

General Membership Meeting
October 22, 2007
Zion Baptist Church, Chester, PA
Minutes

Prior to beginning the meeting, Lorraine Dorsey distributed a survey for members to complete in order for the Board of Directors to solicit feedback from our members.

Meeting called to order 7:30

Moderator: Lorraine Gordy-Dorsey

Introductions

Each member stood up to say their name.

Lorraine reviewed the agenda. Agenda approved by membership.

Review of Robert's Rules of Order presented by Ken Wright

These are the rules we use to govern our meetings. First, a member makes a motion for a proposal. Another member must second the proposal. A discussion about the proposal follows. The membership votes on the proposal. One vote per household is allowed. We have 78 members and need at least 30% of our membership to conduct a vote. We have 23 member households here today which is sufficient representation.

Treasurer's Report presented by Jack Cavanaugh

We have \$23,679 cash on hand which consists of member equity collections of \$9,664, owner/member loans \$12,000 and additional cash of \$2,015.

Jack did a review of how much money was collected from the Farm Fresh Market since its inception in March 2007. Gross revenue was \$14,058 from March until September 30. This includes both sales at the market and donations from churches to buy the food. Expenses were \$10,087 which is food and out-of-pocket expenses. Thus, we had a gross margin of \$3,971.

Rod Powell motions to accept the Treasurer's report.

Lorraine Dorsey seconded the motion.

All approved.

None opposed.

Presentation of Committee Reports

Presidents Report

Presented by Tina Johnson

Tina reviewed the history of our Coop and its achievements to date.

We started in March 2006.

We currently have paid membership of 78 households which represents 168 people from the City of Chester, Delaware County, West Chester, and Philadelphia. We are truly a regional cooperative.

The Product Committee hosted a tasting event in March 2007 and the Wellness Committee organized a Wellness Fair in April 2007. We have had a successful Wednesday and Saturday Farm Market since March.

Because of the Farm Fresh Market, members of other communities are spending money in Chester for the first time. We are building partnerships with Crozer Hospital, Widener University, and other local businesses.

In August 2006 we identified our initial proposed site as the building at 5th and Edgemont. That site did not become available to us because the owners were unwilling and unable to give us a lease agreement. There were several problems with the site, most notably the fact that it was mortgaged and the owners could not legally extend us a lease and were unwilling to spend any money to outfit it which would have put a large financial burden on the Coop.

A potential new site has been identified.

Building Committee Report

Presented by George Brown

The new site is the building at 801/805 Avenue of the States. This is next to the new Auto Zone.

The City owns the building and has listed the price at \$290,000. It needs many repairs and has the problem of water in the basement. We have found someone willing to develop the building for us. The cost to rehabilitate the building would be approximately \$850,000.

On October 1 six member of the Coop met with City Hall. Tina gave a power point presentation. We would like to partner with the City of Chester. The meeting did generate interest.

The Building Committee met with the engineering firm of Tom Sullivan to find out if it would be better to rehab the building or demolish it and build a new building. The new building would be one story steel structure on a 9,000 sq foot slab and would cost \$250,000 more than the cost to rehab the current building. Jerry Childs, the architect, is evaluating whether it is economically feasible for us to build.

Finance Committee Report Presented by Jack Cavanaugh

There are two basic items that drive the financial viability of the Coop. First is the size and cost of the building.

We should consider starting with 4000 square feet – start small and slow. We can grow into a bigger space.

Membership is critical (second key item). We need sufficient members upfront for equity contributions (\$250 per member household), for potential membership loan, and weekly revenue sales. In addition, membership work requirement keeps cost low. 2.75 hours every 4 weeks equates to a 1 man work week per year.

The full building at 801.805 Avenue of the States will carries a monthly lease cost of \$8000. We would need a loan of \$500,000 to outfit it. We would need to start with 125 members and grow to 750 after the first year and 1700 after second year in order to support the lease and debt service.

If we start small and grow slow, we could start with 125 members and grow to 425 at the end of the first year and 550 after the second year.

Membership Committee Report Presented by Alton Loper

We are in the process of revamping the membership committee and getting more members involved. We are dividing into different subcommittees with one main meeting once a month.

Everyone is invited to call Mr. Loper on his cellphone or email him to find out how they can help with the Membership Committee.

Church Liaison Committee Presented by LarRaine Branch

We are reaching out to the religious community to get involved. We are calling on people to be a liaison between the Coop and their churches in order to get their congregations involved.

Mr. Brown is liaison in his church.

Swarthmore Presbyterian and Methodist Churches are working on behalf of the Coop. Ohev Shalom is working for us. These are religious institutions outside of Chester getting involved.

This Committee was formed to reach out to Chester church communities to invite them to become involved in the development of the Co-op.

Discussion followed about how to get new members.

Ken spoke to say the most effective way to begin is with current members bringing in one member each i.e. one person from your church.

The next orientation meeting is Oct 25 at the YWCA.

At the Shiloh Baptist Church there will be a meeting for the Baptist Churches on Saturday October 27. At the end of meeting there will be a discussion about community issues. This would be a good time for the Coop to speak out.

Tina continues with the President's report.

We need to grow our membership.

At the last Board meeting we agreed to close the market. Most of the work is being done by Tina and Mr. Loper. October 27 is the last day.

We are considering continuing the market once a week on Saturday. Andres Café has space made available to us. Members will be required to work. Membership committee will be meeting to organize the schedule for members to work. This will be a test to see if this is the model that we will want to develop for the store. Members only will be allowed to shop.

If the Market is a success at Andre's Café, the next step will be to get a storefront. Success is dependent on members working and people joining.

Tina proposes that we continue the Market indoors. We will have a 2 week break after Oct 26. It will be member only. We will give people a chance to join, but they will not be allowed to continue to shop unless they join.

Robin seconded.

20 voted yes.

Vote passes.

Proposals

1. Joan proposed to have a 2008 quarterly meeting on January 28, 2008. We would plan to meet in April, July and October of 2008.

Rod seconded.

All approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10