



North Coast Co-op
Earth Action Committee (EAC) Minutes
February 23, 2017– Ten Pin Building Mezzanine, Arcata

EAC Members present: Colin Fiske, Leah Stamper, Brenda Harper

Member-Employees present: Nicole Chase

Guests Present: Juliette Bohn

At 5:35 pm the meeting is called to order and introductions are made.

Agenda Review: Discussion included: Approval of the minutes

Consensus reached to approve the January 2017 minutes.

Member Comment Period: None

Net Zero Impact and the Deli Remodel: Conversation with Juliette Bohn

- Juliette was asked by Melanie to come talk about our efforts towards net zero impact and the deli remodel; her specialty is alternative energy, net zero impact and other sustainability issues. Looking at Eureka's deli remodel she wanted to get a sense of what we are looking for. Colin brings up how we can minimize the impacts of our carbon emissions, specifically around Eureka store.
- Juliette says when we choose a contractor we want it in our contract that the materials separation will be included in our contract (not done at the end, but during the whole process). Alves & Kern construction are two local contractors that recycle and separate materials during the process. Our goal is no net increase in energy consumption and emissions.
- Energy piece: How to keep track of energy use during remodel is not the issue, but when renovation is complete, we do not want energy usage to go up. Juliette brings up the possibility of adding solar panels, upfront costs could be gained back through savings in usage over time.
- Discussion of waste, water, energy, emissions and greenhouse gases. When it comes to water usage the goal is to minimize usage. The water issue is harder to tack; a metric is needed; water catchment system? What would we do with the water we caught?
- Juliette wants to know what is currently being tracked-we need to find out more information about this (who is tracking this? Jolie?). We need metrics for tracking our efforts at sustainability and zero waste and reducing carbon emissions. Colin says solid waste is a separate issue, he does not want to reduce everything to carbon emissions. Can we measure greenhouse gases as well as energy use?
- Tracking our solid waste is a concrete way we can tell how we are doing. Brenda mentions that we have a compactor that makes it more difficult to tell how much waste we are producing. Brenda also says staff attitudes and training is a big part of reducing solid waste in the stores.
- Leadership/top level staff need to write waste reduction goals into job descriptions and make sure that all staff are on board to participate. The company culture needs to be "this is what we do here". Have we done a "waste audit"? We need a baseline; a store competition could get staff motivated.
- We want to include in waste reduction the products that go home with customers. Is there a way to track bulk containers at the register? Possibly through container discounts? Tracking bulk sales? Bulk sales may or may not be a reliable indicator. No way to track if they bring their own bulk container vs. reusing containers.
- Need to track: Energy, Water, Waste- Easiest to track: produce, bulk, deli, and meat; Deli is most concrete thing we can track for example: deli prepackaged vs. deli bulk. We can measure directly and have more control over packaging (compared to prepackaged grocery items). If we provided a

discount to customers for bringing their own container that would provide a way to track how many shoppers are doing so.

- Discussion of container types and the Eureka deli remodel: Staff is looking to switch to compostable packaging instead of plastic-lined containers. As part of the remodel, reusable containers will be provided. Auditing the waste stream will be necessary.
- Recommendations: Focus on solar energy, waste audit, staff training and implementation (include in job descriptions). Zero Waste and waste reduction goals need to be company policy from the top down. Emphasis on the overall goal of deli remodel being zero net impact.
- In the Eureka store, grab and go items are popular; what are our biggest concerns and challenges? Leah says to change customer's buying habits is a challenge.
- Colin brings up an idea of having reusable containers available maybe to use with a deposit that can be returned to the store for people who forgot to bring a reusable container. Colin says that maybe we can track how many plastic bags we go through. Juliette asks what if sales go up or down, how do we figure that into the equation?
- Discussion of plastic vs paper bags. Our goal is to transition shoppers to use more durable/reusable containers and moving away from single-use items. This could be accomplished through incentivization; tracking progress would be important metric.
- What does our vision of success look like? As far as packaging; there would be no packaged materials, mostly local items, and bulk items. We would be a net producer of clean energy and shoppers would voluntarily give up the entire middle of the store (pre-packaged grocery items) Education is needed to change customer shopping behaviors.
- Being engaged, committed and accountable makes not only the individual healthier, but communities healthier;
- Juliette asks about a timeline; would this be a phased-in approach? How will the Co-op offset the impacts of construction? A system set up for baseline measuring is a priority.

Zero Waste Policy

- Detailed look at the proposed policy developed by PPC:
- PPC is recommending that the board approve this policy and would like EAC to give input. Brenda looks it over and wants to know what is considered "waste"? Is it landfill? Recycling? Colin says that sometimes recycling winds up in the landfill. The Zero Waste business council looks at landfill contributions. Brenda is concerned about the compacted trash; currently we do not have a way to measure its weight. Is there a way to measure/weigh compacted waste? Could it be weighed before it gets compacted? Brenda thinks it is possible; maybe as a baseline measurement. We need to figure out how to do this. Brenda says that in the past green waste was getting weighed she doesn't know if this is still happening.
- Discussion of pre and post-consumer waste. How do we measure waste reduction before it arrives in our store and once it leaves the store with shoppers? Purchasers need to be on board on purchasing products with less waste/packaging.
- Overall, Brenda thinks the policy looks good though a system is needed to find a way to measure how we are doing.
- Once we hire a Chief Sustainability Officer we will have someone to lead the charge! Triple bottom line, a staff member is needed to represent environmental interests in our stores.

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Discuss agenda items for next meeting:

- City of Arcata ZW action plan draft (need to look it over and give input to the City of Arcata)
- Zero Waste and Deli remodel update
- Zero waste at board and committee meetings

Review: Next meeting will be March 23 at 5:30pm

Meeting Adjourned at 7:07 pm

Minutes by Nicole Chase & Kala Eichamer