

Alfalfa House Members Council Meeting - Minutes of Meeting

Date: Tuesday 27 September 2016

Time: 7pm

Location: Meeting Space, 8-10 Brown Street, Newtown

Facilitator: Katherine

Minutes: Andrew

Timekeeper: Andrew

Meeting opened at: 07:09pm

Acknowledgement of Country: Before we begin the meeting, I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners, both past and present, of the land we occupy and upon which we meet — the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. It is also upon their ancestral lands that Alfalfa House is built.

1. Attendance and Apologies

Attendance: Andrew McNicol (MC), Catherine O’Keefe (MC), Jonathan Green (by Skype) (MC), Katherine Lustig (MC), Maurice Cabrera (by Skype) (MC), Monika Baumann (member), Julia (staff), Stevie Bee (member), Janne (staff), Suzie (via Skype) (MWG), Celine Massa (staff), Lindsay (staff), Alinta (staff).

Apologies: Renata (MC).

Absent: David Begg (MC).

2. Approval of Agenda

That the agenda be approved.

Moved: Andrew Seconded: Katherine. CARRIED by consensus.

3. Consent Agenda

3.1. Adoption of Previous Minutes

That the minutes of the August 2016 meeting be adopted.

3.2. New members and cancellations

That 52 members with the following membership numbers: 11666 - 11731, excluding eleven skipped records (11670, 11679, 11680, 11685, 11695, 11702, 11704, 11705, 11707, 11714, 11728) and two blank records (11686 11729) be accepted as new members.

That 72 members with the following membership numbers be cancelled: 8412 8449 8468 8631 8742 8762 8774 8781 8798 8806 8831 8852 8859 8971 8993 9016 9036 9182 9306 9316 9317 9359 9375 9455 9505 9592 9616 9644 9650 9723 9728 9741 9753 9776 9779 9795 9809 9828 9833 9848 9854 9860 9865 9869 9876 9877 9878 9887 9889 9891 9895 9900 9901 9905 9909 9912 9914 9916 9918 9920 9931 9932 9935 9952 9965 9966 9971 9972 9973 9974 9988.

3.3. Out-of-Session Decisions / Proposals

Decision to advertise for a Shop Coordinator, approved by consensus.

Decision to remove Simon Holmes as signatory to the bank accounts at Bank Australia and to add Katherine Lustig, Jonathan Green and Julia Gove. Decision to make the accounts at Bank Australia operate on two signatures.

Proposal to create single signer authority in the Bank Australia, Community Access Account 12046249 and request that a debit card be issued that is associated with that account. Approved by consensus over email.

Approval given to spend \$200-\$400 on electrician to upgrade for safety reasons. Approved by consensus over email September 21.

Decision to appoint Catherine O'Keefe to the Members' Council. Approved by consensus over email August 26.

3.4. Reports from Working Groups

3.4.1. Governance (Andrew, Katherine, Renata) - NIL

Carried over actions

- Draft a policy on developing policies.
- Draft a new Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures.
- Create hard and electronic folders with index for all policies.
- Conduct and document a quarterly site audit based on the WH&S report. Bring in additional group members to help.
- That a WHS safety and risk management system be prepared in line with the recommendations of the report not later than August 2016, including a documented WHS induction program, updated incident reporting and emergency procedures.

3.4.2. Premises Solutions (David) - NIL

3.4.3. Building Website and Other IT (Stevie) - NIL

3.4.4. Marketing (Cath, Celine, Suzie) - NIL

- Look into proposing a story to 2SER.

- Carried over action item: Consider optimal time for sending newsletters. Liaise with Simon.

3.4.5. Affordability (Maurice) - NIL

3.4.6. Sustainability (Celine, Katherine) - NIL

3.4.7. Volunteer Engagement (Adam, Emily) - NIL

3.4.8. Community outreach (Adam) - NIL

3.4.9. Staff Liaison (Jonny, Renata) - NIL

3.5. Manager's Report - [HERE](#)

3.6. Staffing (appointments and resignations)

Simon Holmes resigned as manager on 12.9.16 giving 2 weeks' notice. His final day of employment was Friday 23rd September.

