

# Meeting Minutes for Weaver Street Market's Board of Directors

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*October 2015 Meeting*

*Monthly Board Meeting, WSM Admin Center, Hillsborough, NC on October 14, 2015, 6:15 pm to 9:30 pm*

**Directors present:** Ruffin Slater (general manager), David Bright (secretary), Lisa Best (treasurer), Barbara Keith, Jon McDonald, and Linda Stier.

**Others attending:** Andy Sachs (facilitator), Brenda Camp (notes), Alicia Altmueller (consumer owner), Emily Buehler (worker owner), and Amy Lorang (worker owner).

## 1. Preliminaries

**Owner Input:** Amy Lorang expressed her appreciation for the ways in which the Board continues to engage owners, both workers and consumers, and encouraged the Board to do so throughout the year. Emily Buehler expressed interest in hearing about the Ends survey and expressed concern that the new Ends statement does not explicitly address “fulfilling employee experiences” as the current Ends statement does.

**Agenda:** No changes to the agenda

**Minutes:** Minutes from the September meeting were approved.

**Decision:** The Board approved the September minutes.

## 2. Co-op Fair

The Directors commented on their experiences at the Co-op Fair.

**Lisa:** It was fabulous, wonderful exposure to the Co-op Plan..

**Barbara:** It was phenomenal. Owners were impressed by the Food House; many did not realize the depth of the mission that sits behind the food shelves.

**Jon:** It was a great start to what could be a longer conversation with owners. Many saw that we were already actively addressing concerns that they have, such as prices. It's a good process for soliciting continual feedback and keeping an ongoing dialogue, particular with workers.

**Dave:** There was a lot of affirmation about the material presented. The stories need to be in front of us—in the stores to remind of us.

**Ruffin:** It provided a connection to the Food House employees, who do not always interact with customers. I would like for us to consider how can we do this more often.

**Linda:** I was struck by number of people who came to see the Food House. It was great to interact with a spectrum of the owners, some had been owners for a really long time. One owner expressed his opinion about the way the discount had gone and how it should have gone, yet he's still here and participates.

The Board agreed to host three Co-op Fairs in 2016: Sunday 3/13, Saturday 6/18, and Sunday 9/18.

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### 3. Policy Updates

The Board discussed whether or not to adopt the revised Ends. Linda Stier suggested that two questions provide the litmus test:

1. Did the draft Ends resonate with owners?
2. Did the Board hear anything that would make it change the wording of the draft?

The GM reported that 1,403 owners participated in the Ends Survey. Of those responding to the two questions about the overarching Ends, 93% agreed or strongly agreed with the overarching Ends of “A vibrant sustainable food marketplace,” and 92% agreed or strongly agreed with defining our business model as “shared economics, shared community and shared knowledge.”

The Directors agreed that the survey responses and feedback from the Co-op Fair directly checked for resonance. Dave Bright asked to hear more about the work experience question raised in the opening comments. In the ensuing discussions, the Directors agreed that the value is expressed in the Ends in “shared economics, shared community, and shared knowledge” and that the GM’s interpretation and scorecard address the details.

The Board decided to adopt the revised Ends statement and to accept the policy revisions with the exception of B6-Staff Treatment and Compensation. The GM reported that employees are being asked to respond to revisions of the employee handbook, which includes the Staff Treatment policy. The feedback will be summarized for the Board.

**Decision:** The Board adopted as its Ends statement: “A vibrant sustainable food marketplace defined by shared economics, shared community and shared knowledge for owners and potential owners.”

**Decision:** The Board decided to accept all policy revisions except for “B6-Staff Treatment and Compensation,” which is awaiting feedback from employees about corresponding changes to employee policy manual.

### 4. Owner Communications

#### Owner Survey Analysis and Next Steps

The GM reported that the Ends Survey indicates the importance of balancing food quality, prices, and service. The Directors discussed additional ways to draw upon the survey results for future owner communications and engagement opportunities:

- Crafting of a message that identifies the impact of WSM, both what is historically apparent and what is more subtle.
- Inventorying and prioritizing the challenges identified by owners in the survey and in other conversations.
- Creating more engagement among groups of participants, such as food tastings that connect store employees who sell WSM products with the Food House employees who make the food.
- Focusing on those topics for which owners expressed considerable interest, particularly the Weaver Card and Reduction of Packaging.
- Aligning survey feedback with what we’re doing now and what our strategic plans are.
- Using CARS (Challenge-Action-Result Statements) to develop stories for the blog.

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**Task:** Barbara, Brenda, and Jon will identify themes and challenges identified in the survey.

### Upcoming Blog Posts

The Board identified the following topics for upcoming posts:

- Dividends (10/16)
- Ends update (10/23)
- Survey Results on Scorecard (11/6)
- Survey Themes (TBD)
- Survey Themes continued (TBD)

## 5. GM Reports

### October 2015 GM Report

The General Manager answered questions on his monthly General Report. Highlights include:

- Sales growth in Q1 (July-September) held steady at 6% but benefited from a comparison to two weeks last year when the Carrboro deli was being remodeled. Discounting those two weeks, co-op-wide sales for the quarter were up only 4%.
- Co-op Fair Blog Post is online at <http://www.weaverstreetmarket.coop/co-op-fair-features-local-food-tastings-and-food-house-tour/>
- The next Community Food Partnership campaign (Oct 21-Nov 3) will raise money to buy apples for the IFC and OCIM food banks.
- There were 1,400 responses to the Ends survey. Those responses are included as an attached report.
- The dividend emails/ mailing should arrive to owners on October 15. It includes a 5%/10%/15% off coupon.
- The Curds and Crafts Festival on the Carrboro lawn was a success. It drew 400 people, many of them new to WSM.

### Monitoring Report: 1-1 Ends

The General Manager presented Monitoring Report: 1-1 Ends.

### Monitoring Report 2-7: Asset Protection

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### Monitoring Report 2-1: General Manager's Constraint

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### Monitoring Report 2-8: Communication and Support to the Board

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The General Manager presented Monitoring Report 2-8: Communication and Support to the Board.

**Decision:** The Board accepted Monitoring Reports: 1-1 Ends, 2-7: Asset Protection, 2-1: General Manager's Constraint, and 2-8: Communication and Support to the Board.

### 6. Closings

- **Review Decisions and Tasks**
- **Board Calendar**

**Decision:** The November meeting is moved to November 4.

- **Next Month's Agenda**
  - Elections Committee Report
  - Board Budget Report
  - January Retreat Topics
  - Feedback on Treatment of Staff Policy

### 7. Executive Session: GM Evaluation