

Fort Greene/Clinton Hill Food Coop General Meeting

Monday, March 31

7-8:30 p.m.

Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church

85 South Oxford

Brooklyn, NY

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Facilitator: Erin (Merchandise and Steering Committee)

Secretary: Veronica (Governance and Outreach Committee)

Start time: 7:05pm called into order by Erin

Meeting Orientation

-Erin welcomed all attendees, approx 50-60 people, and to show a raise of hands for first time attendees and who were on committees

-approx. 1/4th of meeting were first time attendees

-approx. 1/2th of attendees were on a committee

-Erin introduced meeting

-there is lots of interest for this new coop, meetings since January, over 250 people have filled out food survey, over 500 people have signed petition, introduced DK (SC) and Kathryn (SC, OC, FS) as the cooker uppers for this new coop

-each committee explained and formed quickly

-trying something new in this meeting in contrast from last meetings by be able to vote on some agenda items and be involved

-assuming for today's meeting that everyone here is a member

-introduced that we would be talking about meeting structure (talk and vote) and principles of this new coop

Facilitator/Secretary Choice

-Erin explained the roles of the proposed facilitator and secretary roles

-these roles were chosen beforehand for this meeting

-any objections to Erin and Veronica holding their respective roles?

-no objections

Presentation of Main Agenda and Pending Agenda Queue

-Erin discussed how in the future the agenda items will be available with ample time before GM

-Erin presented that 1) Agenda and Meeting Structure and 2) Governance Principles would be on the agenda and that we could open it up to any other agenda items that people want to present

-no offerings of additional agenda items

-no objection to going forward with the two agenda items presented

Brief Committee Reports

- Erin opened the floor for each committee to give info on happenings and progress of each committee
- DK of Location and Lease Committee spoke on the committee's behalf
- mentioned the space on South Portland and Fulton street in Fort Greene is still available and growth into other adjacent spaces is a possibility and the landlord has a good offer and excited about this.
- but they are still looking at other location possibilities

Brief Committee Reports (Con't)

- the LC would like to have a broader locations ie Myrtle ave.
- they need to line up all options and make the location open to all people
- Jim(OC) of Outreach Committee spoke on committee's behalf
- the OC clarified its goals and working on a flier to distribute
 - he mentioned how Veronica (OC) has put together a blurb on spreading the word about this new coop and this can be used for fliers, emails, etc.
- Veronica mentioned how this is a work in progress
- DK wanted to hear more on outreach activities
- Veronica directed this inquiry to the end of the meeting when we break up into committee groups for the sake of time
- Kathryn spoke for Finance Committee because the chair for FC was not present
 - the FC is working closely with Joe Holtz of the Park Slope Food Coop and learning about their financial models and scenarios
- collecting info on getting seed money and grant money
- Erin brought up work credit issue and how a member of the PSFC can keep work for this new coop and get credit for PSFC and one can work now for new coop and that can be work credit for this new coop
 - introduced Diane (OC) who is the liaison between this new coop and the PSFC in making sure that members of PSFC are getting credit for their work for this new coop
- Diane (OC) spoke briefly about this relationship with the PSFC and to keep close track of your work time and get in contact with her at the end of this meeting
- DK (SC) spoke of possible road blocks with banking work credits for future and urged that everyone get their tasks approved by their respective committee-what exactly counts for work credit is still being clarified
- Ken (SC and GC) seconded this motion and that your task for work credit must be approved by your committee
- Erin of Merchandising Committee spoke of committee's behalf
 - 1) the MC has created an online food survey asked attendees to pass this survey on to neighbors to really find out what the interests are
 - 2) paper survey in progress with help from a class from the New School, a survey of the community through housing developments and churches
 - working with MC and OC, getting on foot
 - conducting research into other food coops, a coop study group if you will
 - use skills that people can offer especially like lawyers and designers are in high demand right now
- Jim (OC) mentioned that there is a sign up sheet going around to everyone regarding organizations in the community to partner with and if anyone could offer some contact info on this list of organizations that Daniela (OC) has compiled
- Matius of the IT (Information Technology) Committee spoke on the committee's behalf
 - the ITC is working on way for everyone to communicate via lists, surveys and have a simple and hopefully free way to do this

