

Willimantic Food Co-op  
Annual Retreat  
August 4, 2013  
Executive Summary

Present: Begg, Clark, Krider, Kyer, O'Hara, Oscar, Rubin, Smith, Todd, Walker  
Scribe: Epling  
Facilitator: Todd Wallace

Agenda : See Attachment A

Vision Statements: See Attachment B

"Our Co-Op's expansion was an opportunity to build relationships"

#### SUMMARY OF VISION STATEMENT DISCUSSION

In five years, the Co-op will be providing larger volumes of higher quality food with a healthier and happier staff.

- Up to 11,000 sq.ft.
- Commercial kitchen
- Cooperation with other business/partnerships
- Meat/Liquor/Grain Mill
- User friendly eco-building
- Increased technology
- Maintain good stewardship around food availability

#### CURRENT SHELF SPACE NOT AN ISSUE

#### CHALLENGES

- Adequate fiscal health
- Co-op visibility in community
- Long term commitment from staff/board
- Addressing immediate space issues

#### BRIEF OVERVIEW OF EXPANSION HISTORY

CHANGE – People find it hard

#### ELEMENTS OF CHANGE

- Organizational readiness
- Commitment
- Alignment of board and management
- Knowledge of past as it relates to present

#### BOARD/GM RELATIONSHIP

The Board is responsible for outcomes. The GM is responsible for implementation. Equally true is the continuous relationship between Bd/GM where the Board sets expectations which are delegated to the GM the outcomes of which are then reported back to the Board.

New direction plus movement equals leadership

#### STAGES OF AN EXPANSION

- Assessing feasibility- could take three months to two years. Could include assessment of market, internal readiness, financial readiness, design. Includes the following components:
  - Building commitment and planning
  - Strengthening
- Site selection
- Preparing for construction
- Construction
- Post opening

#### THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Decisions at each stage determines what happens throughout the process
- Management should build a reporting culture
- Staff should be unified
- Co-op community needs strengthening
- Board should consolidate agenda, assess member numbers, use of sub-committees

#### BREAK-OUT SESSIONS:

Question 1: What expertise is needed for expansion:

- Clerk of the Works
- LEED Specialist
- Second financial person
  - Non-profit fiscal expert
- Building designer
- Community organizer
- Real estate/contract lawyer
- Local food concerns person

Question 2: Concrete next steps to lay out feasibility:

- Current board member commitment
- Location, location, location
- Pro forma assessment
- Expansion budget
- Assessment of available properties
- Names to consider:
  - Barbara McGrath
  - Carol Karney
  - Lynne Stoddard
  - Jack Fulton
  - Kathy Magifico
  - Chip Gough

Question 3: Write down a statement of the roles of management and board during expansion:

The board will provide clear and achievable direction for expansion and will be responsible for communicating those plans to the membership continuously throughout the project. The GM will implement the plan by delegating action steps to the appropriate parties, including the board, through consultation with the board, while strengthening internal readiness and maintaining day to day operations.

Question 4: What concrete steps do we need to do to move forward related to expansion:

- Prepare to serve on sub-committees- B
- Listen to staff/gather in-put- B,O,M
- Increased communication and training- O
- Explore board size and skills- B
- Messaging of expansion story to membership- B,O
- Finalize organizational structure- M
- Explore increased compensation for board- M
- Develop marketing strategy- M

Question 5: Make a list of what kind of resources are needed:

- Help with planning
- Financial information
- Study of physical plant needs
- Sub-committees/ ad hoc
- Expand WFC's visibility in community

Question 6: What steps do we need to take to build commitment and the planning process:

- Create a well thought out plan
- Communicate the plan
- Receive feedback and revise the plan
- Create time line with achievable goals
- Financial planning
- General data gathering

THE TIME LINE:

August- Pro forma e-mail (Alice), executive summary (Kathleen/Andrea),

September- Agenda format revision (Kathleen), inclusion of key questions on agenda (Kathleen/Alice)

October- Continue conversation about immediate space needs

November

December

January 2014: Expansion committee formed

WE NEED TO FILL IN THE CALENDAR

The End