Food Conspiracy Board Meeting
Approved Minutes of 1/5/11

A regular meeting of the Food Conspiracy Board of Directors was held at the Pima Friends Meeting House, 931 N 5th Avenue, Tucson, at 6:30 p.m. on January 5, 2011

Present:
Ben Kuzma
Cody Witham
Torey Ligon
Joyce Liska
George Milan
Shefali Milczarek-Desai
Eleanor Starr
Paula Wilk
Linda Laev
Eric Lauterbach-Colby
Coley Ward

Absent:
Rob McLane – Out of town. Tried to skype in, but the internet connection wouldn’t work.
Natanya Siegel -- Ill.
Betty King -- Out of town.

1. Meeting called to order at 6:37 p.m.
We have a quorum.

2. Review Agenda:
Ben: Wants an executive session to give an update about real estate matters.
Paula: We will add it at the end of the meeting evaluation after item 10 since we have a guest.
No other changes.

3. Check In
Went around the circle for check in.

4. Consent Agenda

Item 4.A Approval of Minutes from December 2010
Original minutes have been updated and a new version of December minutes were distributed electronically and as hard copies at the meeting.

Joyce moves to accept Consent Agenda. Cody seconds.
Vote: 5-0
Motion passes.

5. Owner Time:

Eleanor Starr is a member of Food Conspiracy Co-op and Briar Patch Co-op in Grass Valley, CA. She wants to know if it is possible to expand to the left or right of the existing store.

Ben: We lease the two northern buildings in our existing site so it is not really practical to buy any space to the north unless we can buy our existing building. We are considering expanding to the south, however.

Coley: There is an empty space directly to the South of the produce room between the Co-op and the Herb Store.

George: The store looks and feels good.

Eleanor: Things are looking good since she was last here in June.
Also, could we have two pots of soup so that there will be one without dairy and spice?

Coley: Kelley has already placed an order for an additional soup pot so there should be two soups in the future. The extra soup won’t necessarily always be dairy and spice free, but often Kelley will have a dairy free option on a day that she is serving a dairy or meat based soup.

Coley: The Co-op’s 40th B-day is Feb 19th. There will be cake, milk, soy milk and other goodies. Dwight from Glue Factory may be making us some new bike and bumper stickers. He will also come and sell other stickers at the party. Hopefully someone from Sleeping Frog will come out and talk about the new super CSA. Also, leading up to the party the Co-op will have five days of sales. Each department will have an item on sale each day that week leading up to the sale. We are also looking for a band. If anyone has recommendations for a band, let me know.

Coley: The day before the super bowl (Sat, Feb. 5th) Mrs. Green will be broadcasting live from the store. There will be in store demos that day as well.

George: When is the annual membership meeting?
Coley: March 5th.

6. General Manager Information for Board

Ben: We have two more staff interviews to complete to finish the staff survey. The L-2 report on Staff Relations is due in February so I thought it made sense to do it now. April is the three year mark since our last survey and three years is the recommended time to do a survey, but doing it now makes more sense than waiting until April because of the upcoming report.

Also, we recently had an inspection from the health department. We earned a G rating which means that there was something we were doing wrong but it is something that can be corrected
right away. The G mark was given because the deli needed to mark the pull date on items placed in the fridge. Instead they have been marking the open date. So, even though we have been pulling things in 7 days, we got marked down.

We took down holiday lights today.

Sales have been busy. There is a lull when students go away but they are coming back next week. Starting next week things will get busier and busier through the gem show. We’re all preparing for lots and lots of sales.

There is a Western Corridor NCGA meeting in Santa Monica on Jan. 19, 20 & 21 so I will be out of the store for those three days. I will be in the store on Monday and Tuesday before I leave.

It was noted that the chart in the Board packet was so small that it was difficult to read. Torey will try to do a better job of presenting future charts in a readable scale or she will distribute the original excel files in addition to the pdf packet.

Shefali noted that in spite of the small text, it seemed as though Food Conspiracy was doing very well in comparison to other similar sized Co-ops. Ben noted that the Co-op is doing well in all categories except labor. We are a little high on labor.

7. Items from the Consent Agenda
Nothing

8. Board Work

A. GM Ten Year Plan Report

Ben will give three ten year plan reports throughout the year.
Subject of this report: Options for Co-op to invest in farming to grow produce within the region, serving the needs of the local economy.

Ben: This report will look at ways we can invest in sustainable farm development in our community. This would have a direct benefit on our store and the larger community.

History and trends in farming in the US:

- Between 1910 and 2000, the number of US farm workers dropped from 14 M to 2.5M. Wages are low in this sector and there is a widening gap in wages between farm labor and all other wages.

- At the same time, the percent of disposable personal income that families are spending on food has been declining since the 1950s. In the 50s, families spent 20% of disposable income on food. Now American families spend less than 10%. In some other countries these percentages are much higher.
• Each farmer in the US produces enough food to support 120 people. This means the US has had food available to export.

• In the 60’s the US had a trade surplus, due in part to exporting of food. Since the mid 70’s the US has been running a trade deficit.

• During the current recession, farming is one of the few bright spots.

• There are 2.2 million total farms in the USA now. 59% are hobby farms (backyard and small acreage). The next group is small farms that earn less than $250,000 in income each year.

• Today, 14% of farms are producing 85% of the food in the US.

*Current trends in Arizona farming:*

• In Arizona cropland acreage has been declining.

• 84% of Arizona farms are under 100 acres. Smaller farms have been growing over the past decade. Farms over 100 acres are declining in Arizona.

• Farms earning less than 10,000 a year are growing. Farms earning more than $10,000 are declining.

