# SYRACUSE REAL FOOD CO-OP SPRING MEETING Saturday May 21, 2011

Held at Syracuse Real Food Cooperative
618 Kensington Road
Syracuse NY 13210

# Meeting called to order at 4.15pm by Dan Sanders, vice-president.

- Personal introduction. New to process. President, Georgette Nicolaides, away at a conference.
- Attention called to the distributed agenda.
- Noted that on this occasion the attendance did not constitute a quorum as per the bylaws. Members were encouraged to attend the fall meeting so that board matters could be properly attended to.
- Announcement of due notice fulfilled requirements by in store posting of notification of meeting.
- The minutes from the October 6<sup>th</sup> meeting held at May Memorial Unitarian Society were reviewed. The notion to accept these was presented by Walley Francis and seconded by Dawn Wilson. Passed unanimously.

# Annual Reports.

# The Presidents Report

• Note the President's report in the handout information.

# The Treasurer's report was presented by Walley Francis, Treasurer.

• Noted that SRFC is currently running at capacity. Suffering from the problems of the stores current physical location. Numbers consistent with past years. A full annual financial report will be given at the fall meeting.

# Question (from member Vernon Van Steean):

- Is the Co-op making money as he understood and paying down debt?
- Issue of viability of store?

#### Answer:

- No new debt.
- Member loans for new equipment nearly paid off.
- The mortgage on the building is being paid down monthly.
- Not for operation of/at current facility

# Store report from Travis Hance, General Manager.

- Relatively good year. Some challenges to meet the aggressive pricing/sales tactics used by Wegmans.
- Strong growth in deli, some growth in produce. Similar pattern across the industry. J curve in the natural food market in the nation.
- Competition from the revamped Tops store.
- March/April 2010 best months ever. Challenging to meet this.
- 1 -2 % down on year.
- Diligently shopping for Real Estate.
- Looking at possibility of opening a second store but challenges in finding it.
- In the meantime focusing on future initiatives for current store.
  - Need member input to redo façade, as store does not look good in comparisons.
  - Hire architect.
  - Need to hear owners vision at the three planned meetings.

    June 22 is the first.

- Plan to refit the store by end of October with major reset inside with focus on deli, produce and fresh. Reducing dry.

#### Question (from (new) member Daniel Curewitz):

• Does Co-op get involved with local farmers by early investment up through harvest time?

#### Answer:

• SRFC does have a pick up point program for Common Thread Farm of Madison County. (Between 30 and 50 cases currently). After competing with CSA's this was started two years ago. It works fantastically bringing potential customers into the store that shop and buy at pick up time.

#### Question:

• Any plans to expand this to other farms?

#### Answer:

• Haven't seen the need for it at this time.

#### Question:

• Any zoning issues for proposed changes to outside of building?

#### Answer:

• Likely there will be but should be quite smooth.

# Question (from member Frank Cetera):

• What will happen to bulk?

#### Answer:

• Current growth is even but likely to grow. Grocery now going down. Will meet customer demands.

# Question (from member Elizabeth Donosz):

• Potential for selling Green Juices?

#### Answer:

• Potential project for fresh juices in the future.

# Question (from member Ollie Clobb):

From an article in the Post Standard. The EP designated Syracuse as a
Green City with an "amazing vision". For consideration by the SRFC is the
model of the vision of Judy Wicks of the White Dog Café in Philadelphia
whereby a network of farmers bring produce to a central location. The
organizer(s) were offering help to others to emulate this program. It is a
powerful vision.

# Response by Jamie R White, SRFC Board Member and chair of the Ends committee.

• What is the vision for the SRFC? Members were encouraged to sign up for the Ends committee to be part of this dynamic.

# Question (from member Ursula Rozum):

• (Working on green core questionnaire) – Viability of expanding bulk to be sustainable? Concept of bulk being more affordable with the use of customers own containers and increasing demand.

#### Answer:

• 15% of sales from bulk. Decrease in packaged goods but keeping bulk more sustainable through growth.

# Question (from member Ursula Rozum):

• What if a member has serious issues of ethical production?

#### Answer:

- SRFC is a buying agent for members example of people's views of both meat and soy products. The shopping habits dictate what is stocked.
- (Historical) Israel issues mentioned.

# Question (from member Ursula Rozum):

 What about Dole bananas and the connection with Columbian death squads?

#### Answer:

These issues need to be a public campaign by everyone, not just the SRFC.
 Because the co-op would die if it kept stopping the sale of certain products. (Example of grape story.) There has to be a partnership with public policy.

#### Question:

• Options of sourcing bananas from other suppliers?

#### Answer:

• Tracking between organic and conventional in the store at this time shows 2:1 for Fair Trade.

#### Question:

Has a downtown site been considered for a second store?

#### Answer:

- Bob Doucette with his Dey Building expansion plan would help but there is the problem of parking.
- Financial feasibility of options.

#### Comment:

• The example of the development in downtown Portland.

## Response:

• If plan would work, we would do it.

# Comment (from member Frank Cetera):

• Would like to see the development of a downtown site.

## Response:

• Dey building plan probably not viable.

# By-laws committee report presented by Karl Newton.

- Will email report to those interested.
- The report has been worked on for 1 ½ years. Use of color in the document to show progress.
- What does the membership want done.
- Need for quorum.
- Choices for financing.
- Membership needs and decisions to be made.
- By-laws committee does not think it viable to move to a different type of co-op.
- Legal questions, outlined in the document, include:
  - o What type of co-op does the SRFC want to be?
  - o IRS regulations.
  - $\circ \quad \text{Non-member trial memberships.}$
  - o Capital contribution.
  - o Capital stock.
  - o Selling shares.
  - o Voting rights.
  - o Selling stock.
  - Work requirements.
- Green & Seifter CPA

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• Dialogue necessary.

No unfinished business.

**New Business.** 

# Question:

• Is there an opportunity to have pricing by weight information available on labels in store?

#### Answer:

• This will happen within the next three months.

Thanks and appreciation for the staff of the SRFC. "Very friendly and professional."

No other business.

Election of Directors (n/a).

# Adjournment.

 Motion to adjourn meeting from Karl Newton. Seconded by Vernon Van Steean