

Weaver Street Market Board of Directors

April 2009 board meeting

Held at the Corner Building, Carrboro 6:15 p.m. Wednesday April 15, 2009

Directors present: David Rizzo (chair), James Morgan (secretary), Lori Washington (treasurer), Ruffin Slater (general manager), Jacob Myers, Linda Stier, David Bright.

Others attending: Andy Sachs (facilitator), Kate DeMayo (notes), Ginger Gidry (visiting owner)

1. Preliminaries

Owner input: Ginger Gidry spoke to advocate for the continuance and development of the volunteer program. The Board responded that Dave Rizzo is looking at the volunteer program and will be bringing back options for consideration at the next meeting.

The agenda was amended to add a personnel item to the agenda for executive session.

The Board approved the March minutes as posted.

2. General Manager Items

GM Report and Communication to the Board

The GM reported that the Southern Village developers had dropped the plan for a hotel in the parking lot across from the store because of community opposition. They had not abandoned the notion of some development at the site in the future but there were no current proposals.

The GM added an oral note that a mainstream grocery trade publication "Progressive Grocer" had focussed on Weaver Street Market as its store of the month and suggested that our model might represent "the future of retail"

3. Board Development and Process

Board Policy 2-3 Treatment of Staff

The Board considered a draft update to this policy, first to further specify requirements for staff training and support and second, to add language limiting the use of subcontract labor. There was concern that the draft as it stood might be overly prescriptive. The Board clarified that the root concern of the first item was to improve communication within the coop and ensure that all employees with frontline contact with customers were well-informed on organizational changes and developments.

Task: Linda and James were tasked to develop further options and bring them back to the Board.

Executive Assistant Position

James had circulated an updated draft of the requirements of this position. Discussion centered around whether these responsibilities would be best fulfilled by a direct employee of the Board or by a staff employee reporting indirectly through the General Manager. It was felt that performance and accountability issue might be more easily addressed via the latter option: in accordance with Policy Governance guidelines the Board currently has no performance review protocol for any employee other than the General Manager.

The Board agreed to continue the discussion online and revisit the subject at the next meeting.

The 'Pollan Conversation'

The Board continued its discussion of Michael Pollan's 'In Defense of Food'. Pollan traces the varying dietary advice from bodies such as the American Heart Association over the last couple of decades which has taken nutrition out of the context of food and food out of the context of culture, resulting in greater and greater confusion of the general public and the growth of 'an unhealthy obsession with healthy eating'. Nutritionism has done nothing to stem the proliferation of ever more highly processed foods and the ongoing dearth in the popular diet of fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grains. We are faced with ever-increasing rates of obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease and

diabetes and while we become ever more sophisticated at treating these ailments we seem powerless to slow the explosive growth in their onset even with the younger elements of the population.

The difficult truth for the food delivery industry seems to be that degradation of food quality is implicit in the dominant model: preparing and delivering foodstuffs for extended shelf life in transit and in the store inevitably tends to lead producers and processors to remove key nutritive elements to protect the goods from rodents, insects and decay. This is even true to some extent for progressive grocery businesses like our own. How do we face this challenge? Coops had their origin in developing food supply alternatives to the exploitive and adulterative company stores of industrial communities in nineteenth century England. Are we as a community-owned food enterprise similarly prepared to lead the way forward in this current dilemma? A number of Weaver Street Market owners have already indicated an interest in joining this discussion. The Market needs to continue to develop its leadership role in fostering a strong and resilient food culture appropriate to our community and culture.

The Board tasked Ruffin to develop options for owner-involved activities such as an online food forum.

4. Closings

The Board reviewed its tasks and decisions and conducted a brief evaluation of the meeting

Adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m. and went into Executive Session for a discussion of confidential financial and personnel issues.