

Meeting Minutes for Weaver Street Market's Board of Directors

November 2018 Meeting

Monthly Board Meeting, WSM Admin Center, Hillsborough, NC on November 14, 2018, 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm

Directors present: Ruffin Slater (general manager), Alice Ammerman, Hank Becker (treasurer), David Bright (secretary), Jon McDonald (chair), Linda Stier, and Charles Traitor.

Others attending: Susan Sachs (facilitator), Brenda Camp (notes), and William Madden (consumer owner).

1. Preliminaries

Owner Input: William Madden, consumer owner, noted that he lives half a mile from the Carrboro store and works in same building as the Hillsborough store. He observed that the Carrboro store has two cashiers stationed at its café, which allows diners to check out quickly while their food is hot. He observed that when he eats at the Hillsborough hot bar, his food is often cold because he must wait in line behind shoppers buying groceries. He requested that the store add a designated register line for the hot bar.

Agenda: There were no changes to the agenda.

Minutes: Minutes from the October meeting were approved.

Decision: The Board approved the October minutes.

2. Debrief Pre-Meeting Session

The Board held a special owner session prior to the regular Board meeting. More than 100 consumer owners and worker owners participated in a round-table discussion about a proposed plan to replace single-use shopping bags with reusable options and to offer reusable to-go containers. As part of the discussion, owners provided written feedback on the proposal. Displays about the proposed changes will be in the stores after Thanksgiving.

Board directors provided the following feedback on the session:

- Jon McDonald pointed out that the original expectation was 20 owners attending. He acknowledged that the session was well planned and implemented.
- Linda Stier reported that the owners generally loved the opportunity to participate. She mused that there would not be a problem with owners making this cultural shift, but also cautioned that we wouldn't want to see it become a cultural barrier to some.
- Alice Ammerman observed that the owners are very enthusiastic about Weaver Street. She noted that having good bag options alleviated some of the concerns owners had about non-owners and new customers shopping at the co-op.
- Charles Traitor characterized the session as fluid and easy, and he acknowledged the increased opportunity for owner engagement. He suggested that the session provided an affirmation going forward that the Board reflects the ownership.

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- Dave Bright described the session as having great energy and discussion. He suggested that a discount might be offered for bringing your own bag and that one of the design schools might have ideas about bags and containers.
- Hank Becker remarked that he was overwhelmed by the brilliance of the people attending—that they offered interesting, very specific ideas, very specific. He noted that were health concerns about whether bags brought back were sufficiently cleaned.
- Ruffin Slater noted that it was great that the directors played the role of facilitator. He too acknowledged the planning process by the agenda committee. He noted that a FAQ page will be added to the survey and store displays. He suggested that the co-op could do the bold thing, where we're the leader (eliminate all single-use bags) or undertake the popular option (get rid of plastic, but keep paper).

TASK: Send to Brenda questions that need to be addressed in FAQ about the bag proposal.

3. GM Reports

GM Report

General Manager Ruffin Slater presented his 2018 November General Report. Highlights of the report include:

Sales Growth

Sales grew 6% over last year for the quarter ending in September, with Carrboro up 2%, Southern Village up 14% and Hillsborough up 8%. Southern Village sales are up an average of 7% a year for the last two years.

Finance Manager

Our finance manager Lonnie Lempert is retiring at the end of the calendar year. We have hired John Berngartt, formerly the CFO of the Triangle Community Foundation, to be our new finance manager. John will start the week after Thanksgiving and have a four-week overlap with Lonnie.

Raleigh Opening Update

- The mezzanine will be finished the week after Thanksgiving and is looking great.
- Opening is now scheduled for March.

Hank asked about the delay to the Raleigh opening. Ruffin responded that the mezzanine continues to take longer, that complicated issues arise as the floor is fitted into a place where it wasn't designed for.

Monitoring Report B1-Financial Condition

The GM answered questions about Monitoring Report B1-Financial Condition:

- Jon asked what Ruffin was thinking about sales growth trending upward and if he was worried about it dipping again. Ruffin responded that the real test will be when Wegman opens in Chapel Hill. He attributed the sales growth to payoff from a lot that we're doing well—the new owner coupon program, new product lines, and good experiences at the store.

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- Hank asked about the net income decline. Ruffin attributed the decline to benefits being over budget—one employee has reached the \$100,000 stop loss in coverage and another is close to reaching the stop loss.

Decision: The Board accepted Monitoring Report B1-Financial Condition with contravention.

4. Closings

Decisions and Tasks

Next Month's Agenda: Owner survey report, election reports, budget report, GM evaluation

Calendar: Open Board Time each month

Meeting Evaluation