

Syracuse Cooperative Market Board of Directors CANDIDATE APPLICATION

Name	Richard Barton
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Candidate Statement

I. Describe your involvement with the Co-op. Include amount of time spent and specific activities, if appropriate.

I joined the Co-op Board last January. Since then I've attended every board meeting, the board retreat, and the spring membership meeting. Beyond this, with the help of other board members, our general manager, and consultants, I have invested considerable time into understanding the Co-op's financials and developing our capacity for a relocation within the Westcott community, or expansion to a second location.

Before joining the Syracuse Cooperative Market, I was a member of the GreenStar Co-op in Ithaca for several years, and the Park Slope Food Co-op in Brooklyn for several years before that.

2. Describe any volunteer or paid experience relevant to serving as a Co-op Board member.

As a graduate student in government, I have experience writing grants. I am also a graduate fellow of the Central New York chapter of the Scholars Strategy Network--a federated organization that connects researchers to policymakers, advocacy organizations and media. In this role, I have met with members of the current city administration, state legislators and academia to develop policy initiatives around community investment and housing stability. Also, as a member of the Park Slope Food Coop, I served as a squad leader in charge of stocking shelves.

3. What do you see as our Co-op's role in the broader community?

As I see it, the Syracuse Cooperative Market is part of a movement fighting for sustainable agriculture, healthy living, and economic equality. The Co-op advances these goals by selling whole foods from local farmers, and national goods that are organic and fair trade. This movement, stands in stark contrast with mainstream

grocery stores that predominantly sell highly processed foods that are grown in large-scale factory farms and produced by large corporations that are detached from local communities, unconcerned about their environmental impact, and contribute to wealth inequality by lining the pockets of CEO's and shareholders.

Our Co-op plays an important role in this movement. Here in Central New York, with a local economy that has long been dependent on agriculture, the Syracuse Cooperative Market connects local farmers to the growing network of consumers.

4. Please provide a personal statement, including anything you feel is relevant to your candidacy.

I believe that Co-op can grow even stronger and more impactful by continuing efforts to increase diversity among member-owners. We live in a city with extremely high levels of intergenerational poverty and racial segregation. The Co-op has made efforts to attract low-income members (i.e. by accepting SNAP benefits). I think the Co-op can do more to recruit and improve accessibility and lower costs for city residents that are low income and people of color. And, most importantly, as a board member, I am firmly committed to my fiduciary duty to the existing member-owners of SCM. To me, this means that the goals of expansion/relocation and greater inclusivity are, while important, subservient to preserving the SCM as an institution, and protecting the interests and investments of current owners.



Richard Barton