

**Open Harvest Cooperative
Annual Business Meeting Minutes
Sunday, November 08, 2015
12:00 – 1:00 pm
Chez Hay, 210 N 14th Street, Suite 1**

- 12:00 pm **Welcome, Introductions, Announcements:** Board Members Kat Shiffler and Nick Svoboda called the meeting to order, welcomed and thanked current and past board members, staff, volunteers, member owners, and producers/suppliers. They announced the winners of two raffle prizes.
- 12:05 pm **Annual Report by the General Manager:** Kelsi Swanson, the GM summarized her report that was included in the meeting brochure that was distributed to the attendees as they entered and registered for the meeting. In addition to the written report, she announced to the membership that she will be resigning from Open Harvest as of December 31, 2015.
- 12:10 pm **Annual Report by the Board of Directors:** Carla McCullough, the Board Chair, summarized the Board Report that was included in the meeting brochure. In addition, to the topics in the written report, she discussed the following:
- A Board committee is being formed to conduct the search for a new GM.
 - A Board Operations Committee was formed that includes the board officers: the Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary.
 - Board officer elections will be held in December to elect a new Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The current Chair will continue as a board member until the end of her term in May 31, 2016, but will not run for re-election to the board.
 - She urged the membership to help improve Open Harvest sales by taking the following actions:
 - Talk about the co-op to other community members.
 - Share information about Open Harvest in social media.
 - Provide the Board with feedback by completing the forms that were given to each member owner attending the meeting.
 - Shop at the co-op faithfully.
- 12:21 pm **Present Proposed Bylaws:** Quorum, as defined in the Bylaws, was confirmed with more than 50 Member Owners being present for the meeting. The Board Chair overviewed the changes to the Bylaws that the Board recommends to the membership, which were posted with the invitations to the Annual Meeting and printed on the agenda distributed to the attendees as they entered into and registered for the meeting. The purpose of the Bylaws change is to reduce the size of the board to 9 members from its current range of 9-15 and for the Board to accomplish this reduction in the next fiscal year (i.e. by June 30, 2016).

One attendee asked how many board members there are currently. There were 15 at the beginning of the year; one resigned in the past month.

One attendee asked how this reduction would be achieved. There are 6 board members whose terms end with this fiscal year. Five of those are not running for re-election. Another board member is stepping down in March of 2016. With the previously mentioned resignation, there will be one open seat for the election this year.

12:25 pm

Member Owners vote on Bylaws: The chair called for a vote. The bylaws were approved 45 – 0.

12:27 pm

Member Owner Q & A:

1. Given that the business environment of the 16th & South Street neighborhood seems to be in decline, is it possible that Open Harvest could relocate?
The GM stated that the lease expires in 2019 and the co-op will retire its debt in October 2016. That will allow the co-op to consider alternatives, which is the purpose of the Strategic Planning Committee. To prepare for this plan, the staff and members will be surveyed. She noted that in 2009 when planning for expansion, the member owners preferred that Open Harvest remain within 1 mile of its current location.
2. A suggestion was made that Open Harvest work with NeighborWorks to strengthen and revitalize the area, rather than abandon it.
3. A suggestion was made that Open Harvest participate in other events in Lincoln that would possibly increase traffic in the store. The GM responded that the store had offered a free item to the participants of the Lincoln Marathon this year. The store has always struggled with name recognition; e.g. people often confuse it with Whole Foods. It has also struggled with other misconceptions: only members can shop in the store or the only a certain demographic is welcome to shop at the store. The store is trying to communicate with the public better.

12:35 pm

Adjourn