- Julia Gove was appointed to fulfil the Manager's operational duties on an interim basis for 23 hours/week.
- Janne King was appointed to fulfil the Manager's staffing, payroll and rostering duties on an interim basis for 7 hours/week.
- Lindsay was appointed to support Janne in the payroll.
- The additional 5 hours are to be used by staff to cover lunch breaks as necessary.
- Elizabeth was appointed to resume employment with Alfalfa House on a casual basis from October 2016.

Alinta Haydock-Burton has become a casual staff member.

Proposal: That AH accept the resignation of Simon Holmes, Manager effective from 23rd September 2016.

3.7. Deferred Matters / Business Arising

3.7.1. AGM

Renata met with a Volunteer to organise the AGM event. We discussed holding the event at the Newtown Neighbourhood Centre or at Brown St. We plan for the AGM to run from 6/6.30-7.30 followed by a pot-luck dinner accompanied by live music until 9pm with Brownies and other AH dessert goods for sale.

Note: Renata will be away in November so someone will need to assist said volunteer on the day of the AGM and with other organising closer to the event.

3.8. Food Grants - NIL

3.9. Workplace Health and Safety

Ongoing shoulder injury has been noted by Lindsay. She has been advised to see a doctor for appropriate referral.

That the Consent Agenda Items be approved.

Moved: Andrew. Seconded: Catherine. CARRIED by consensus.

4. EFTPOS minimum (2 min, Renata)

It is understood that Alfalfa House pays every time a customer uses the EFTPOS machine to pay for a shop, and that the cost to AH per month is over \$1,000. Many people use a card to pay for low cost shops.

Proposal: That Alfalfa House seek to renegotiate terms with the bank or other relevant party to remove the cost for small transactions for EFTPOS (including PayWave). Further, to ensure staff know costs associated. Finally, if renegotiations are not successful, that Alfalfa House introduce a policy of \$10 minimum spend to use EFTPOS.

Andrew: Were there any comparisons between this proposal and the previous system where the cost was added to specific payments?

Stevie: This is simpler, consistent with other stores as no one else charges personal fees, and it reduces cash handling.

Action: Julia to move on this.

Moved: Katherine. Seconded: Catherine. CARRIED by consensus.

5. Shop Coordinator and Volunteer positions

Shop Coordinator and Volunteer Coordinator positions are being advertised as per policy. An MC member is required for the panel.

Proposal: That Renata represents MC on the interviewing panel.

Moved: Katherine. Seconded: Catherine. CARRIED by consensus.

6. Manager / Coordinator (ALL, 38 mins)

Proposal 1- we hire a Manager using the job description most recently used, making no changes and advertising immediately.

Proposal 2- we hire a coordinator, making minimal changes to the Manager JD.
Proposal 3- we split the position into some admin tasks, to be paid at a lower rate, and a coordinator. Both on a part time basis.

Catherine prepared a 'Retail Manager' [job description](#) with [a breakdown of resources](#) between paid (manager) and unpaid (MC and working groups) for discussion.

The general idea is that roles and responsibilities have changed so specialists can work on certain projects (such as IT, and grants) so the Retail Manager can focus on important and relevant tasks to the role.

Lindsay: Concern about HR responsibilities not being prominent or clear.

It's being suggested that tasks such as rostering may be managed by staff, like is current, informal practice.

Maurice: Concern about conflict of interest. [Adding in HR responsibilities about staff relations etc.]

Staff liaison working group act as a

"Implementation of the agreed marketing plan."

Stevie: What is the timeline of this position planning and hiring process?

Katherine: After the meeting, someone will clean up the JD, and Janne can send it out ASAP, with a view to hire within the next two months.

Monika: Concern about 'reporting to chair of finance committee', which may not be MC. 'Treasurer' would be more accurate.

Maurice: Just report to 'MC' is preferable. Also want to make sure this role has the ability to move on things quickly without having to go through the marketing working group.

Catherine: This is framed as a 'sales person' as the main responsibility.

Monika: 'Report to MC, direct liaison Chair and Treasurer'? People seemed to like this.

Lindsay: 'Direct and manage' section concerns because looking up new products is a role staff enjoy.

