

Natural Harvest Food Co-op Annual Meeting

April 18, 2015

Board members present: Sarah, Gina, Britta, Troy, Yvonne, Chris, Samantha (Absent Janet & Greg)

Meeting called to order by Chris at 6:20 pm

Proof of notice of annual meeting posted in newsletter, in store, on website

Motion to pass October 2014 annual meeting minutes by Florence Lehtinen. 2ND by Missy Roach. All approved, motion passed

General Manager's Report- Anja Parenteau

- Switched annual meeting to April so closer in line with our fiscal year.
- Staff/board decisions are based on our Ends (goals for the Co-op).
- 2014:
 - Applied to be a full member of NCG in April. NCG a big voice in Washington D.C. and participates in a lot of food advocacy (i.e. sustainable food systems). More information on NCG and their work: www.strongertogether.coop
 - Able to offer Co-op Deals which became a big learning point for staff. Started Owner Specials as a perk for owners since Co-op Deals available for all customers (Owner specials at least 20% discount).
 - Able to send staff to NCG trainings; able to learn and network with other co-ops.
 - July '14: NCG staff development advisor observed staff and operations.
 - New logo voted on in store and at last annual meeting resulting in new printed materials, etc.
 - New refurbishments in store due to age and to make shopping easier.
 - Started Round up for Charity (around April). In 2014, raised \$11,500 for charities.
 - Sales 2014: \$2.25 million (grew 12.3% over 2013).
 - Net Profit 2014: \$161,000, 7.2% of sales.
 - 44% shoppers were owners in 2014. So far in 2015, an increase to 50% of owners.
 - 1,601 active members; 241 new members in 2014.
 - Received \$180,000 in member equity
 - Purchased from 59 local (100 mi) and regional (400 mi) producers. \$205,000 went to local/regional producers (63% were local). Almost 15% all products purchased in the store are local/regional.
 - \$72,000 to local economy for services, \$347,000 went to wages in 2014.
- In 2015, want to look at pricing and try to lower pricing on staple items.
- Grocery reset coming on April 22 & 23. Merchandising team will be coming in. Plans to have aisle signage as well.
- Plan to regularly have newsletters up on new website and easy to locate.

**Video played while owners ate dinner (NCG video about Co-ops). Owners then asked to list why they joined Co-op and Chris shared with the group.

Board President- Chris

Market study in the works with Dakota Worldwide (cost \$8,500). Analysis will look at current site for expansion as well as some other locations and expansion options. Board right now has no intentions of moving, but looking into options. Market analysis will be done by next week and Board will proceed from there.

Visited with Cook County Co-op in Grand Marais to talk about their expansion. A market analysis told them to double their footprint. 18 months later they went from \$1.8 million in sales to \$3.6 million and from 20 to 40 employees.

**Showed video about a Brooklyn, NY co-op (Park Slope Co-op).

Members are encouraged to join the board. Chris and Troy will be stepping down this year.

Want to be able to make improvements to the building such as a loading dock, expanded bathroom, meeting space.

Want to increase employee wages to a \$10/hr minimum even if it results in reducing board discounts.

Bess Metsa garden in need of volunteer leadership to keep going.

Chris thanks everyone for attending and to the local growers present for attending as well.

Keynote speaker: Jim Riddle "GMOs, Organic, and You!"

Grew up in IA until moving to MN in 1980. Grew produce and helped start the Winona Farmers Market. Has a 5 acre fruit farm called Blue Fruit Farm. Worked for the U of M, but left to work with the Ceres Trust (<http://cerestrust.org/> Gives out grant money in 5 states of upper Midwest) and has worked with local growers in Jamaica recently. Served on the USDA National Organic Standards Board for 5 years. Is a certified organic farm inspector with Organic Independents LLP

Main Topics of Presentation:

- What are GMOs
- GMO labeling, why label
 - No pre-market human health safety tasting
 - Conduct epidemiological studies
 - Environmental and public health impacts
 - Social justice
 - Freedom of religion (patenting of life).
 - Market opportunities for non-GMO farm
 - Transparency

- Let free market decide fate of GMOs.
- What organic is about
- Reasons to buy local, organic @ food co-op
 - Protect natural resources
 - Recycle economic resources
 - Invest in food security
 - Advance rural living skills
 - Conduct regionally adapted research
 - Build community
 - Fresh, healthy, flavorful, fun

End of Meeting Miscellaneous:

Co-op will put up resources on backyard/small scale organic gardening up for owners to view. A couple resources: Rodale Institute "Encyclopedia of Organic Gardening", books by Elliot Coleman.

Drew names for raffle items (turkey, gift certificates, gift basket, fitness membership).

Motion to adjourn annual meeting by Florence Lehtinen, 2nd by Daniel Spence. All in favor, motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.