

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

*May 2013 Meeting*

*Monthly Board Meeting, Panzanella meeting room, Carrboro, NC on May 8, 2013, 6:15 pm to 9:30 pm*

**Directors present:** Ruffin Slater (general manager), Curt Brinkmeyer (chair), David Bright (secretary), Lisa Best (treasurer), Michael Marotta, Jon McDonald, and Linda Stier.

**Others attending:** Andy Sachs (facilitator) and Brenda Camp (notes).

## 1. Preliminaries

**Owner Input:** There was no owner input.

**Agenda:** The April new owner lists were moved to the May agenda.

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

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

## 2. Owner Communications

### Owner e-News

The Owner Services Coordinator, Brenda Camp, reported that the first Owner e-News is set to go out on May 17<sup>th</sup>. More than a thousand new and updated emails were collected, and 12 consumer and worker owners won raffle prizes in the email drive. The Board reviewed the final draft of the Owner e-News and discussed the content and writing assignments for the June Owner e-News:

June Owner eNews Content and Assignments:

- **Headline:** WSM 25th Anniversary! [written by Brenda with help from Marketing team and Ruffin]
- **Story 1:** The Reusable Bag Campaign [written by Brenda and Lesley Linton, Marketing Manager]
- **Story 2:** Update on Carrboro Renovations [written by Carrboro Store Manager, Josh Moorhead, and Ruffin]
- **Board FAQ:** What Makes WSM Unique? [first Director response, see below]
- **Calendar and Participate!** [compiled by Brenda]

The Board brainstormed ideas for the Frequently Asked Questions that they would like to address in upcoming Owner e-News. Broad topics included

- What makes us unique? (Especially with our competition. Something they cannot replicate. Why shop here?)
- What are we doing to keep consumer prices down? (How can we help owners and shoppers to understand why our products costs more. How does this relate to expansion and renovation?)
- How can a consumer be a part of the Carrboro renovation?
- What has WSM done for me lately? Why are we better, why are we good?

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- Why run for the Board?
- How do we get our local food? Who do we talk to?
- What does a Board do?
- Why don't you put a co-op in my city?
- How do we grow without selling out, without becoming corporate?

The Directors decided to focus one question: *What makes us unique, especially among our competition?* The e-newsletter will present multiple perspectives on the single question across a number of issues.

**Task:** Each Board director will submit to Brenda by 5 pm, Wednesday, May 22 a 250-word answer to the question: "What makes us unique, especially among our competition?"

### Participation Plan

The OSC presented an updated participation plan that takes into account the feedback from the April meeting. The categories used to frame the goals now reflect both the outcomes sought through the participation goals as well as the different types of relationships owners and shoppers have with the co-op. A final participation plan will be presented at the retreat, at which time the goals for 2014 will be identified.

WSM Participation Plan		Draft: 8-May-13	
Goal	Measure	How to Achieve	Who does it
<b>Service (to co-op)</b>			
1 Help w tours/presentations/events/delivery	Community members reached	Expand vol. program & train vols.	
2 Co-op Sourcing on 2020 goals	Rate of learning best practices	Develop work groups for each goal	
3 Serve on board/Committees	No. engaged in leadership	Develop recruitment plan/incentives/education	
4 Bring co-op to your downtown	No. of engaged communities		
<b>Engagement (with co-op)</b>			
1 Follow what co-op is doing	# of web, e-news, social media "hits"	Post info/engage discussion	
2 Connect behavior with co-op goals	Progress toward goals	Open book shopping/mgt.	
3 Engage socially	No. that attend events	Regular fun events	
4 Make suggestions/return surveys	No. of owners responding	Online feedback & surveys	
<b>Ownership (of co-op)</b>			
1 Become an owner	% of sales/hours by owners	Owner drives, reward programs	
2 Invest capital /receive dividend	% of capital from owners/Dividend amt.	On-line investment platform	
3 Vote in Board elections/attend meetings	No. of owners voting/attending	On-line voting	
<b>Loyalty (to co-op)</b>			
1 Shop/work at co-op	Market share/no. of jobs		
2 Spread co-op's story	Growth rate		

### 3. General Manager Report

The General Manager answered questions on his monthly *General Report*. The report included a number of highlights for the past month:

- Sales growth picked up a little bit in April, the first month of Q4. YTD sales growth is 8%, above the budget of 6%.

