

**Nominee Name: Chris Bardenhagen**

**ELFCO Owner number: 5387**

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**Please answer the following questions:**

Why would you like to serve on the ELFCO Board of Directors?

**Answer:** I would like to help during the development of ELFCO's next steps.

What is your dream for East Lansing Food Cooperative?

**Answer:** I would like to see ELFCO open in the east side of Lansing, hopefully as part of the Allen Street center.

How should the East Lansing Food Cooperative reimagine itself to serve our owners and the community?

**Answer:** I think that a strategy of starting somewhat small and focusing on bringing in local and regional products, as well as providing deli items and salads, would be part of a great platform for ELFCO. Services such as local/organic catering could be auxiliary sources of income and promote ELFCO in the community.

What do you think ELFCO's role in our community should be? Why cooperatives?

**Answer:** One role ELFCO can serve is to provide educational events such as cooking classes. ELFCO should provide people with the resources needed to learn about or develop natural, organic, vegetarian, and vegan diets. It should also be a place where people can source healthy, locally raised animal and meat products, either through the store or through providing direct connections with farmers. ELFCO should work to help support local farmers and producers and cultivate local food system supply. I think there is potential for ELFCO to work with other cooperatives and food businesses to provide a larger regional market for local producer's products.

I think cooperatives are important because they are unique in their focus on the customer as owner, enabling them to focus on and serve their local community, and also to work with other cooperatives to provide social goods.

Please offer any additional thoughts you would like ELFCO owners to know about your interest in ELFCO's future.

I recently served for 8 years on the Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance board. I currently work for the MSU Product Center's Michigan Cooperative Development program as one of my part-time jobs (I am currently a doctoral student who was a farmer before returning to school in the somewhat recent past.) I am a licensed attorney in Michigan (but I do not currently practice law for a firm or solo.) I studied business law and am currently studying organization of regional food system businesses for my doctoral work.