouraged members to join the Leadership Committee or any of the other committees. Finally, he asked that members become working members and donate their discount to Weavers Way Community Programs.

Bylaw Amendment

Margaret explained that the amendment to change the language of Article VII (“Committees”) was introduced because quite a few committees were non-functioning, but were still listed in the bylaws. A member expressed concern that the new language does not spell out how a committee can be dissolved. David said the board would take that under advisement. (See below for results of the vote.)

Appreciation of Board Members

Margaret presented a framed certificate to Board President David Woo in appreciation for his service to the board. David then presented certificates to out-going board members Chris Hill, Sylvia Carter and Ian Zolitor, in appreciation for their service. David also presented Sylvia with a gift certificate for the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Guest Speaker: Don Hinkle-Brown, President of The Reinvestment Fund (TRF)

TRF is a local non-profit whose mission is to “build wealth and opportunity for low-wealth people and places through the promotion of socially and environmentally responsible development.” Don has been with the organization for 21 years. TRF has made \$1 billion in investments and loans throughout the mid-Atlantic, and currently manages \$688 million in capital with nearly 830 investors. TRF also has a development company that has built houses in Baltimore and Camden, among other places. TRF has constructed 279 units of affordable housing, and has put \$110 million toward development in the last five years.

More recently, TRF has put together a Healthy Food Financing Portfolio. Thus far, they have funded 101 projects for healthy food financing, part of the Healthy Food Financing Initiative co-sponsored by the U.S. Treasury, the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services, along with state and local initiatives.

Don said food co-ops and community enterprises are often recognized as an innovative way to support local economies and farmers while providing fresh food options. TRF’s most recent venture in that regard, the financing of the expansion at Mariposa, seems to have worked flawlessly, he said. TRF helped finance Weavers Way’s Chestnut Hill store, as well as storefronts for the Chester Co-op and Creekside Co-op.

TRF also does some financing of charter schools and sustainable energy projects (including windmills in Somerset County).

Reports from New Committees

Chicken Committee

Anton Goldschneider, buyer for the Weavers Way pet store, explained that the Chicken Committee, also known as Philadelphia Backyard Chickens, was formed because the co-op started selling a lot of organic chicken feed, indicating that a lot of people in the area keep backyard chickens. About 20 people attend the committee meetings, and there are 100 people on their mailing list. Members get together to share their knowledge about chickens, and often visit

each others' chicken coops after meetings. There are even people who attend who don't have chickens.

Health & Wellness Committee

Susan Holck, co-chair of the Health and Wellness Committee, said the committee was started in September of 2011 as a result of interest from members on a wide range of health and wellness issues. Over 40 people attended the first meeting, and six working groups were established at that meeting. The purpose of the committee is to create an environment that fosters the health and wellness of Weavers Way staff, members and community. The conveners of the working groups make up the steering committee, which is working to finalize strategic priorities and is planning a meeting of the larger committee for September.

General Manager's Report

Glenn thanked David Fellner of 7165 Lounge for the use of the facilities. He then introduced Nina Berryman, Weavers Way's other CFO or Chief Farm Officer, who reported that the farming season is off to a great start. The first CSA pickup is this week at Henry Got Crops, which is still really supported by co-op members, and has a lot of farm education groups in addition to its work in the fields.

Nina showed a mockumentary describing the need for a tractor for the farm. The farmers attempted to do a fundraiser on Kickstarter for the purchase of the tractor, but it was not accepted. However, shoppers can contribute to the tractor fund; checks will be accepted at the registers in the stores.

Susan Beetle reported on the current state of Co-op finances. She said sales are up 10 percent and eight percent over budget, and cash has grown by over \$500,000 since last year.

Glenn acknowledged the efforts of Rick Spalek and Dean Stefano, store managers at Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill, and Don McGuire, who works at both stores and came up with the idea of encouraging shoppers to use gift cards as an alternative to credit and debit cards. Since that push was started, the use of gift cards in the stores has tripled, resulting in lower costs for the co-op. Last year, Weavers Way paid \$191,000 in bank fees related to card use.

The Mt. Airy renovation starts in June with the renovation of the 610 building. There will be a double door at 610 that will open into the pet store and the Health and Beauty Aids departments. Renovations in the 559 main co-op building include a large bulk department on the second floor, featuring more than 400 items. A chair elevator will be installed along the wall where the flowers are now located to help those shoppers who have trouble managing steps.

Election Results & Bylaw Change

David Woo announced that there were a total of 609 votes cast, 400 of them online. Regarding the bylaw change, 476 voted in favor of the change, and 40 against. In the board elections, the following candidates were in the Top 5:

1. Margaret Lenzi--400
2. Jeremy Thomas--322
3. Megan Seitz Clinton--307
4. Dave Tukey--270
5. Jonna Naylor--246

David thanked all of the candidates for participating.

The winner of the raffle for a ticket to the CCMA Saturday night party was Sara Steele. The meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m., followed by cake and music from the Three Stories Jazz Trio.