Julia: 'Oversee' rather than 'manage' may allow more flexibility. Team support role.

Maurice: [recommendations re using volunteers better - will be worked into the JD]

Jann: Concern about the word 'manager'. Janne: This also affects the kind of people applying for the position.

We will look into other alternatives. And make sure the position reflects the objects of the co-op.

Julia: Recommend adding a 'cover the till' section. Everyone agrees.

ACTION: Catherine to redraft this JD and send it to staff and MC this week for final discussion.

ACTION: Anyone with further comments, including a better name than 'team leader/coordinator', please email responses.

7. Alfalfa Financial Position (Jonny, 40 mins)

[August 2016 Treasurer's Report](#)

[August 2016 Dashboard](#)

To be resolved:

1. When to let members know about our financial position.
2. What message to give members about our financial position.
3. Steps we can take immediately to improve our position, especially increasing sales (crowd-funding page for immediate help)

Jonny: \$29,000 in the bank after payroll and paying at least some creditors. This is low. Poor sales in the next few months, or unforeseen expenses (annual leave payout etc), could make this look worse.

Julia: Some room to purchase less, but there is a risk of people buying less if the shop looks empty. We owe \$5,000 in tax, and \$10,000 for creditors. Unsure about amounts because only got access to the accounts on Friday. Either way next month will be really tight, as September sales were low..

Catherine: Defer the tax bill. (Julia will talk to Anthony tomorrow.)

Maurice: We need to start building a narrative to the membership. We have had a revenue problem for the last year (at least) and we have to communicate this. Crowdfunding campaign could restart the conversation, as well as the proposed AGM event. We also need to remind our local community who we are and what we are about. It's a lot of work, but we have a lot of capable people around right now.

[Sales Activation plan.](#)

Catherine: Looked at how we have activated businesses in the past. If everyone paid \$5 more we would make 15%. If we got extra members per week we could make 15%. Some specific ideas include making it easier to order a box

Janne: Need money in the bank immediately. We can discuss the situation with members and many will be behind putting money in, perhaps as a replacement for membership fees we have not had to pay.

Julia: Price drops about a year ago haven't increased sales. Short term fix is we will raise those back to regular prices. Narrative is important.

Jann: Feeling members don't get included in what is going on. When discussing with members, they have immediately brainstormed ideas and shown support. Members need to know we need them to shop here.

Suzie: Immediate communication is most important. Also important to discuss tonight is whether fundraising or an annual fee will be the best focus right now.

Janne: It's not that hard to explain. Other co-ops have a cushion to fall back on because of membership fees.

Lindsay: Fundraising or an annual fee is being discussed. Why not both??

Monika: Frame the membership fee as "\$20 per year to invest in the ongoing maintenance of the co-op". Make it clear you're buying into your co-op.

Andrew: In agreement we should have a membership fee, and this may relate to a fundraising drive. We should also tell members ASAP. How do we tell members and how will we move forward?

Katherine: If we start membership after the AGM, that's 2 months away and not immediate. In the short term need to do 'quick win things'.

Message is fairly clear: honest and practical.

Take membership proposal to AGM. Also work on the following immediately:

- Come and shop, more and more often.
- Membership fees happening soon, so if you pay in advance you get a benefit!
- Offer a way to donate money at the till.
- Conversations about the co-op in the shop and in members comms.
- Promote the working group video about fees.
- Fundraising (kickstarter, or any place people can just donate)
- Various social media platforms at once.

ACTION: Julia to organise a line item for donations.

ACTION: MC to draft 'comms' (~5 ways people can help us) by Thursday, Suzie to start draft shareable document. MWG to put out final copy Sunday for approval by MC, to get it out to members Tuesday.

ACTION: Maurice to contact Inner West courier to get them to do a piece on us.

ACTION: Shop staff to investigate how to do online crowd-funding campaigns.

ACTION: MC to prioritise vision and mission statements to ideally have them ready for these campaigns.

Meeting closed at 09:25pm

Notes for future meetings:

- Keep Treasurer's report as a standing agenda item.
- Keep AGM planning as a standing agenda item.
- November MC meeting to be held Tuesday 15.