Main Agenda 1) Agenda Structure

- Erin explained that a component of the proposed agenda structure would be that whoever proposed an agenda item would take the floor at this point and present their agenda-Erin then passed it to Ken to introduce the two agenda items for today's meeting
- Ken stated the two items on the agenda for tonight: 1)proposed meeting structure for GM 2)Collecting ideas and opening a dialogue about the principles and values of this new coop ie mission statement.
 - stated how we are dealing with a chicken and egg situation at the center of beginning a coop together. Example is being taken from the PSFC and drawing information from his own experience from being on the board at PSFC and assisting other coops start up.
 - Proposed that the central decision making body will be this and future GM, that agenda items be presented and voted on-you can submit agenda items to the SC before future GMs and the SC will determine what will be able to fit on the agenda schedule.
 - also proposed in the interest of transparency, for future GMs, the proposed agenda would be sent to everyone beforehand
 - Facilitating a meeting: there should be a majority on who facilitates each GM, if you want to facilitate a future GM contact the GC, suggested having a pool of facilitators to rotate in responsibility
 - suggested having longer GM length of time
 - Do we want to approve the meeting structure and come to vote? Are there other possible meeting structures for what the group wants?
 - Open Forum: quick easy issues-if they need more discussion they should be recommended as an agenda item for next GM
 - Feedback: a time for reflection about the process of the meeting and not a time to go back to talking about issues
 - End of today's meeting: decided how you want to contribute, exchange separately, people standing by for general questions
- Kathryn (SC) announces she is sending around email list
- Paula (GC) states that we are not relying on one person-distribute the decision making, create cooperation through these meetings
- Alfred (new and from City Council member's office of Leticia James) stated what we are doing is important in creating a new community and culture
- Hilda asked if the GMs would go through any kind of evolution?
- Ken answers Hilda's question: this proposed structure is intended to be used as is and maintained, the feedback portion of the structure is useful-each GM is different from another, this proposed structure is a framework to use for future GMs
- Andreas (LC) would like to see clear goals and purpose stated in this GM and for next GMs.
- Ken: items for future agenda feed into the Feedback portion
- Andreas states we need concrete decisions
- Sara (new): proposes that the open forum be before the agenda items because people become tired after hearing about agenda items and don't have energy to contribute in the open forum
- Ken states he could go either way on the order of the agenda items and the open forum maybe we should open it up to the attendees and see what people think
- Erin suggests we vote on if the open forum should be before the agenda
- Dylan (FC) thinks that the open forum should follow the main agenda and suggests that brief announcements come sooner in proposed structure-maybe in beginning of GM

- Paula (GC) suggests that keeping appropriate time on open forum is important
- Kena (new) thinks of these GMs as a time to get things done to move forward and would like attention on agenda and announcements at the end
- Gerold (LC?) stated its important to make the atmosphere of this new coop child friendly and handicapped accessible, a place to communicate concerns
- Brian (LC) suggests having agenda first then open forum because questions/statements mention in open forum might be addressed in the agenda
- Sara (new) stated that the facilitator is super important in keeping strict limits, what she enjoys about the PSFC is how the open forum embraces interesting ideas and dislikes how votes taken to extend conversation on an agenda item cuts in to open forum time, emphasizes flexibility
- Ken suggests informal polls
- Erin presents a time to vote: those who want open forum before agenda-approx 9 people
- those who could go either way on the issue: more than half of the attendees
- adopt the proposed agenda then open forum: approx less than half of attendees
- Irene (new) suggests keeping the order of the agenda and open forum flexible from situation to situation ie GM to GM
- Erin states we are going to adopt the proposed meeting structure order and make adjustments as we go, and for people to propose future agenda items regarding this issue available to SC**
- Ken stated that change through the GM is how we are going to change structure if we need to
- Clara (GC and MC) suggested if in the beginning the forum can be longer
- Paula (GC): time of meeting-times to reconsider
- Nina: adjust timing as agenda evolves-not so concrete
- Ken: vote? We vote as is with the idea that anyone can submit something
- Erin asks for attendees to vote by raise of hands on this
- Proposed GM structure approved by simple majority, no opposition**