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- Linda Stier and Ruffin Slater attended the NCGA Meeting for Board Chairs and General Managers. The meeting provided a great perspective of the challenges and opportunities shared by co-ops nationally.
- Also at the meeting, Weaver Street was recognized by NCGA with an innovation award for our Food House.

### **Monitoring Report 2-6: Financial Condition Report**

The Directors approved the areport.

**Decision:** The Board approved Monitoring Report 2-6: Financial Condition report.

## **4. Board Process**

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Board Treasurer reported on the budget for Quarter 3. The report shows actual versus budget for the quarter and the year to date.

### **Board Monitoring Survey Results for Policy 4-1: Governance Commitment and Policy 4-2: Governance Style**

The Board Chair reported that Monitoring Survey 4-1: Governance Commitment indicates that the Directors are satisfied with their performance guaranteeing the accountability of Weaver Street Market. One Director observed that this performance will be greatly enhanced with the new budget process that has implemented.

The Board Chair reported that Monitoring Survey 4-2: Governance Style indicates that the Directors are satisfied with their governance style. A Director noted the consistency among the Directors on their survey responses.

### **Report on Board Emails**

The Board received no emails during March or April. Owner Jason Baker sent an email to the Chair and General Manager with a link to a study that shows grocery delivery services to have a lower carbon footprint than individual trips to the store, primarily because a few chained trips take fewer miles than several out-and-back trips.

**Task:** Curt will email the directors Jason's email.

### **Follow-up on Board Process Policy 4 -17: Board Evaluation**

The Chair presented a Board self-assessment tool provided by CDS Consulting Co-op. Feedback and questions on the form included:

- The content reflects the questions on the monitoring surveys already being administered.
- The tool has an additional option of listing what you'd like to learn more about as a Director or the training you'd like to receive as a Director.
- Are the self-assessment questions an objective measure?
- Is the Board looking to replace the monitoring surveys?
- What are the goals of this assessment?

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The GM observed that the monitoring surveys evaluate the effectiveness of the Board and that what was needed was a method for evaluating the effectiveness of the individual directors. The Board will continue the discussion of Board Evaluation at subsequent meetings.

**Task:** Linda will provide Directors with information on the eight effective traits of Board Directors and Curt will work on an individual evaluation assessment tool for self-evaluation and peer evaluation.

### Summer Retreat

The Board agreed to hold a summer retreat on Wednesday, June 26, 2013. Three agenda items were identified: following up on the discussion begun tonight, a review of the plan and budget for the coming year, and a review of the participation goals for 2014.

**Decision:** The Board will hold an all-day retreat on Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> in lieu of the June 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

### 5. Open Board Time

The Board members expressed excitement about the summer retreat and the opportunity it would provide for more in-depth discussions about the topics that were raised at meeting.

### 6. Closings

**Tasks and Decisions:** The Board reviewed and confirmed its tasks and decisions.

#### Meeting Evaluation:

The Directors identified a number of ways in which the meeting moved the Board forward on one or more of its priorities:

- Telling the story: The first Owners e-News will advance the coop story, and the FAQ assignment will allow all the Directors to participate.
- Framing the participation plan.
- Identifying together some of the important FAQs for the Board.
- Having a more developed context for the 2020 goals from the NCGA presentation.

The Directors identified two important questions that remain:

- How are we going to be unique in the future?
- How do Whole Foods and Trader Joes make their decisions about what populations they target and what's the strategy behind their choices?

The Directors also extemporaneously formulated sentences that captured what they would like to tell owners about the evening's meeting:

"We're stronger together."

"We're not alone in our story."

"We focused tonight on trying our best to communicate what makes us different."

"We learned more about the competitive market we're in."

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“Co-ops are the answer to the problems that face our country. It’s a powerful story!”

“We see the need to nail down what we are, why are different. When we do that, we won’t have to worry about the competition!”.

## **7. Executive Session**