

Member Involvement Group
Meeting Notes - April 18, 2023
Wakefield Library

Attendees: Louise Profeit LeBlanc, Arleen Prost, Ellie Wilkinson, Judi Webb, Carol Faulkner, Kelsey Walsh, Monique Lalonde, Michel Renaud, Phil Cohen, Irene Richardson, Sally Swan, Blair Richardson, Lenny Prost, Ilse Turnsen, Bob Gibson, Linda Vanderlee, Lindsay Farley, Virginie Monegeon, Victoria Carlan, Peter Hale, Karen Bays, Claude Laroche

Welcome and Opening

Louise welcomed participants to the meeting and shared the land acknowledgement. She presented each of us with the opportunity to select a piece of sage (used as a purifying herb) from a vase that was passed around the circle to the group.

New Faces

We shared our names around the circle and Kelsey Walsh, Blair Richardson, Carol Faulkner, Sally Swan and Michel Renaud were welcomed to the group.

Meeting Guidelines

Monique Lalonde reviewed our meeting guidelines with the group and encouraged all to keep them present as the meeting continued.

Possible Cultural Direction

David Park had been invited to present information on a new Cultural Direction for the Centre based on information he distributed to our group by email in March. But he was unable to join us.

In his place, Claude provided a general overview in David's absence.

Notes on Claude's "Cultural Centre" vision presentation

- He referred to the "Shack Days" before the current Centre was built. He feels we are still thinking of the GSH in those terms.
- He proposed that we apply the same energy and vision to GSH as we apply to other programs and events.
- To realize the full potential of the GSH, we need equipment upgrades, as well as focus on its potential as a showplace.
- Based on the possibility of \$3000/rental, GSH programs have much better revenue potential than programs like yoga, although the two are not mutually exclusive, and revenue is not the sole objective.

There was interest in hearing more on this initiative and an opportunity to engage a wider audience.

Updates from Circles

HR Circle - Lenny Prost

Lenny noted that Vicki Carlan joined the Circle for its meeting and found the sharing of information extremely valuable. The discussion came up with the following thoughts and considerations:

- May target for information on funding for staff

- Group wants a healthy, sustainable staff. Goal is for the Centre to be an employer of choice. Vicki is the senior administrator

- Group would like to engage more youth, see employee benefits, a leave policy, and staff at Board meetings

- The Board would like MING involvement on the Board's People's Committee - especially someone with HR expertise to serve on their People's Committee

- Staff, Board and volunteers need training on the operations manual

- Thinking of regular community gatherings to solve problems and heal wounds

- Need a succession plan for new Board members

- Training of Cooperative members on responsibilities and rights

Lenny offered to send meeting notes and Vicki's report she had sent the HR Circle

Communications and Transparency Circle - Linda Vanderlee

Met last week and discussed the following:

- Participation at the Wild Apricot training conducted by Irene Richardson

- Focused on membership and communication

- Communication and general information management manual documents

- Issue of emails and phone calls not being answered

- Disconnect between the Board and the Membership

- Exploring ways to address issues - good news articles/newsletter, identify what the coop is and its advantages, implications of being a member, how to get involved

Financial Stability Circle - Irene Richardson (currently a circle of one)

Irene worked on the 2023/2024 budget but has not been informed of its current status. (Vicki noted there had been some minor adjustments and it would be shared after the Board reviews it.)

It was noted that in the past, members only see the budget at the AGM - often 6 months into the year after it was implemented. Not a practice that allows member feedback and adjustments.

Governance Circle - Peter Hale

Peter noted the group had met last week and were joined by Carol Faulkner who shared information from her past Board experience in and around 2014. She noted a lot of processes and procedures had been in place that seemed to no longer be in practice. Peter and Carol are locating files which may be useful to us now. No need to keep reinventing wheels.

Karen noted that she did a partial analysis of sections of our By Laws and the Cooperative Charter pertinent to membership and membership actions/responsibilities and highlighted sections where some review, reform, and discussion is required. Her work is in no way a complete review of these entire documents. This information will be on the Members Page on the Centre's website.

The Governance group is also looking into other area organizations and associations to see what governance models they function under as well as the history of development of the Centre and other similar facilities/programs operating in our area (ie Masham Arena, Fairbairn House, Cantley Community Centre, etc.)

Other

Comments from the group: a) think about other people in the community who could assist us with particular tasks/challenges and pull them into your circle and b) let others in the MING know when you are having a Circle meeting so they can attend if interested and available.

News/Info from the Board

Note: the agenda that evening was fluid with so some information under this heading was actually discussed at various points in the meeting

Judi Webb, our liaison with the Board, reported that there had been a Board vote asking for approval to hold a Special Meeting with the Membership asking for approval for the Board to explore negotiation with the Municipality concerning possible transfer of ownership of the Centre building to the Municipality. Judi noted that she voted against the motion and explained she made this decision because there were a number of questions and unknowns before she is ready to support this Board in this undertaking.

Lenny, in his HR Circle report, mentioned information the circle had received from Vicki. He shared this with the group in his HR Circle report.

When Vicki joined our meeting, she noted the following:

Municipal Proposal - there is a plan evolving with steps for coordination and engagement of members and a plan for communications. The Board wants the community/members to work with staff through this process.

She noted the Board is working on the following: Governance, Member Engagement, Financial Sustainability, Quality of Life for Staff.

She spoke about the Strategic Planning process and noted that it was really a three year renewal plan to set priorities (ex. succession, staff benefits), and work on getting their house in order - \$, staff, Board, building

She noted that Year 1 would focus on the following:

- Financial stability with the coop model
- Municipalization and member engagement
- How to make the Cooperative structure work
- How to support community vitality, youth engagements
- Internal structure and working with others.

She also noted that:

Municipalization started in 2021
Building is 10+ years old
Board can't solely decide functions of the building
Board will present what it knows and what Members need to make an informed decision
Board doesn't have a position and just wants to talk with the Municipality

Members Meeting re: Municipality - What do you need to know?

We ended the meeting by pausing to think of one question each person wanted to know as we develop a path to consider a vote to support the Board exploring what "municipalization" might look like. The sum of those questions follow on the last pages of these meeting notes.

Thanks to Bob Gibson for taking notes and Peter Hale who served as flip chart scribe.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 16th, 4:00 pm - 6:00pm Wakefield Library

1. How to access the members' names?
2. Purchase by Municipality?
3. Why consider the transfer (2 individuals asked this question)
4. What are the benefits of a transfer/purchase?
5. What would members lose by the transfer?
6. Are we broke?
7. What would the advantage be of the transfer?
8. What would the transfer bring to the community?
9. What is the role of MING and volunteers? (6 month plan for volunteers.)
10. What is the relationship between the MRC and the Municipality regarding the transfer?
11. Will the co-op have control over programming?
12. How will MING and other members be involved in the decision (adequately informed to vote)?
13. Are we ready to enter into the discussion?
14. What are the implications for the staff and board if transferred?

15. Are we asking the Municipality to take over the building or they asking to take over the building?
16. How does the Municipal vision align with that of the coop?
17. What other options could make the Centre sustainable?
18. If the coop becomes a tenant, would that affect our expenses? (rent free, hydro)
19. Will all members have an opportunity to vote on the transfer decision?
20. Can the cooperative sell the building to anyone it wishes?
21. If the Municipality owns the building, will they pay rent if they use it for Municipal activities and events?