• Maricopa, Pinal and Yuma counties are the largest farming counties in the state. La Paz and Cochise counties are the next largest farming counties. Pima is not amongst the top five.

Food Conspiracy has an opportunity to link up with existing small farms rather than trying to develop large areas of organic cropland.

*Ideas for supporting sustainable farms in Southern Arizona*

**Community Supported Agriculture** – “In basic terms, CSA consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or spiritually, the community’s farm.”

There are 2000 CSAs across the USA. The USDA lists 9 in Arizona.

There are a lot of programs out there to help farmers. Many organizations offer grants to farmers. There are lots of existing resources out there – maybe the Co-op can be integral in helping to connect farmers with these resources.
Super CSAs – Co-op can invest in several shares of an existing CSA as a means of offering a larger amount of capital to a farm and guaranteeing delivery of a certain amount of produce. We have implemented a super-CSA with Sleeping Frog Farm.

- There are many examples of Co-op’s offering innovative funding to small-scale farms in exchange for local produce for sale at the store. La Montanita Food Co-op in Albuquerque, NM has several programs to support small farms. Currently they are offering LaM Funds. These funds allow the Co-op to purchase 100 A-interest shares as collateral and then co-op members can purchase B-shares to help provide additional support to farmers.

Also, Bellingham, Wash started a Farm Fund 10 years ago which was funded from some of the co-op’s net earnings.

Subscription Crops - Two years ago, the co-op requested that a local nursery grow out tomato starts for sale at the Co-op. This was a very successful offering and the store repeated the request last year and upped the purchase to 1,000 starts. This is a good way for a local farm or nursery to have a guaranteed sale.

The next portion of the presentation listed farm and garden programs around the country that are offering innovative examples of urban farming or farm/grocery store and farm/restaurant partnerships.

Communities Putting Prevention to Work.

Coley is sitting on a task force with Beth Sanders from the UA School of Public Health to look at ways that more backyard produce can be introduced into people’s lives. This initiative is funded by a large grant from the stimulus package. Unfortunately, this involvement led to a realization that the Co-op is not legally able to sell produce from backyard growers because the law says that only produce from registered farms can be sold and only farms of an acre or more are eligible to be registered.

8.B. Finance Report

No questions

8.C Acceptance of Board of Director Applications and Statements for the 2011 Election Ballot

There are three people running for the Board of Directors in March.

Cody made a motion to nominate Rob McLane, Joyce Liska and Shefali Milczarek-Desai to run in the 2011 Food Conspiracy Co-op election for Board of Directors.

Linda seconded the motion.
Vote: 5-0
Motion passes.

8.D. Committee Reports

1. Board Development

   *Meeting Evaluation Form.* Joyce initiated a discussion about a new meeting evaluation form (included in the Board packet). Some minor formatting changes were suggested after the packet went out.

   There was a short discussion about the new form including a suggestion that Board members be asked at the beginning of each meeting if they are prepared for the meeting and not during the meeting evaluation portion of the meeting.

   Paula requested that Joyce put a change of meeting procedure, wherein Board members are asked if they are prepared at the beginning of the meeting on the next agenda for Board members to vote on a change in policy. Shefali requests that there be an explanation of what “being prepared” for a meeting will mean.

   *Proposed calendar of presentations.* Board members can contact Joyce or go on Basecamp if they want to volunteer to lead a presentation. Do people still want to have a basecamp training? Yes. Cody would be happy to go over it with anyone.

   Everyone will need to be using basecamp in order for it to be useable tool.

2. Elections Committee – No Report
3. GM Review Committee – No Report

9. Next Meeting/Calendar

   - Feb 1 - Begin balloting
   - Feb 2 - Next Board meeting
   - Feb 5 - Mrs. Green’s live broadcast at the Co-op
   - Feb 5 - Newsletter article deadline – Joyce
   - Feb 19 – Co-op’s 40th Birthday Party
   - March 5 – 2011 Annual Meeting

10. Presentation

Genetics by Cody Witham

Cody put together an interesting presentation on genetics for members of the Board and Co-op members in attendance. The central topic in the presentation was The Central Dogma which includes: DNA Replication, RNA Transcription, Protein Translation, Cellular Function

Due to the technical nature of this presentation, detailed minutes were not taken. Anyone interested in learning more about the presentation can contact Cody to view the powerpoint slides.
11. Meeting Evaluation

Board Meeting Evaluation/Monitoring Form
Date of Meeting 1/05/2011

In a continual effort to improve its Policy Governance process, the Food Conspiracy Board of Directors developed this form to evaluate its progress. This evaluation is the board as a whole, not individual board members.

1. The board was prepared for the meeting
   X☐ Satisfactory ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

2. The boards time was appropriately spent on Ends as opposed to Means
   X☐ Satisfactory ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

3. Each board member was given an adequate opportunity to participate in discussion and decision making.
   X☐ Satisfactory ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

4. The board’s treatment of all persons was courteous, dignified and fair.
   X☐ Satisfactory ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

5. The board adhered to its adopted governance style:
   a. It emphasized outward vision:
      X☐ Yes ☐ No
   b. It encouraged diversity in viewpoints:
      X☐ Yes ☐ No
   c. It exercised strategic leadership more than overseeing administrative detail:
      X☐ Yes ☐ No
   d. It maintained a clear distinction between board and management roles:
      ☐ Yes ☐ No NA
   e. It looked to the future:
      X☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Did the Board Encourage Owner Participation?
   X☐ Satisfactory ☐ Needs Improvement ☐ Unsatisfactory

Evaluation comments:

12. Adjournment of regular meeting

Joyce motioned to adjourn. Shefali seconds.

Vote: 5-0
Motion Passes.

Meeting ended at 9:10 p.m.