Main Agenda: 2) Governance Principles/Mission Statement

- Erin introduces Ken on the issue of governance principles and the mission statement
- Ken: why we exist, our values, what are we here for, need rules and bylaws, how membership is defined, examples of other coops, offer up what this coop will be what is a member, talk about values they want and don't want, send ideas to the email address on handout, then at a future GM we will have a collection of ideas/values and then we can vote on them
- Gerold(LC): what is the name of the this new coop? Thinks this is the first step in making it welcoming to people. Suggests not having a regional/neighborhood name in name of coop because we don't want people to feel left out, also the some people don't know what the term food coop means
- Veronica (GC): how about The Greene Hill-A Food Coop?
- Gerold (LC): referenced a food coop in chapel hill that was not regionally specific: the Well Spring Coop
- Paula (GC): is this new coop a work only one?
- Laura (new): can someone talk about the difference in coops ie the PSFC
- Sara (new): as a PSFC member explained different types of membership, status range of other food coops
- Peter (LC?): the PSFC can only help us if we are a work-only member coop
- Mataus (ITC): suggests making a name and if the coop should be work only as an agenda item
- Elayah (LC): her experience with tiered coops is that the food is more expensive because you have to pay more people to work
- Andreas: people need to really commit and maybe have specialized jobs

- Hilda (new): there is an intimidating factor with the PSFC and would not like to see that repeated and make location accessible
- Jodi (new): non-members shop? @higher prices to make it open to the community, how shifts can be in community like a soup kitchen shift
- Steve: coop can have an energy that it offers to the community
- Erin announces that we have 2 more minutes but this is not a closed discussion
- DK (SC): hire manager of members, Joe Holtz of PSFC expressed that if he could do things differently he would bring people in to see the coop because it can be unwelcoming-how do we bring people in?
- Kena (new): her experience with the PSFC and New Haven FC that as a working mother it can be very difficult to work. Likes the model of the Flatbush food coop where there are different levels of membership-maybe our model can evolve where it can be more flexible for people who don't have the luxury of flex time because of jobs and kids
- Ken: counterpoints with the PSFC has always had a problem with overcrowding and low capacity. Not welcoming? Big numbers, know you are connected by working shifts and making healthy food affordable, ways have members do other work seem open and not turn people away, everyone has a chance
- closing point-send email, blog entry, add comments about values that are important to you
- Sara: who is doing the drafting of the mission statement?
- Erin: GC does this.

Open Forum

- Erin initiates OPEN FORUM and states she cut into open forum because the discussion before was important
- reminds that you can submit agenda items to the SC for next GM

Next Meeting Arrangements

- Kathryn gives a proposed location, date, time for next GMs:

-Location: Cadman Memorial Church

350 Clinton Ave at Lafayette

Brooklyn, NY 11238

-Dates and Time: Tuesday April 15th 7pm-9pm

Tuesday May 20th 7pm-9pm

Tuesday June 17th 7pm-9pm

-the first date, April 15th, might be too soon for a GM but maybe other separate committees could use this time to meet

-she wants to take 3 nights because they are free

-passing around basket to donate money for space for tonight

-Erin asks attendees with show of hands of we want to take these date, times, and location

-Agreed with simple majority that the proposed location, date, time for next GMs is accepted

-Paula (GC): child care needs to be a priority for these GMs and considering a separate space for the kids

-Erin: agrees with this point in having a separate designated area for childcare and takes up Paula offer as a possible child care worker for future GMs

-Kathryn (SC and OC): seconds this motion

-Gerold (LC): emphasizes that kids need to be comfortable in their environment not just put anywhere

Meeting Reflection and Feedback

-Erin introduces this section by asking if this new structure is better than past meetings

-Diane (OC): new structure is good

-Roy (new): is there a target date for opening?

-Erin: in state of flux, need to make more decisions before this opening happens

-Sara (new): would have liked the this GM to be more explicit decision process

-Ken: agrees with Sara in that maybe we were too bashful and hopefully we will be more clear

-Erin: meeting rules?

-Andreas (LC): the LC and FC are coming together

-Mataus (ITC): would have liked to see more structure, having a meeting about a meeting, suggested having discussions online

-Erin: push as an agenda item

-Stefanie(new): can we designate who the committee are and how to join them

Meet with Committees and Cleanup

-Erin: good seg way into talking to individual committees, committees head raise their hands, if you have general questions talk to DK and/or Kathryn

-Gisella (new): committee email?

-Erin: go talk to individual committees for additional dialogues

8:40 chair pick up/clean up/ and separate committee talks

Meeting ends and people disperse at 8:45

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Abbreviations: MC (Merchandise Committee), GC (Governance Committee), OC (Outreach Committee), Finance Committee (FC), Steering Committee (SC), Locations and Lease Committee (LC), General Meeting (GM), Information Technology Committee (ITC), Park Slope Food Coop (PSFC)

Prepared by Veronica (GC and OC)