

ELFCO Board Meeting Minutes.

Meeting called to order: 7:15pm

Attendees Board members: Marshall Clabeaux, John Reich (Treasurer), Michelle Bridges, Steve Andre, Chris Bardenhagen (Board President), Stephen Gasteyer (VP and Secretary)

Invited from Student Housing Coop: Holly Jo Sparks, Exec Dir., Emilia Ledda, Daniel Newton

Owners: Kriss Ostrom

Visitors: Bryant Bussa, Sara Stacy

Staff: Peggy Cunniff

Regular ELFCO Meeting

7:10 **Staff Update**

- financial update
- Annual meeting/excess equity report
- Telephone lines
- disclosure statements
- Other

Listen Peggy

7:25

7:30

MIFFS Conference

Brief overview

Board Discussion and Action

- VISTA Proposal, SHC Comments/discussion
- Motion and vote on VISTA proposal
- Mission/vision-- short attempt at clarification for now (10 minutes!)
- Letter to Excess Equity holder/ Notice of Annual Meeting (and related issues)
- Farmer Survey (and related items)
- Signatory practices-- Treasurer v President
- Food for thought: How do we make the new store interesting/attractive to students generally? For pondering and revisting
- Motion for Executive Session to discuss finances (?)

Listen

Discuss and act

MF Committee

Members

8:45 **Comments from ELFCO Owners** (more time will be allocated if needed)

Listen

8:50 **Determine next meeting time**

8:55 **Adjourn**

Call to Order and Introductions

- Some discussion of Wolf Moon and Green Earth Coops in Lansing....

Review Agenda: Agenda Approved

Approve Minutes from 1/8/18 Discuss and act

There were amendments to the Minutes by Peggy – see last minutes...

Comments from ELFCO Owners and other attendees

Kriss Ostrom – Will be interested in discussing SHC partnership

Question regarding the goal of ELFCO – Chris and Marshall -- Looking for retail space; but also happy to partner – We are actively looking at a new retail space -- currently looking at East Lansing...

Chris – First attempt was a more focused at reopening as a retail space. This new attempt is really focused on local pass through.

Q – Was Wholefoods the reason for the closure.

Peggy – there were many reasons.

Q – new location would be to find a niche.

John – Thus Allen Street consideration though that may not make sense now.

Staff Report

Finances: \$148,248 in the bank as of today.

Telephone: We were paying \$187 per month. Have gotten rid of one of the lines – which was designated for the credit card machine. That leaves us with 3 lines. \$49 for each additional line.

So we will get rid of all but one line. Board moved to eliminate all but one line.

Will not be able to transfer lines.

Discussion of Annual Meeting

- We will develop a letter to allow people to ask for their excess equity back – with a 60 day window. Will want to be able to articulate what we have done and where we are going so that a minimal ask for excess equity.
- Will also announce annual meeting on April 06, 2017, 2-4pm at the Hannah Center, East Lansing. Any owner who wants to run for the board, by March.
- Invitation to submit Annual Meeting Agenda Items.
- We will send the letter electronic – but 20% of owners did not divulge emails... we have contact information for all excess equity owners –
- Intension is to send t

- **A motion was proposed, seconded and approved to mail the letter to owners for whom we don't have email addresses.**

Debrief of Michigan Family Farm Systems Conference

- Diverse vender tables; Found lots of interest and opportunities.

Steve Andre and Stephen Gasteyer filled out disclosure statements.

Letter for farmers – we are trying to develop a consignment retail establishment

We will establish a subcommittee of Stephen G. and Marshall to work with Peggy on finalizing the protocol and contacting farmers to gauge interest in distributing through our space.

SHC and ELFCO collaboration

Holly Jo Sparks – 2014 started with SHC – joined the Power of We Consortium, and is expanding collaboration with surrounding housing and other coops.

SHC, based on discussions with Stephen G., has applied for 2 VISTA positions.

Would like to partner with ELFCO on developing an exploration of food models to serve the communities that we SHC serves – in the greater Lansing (specifically East Lansing) area.

VISTA would develop a white paper and move forward models of food delivery –

Chris – Is this a proposal that we wait and see until the white paper is done?

Holly Jo – There is a history of coop cooperation. Dr. Ryan Alree ? who found Food of Our Desire which became ELFCO as a youth (student) led effort also founds SHC. So the notion is the collaboration could be about energizing a student led initiative... that could give new energy to the ELFCO.

Emelia – there is still interest – and SHC students have explored bulk buying – have some evidence that millennials want safe, healthy, local food – but it has to be convenient

Holly Jo -- But the purpose of the VISTA would be to query members about what would she need.

SHC has to do their own assessment of where we would get resources...

Steve Andre – Concern about the pricetag – cost for the VISTA in the proposal was more than \$8,000

Marshall – Seems like this could be a great fit in terms of having someone who is thinking about the models of making a coop perk in the longrun...

Holly Jo – The price tag – would see fundraising as critical – so this would not just be about ELFCO paying the full cost.

John – Regionally, we need to think about a farm cooperative such as the Grange – Anymore, what sells, is hot and prepared, off the shelf... have to be concerned about the fit for what we need right now...

Marshall – this VISTA volunteer can come and work with Peggy to work on the tweating...

Peggy – Kathy Sample is excited to work with us to get the Argus Farm like model started here

Chris – what is the control that we would have over the activities of the VISTA volunteer...

Holly Jo -- The VISTA is like Peace Corps, they are not directly accountable to anybody – their job is capacity building. The Power of We is the ultimate authority. But if SHC-VISTA were working together we would have a task force to oversee activities... there is an executive committee that would be charged with giving direction and ELFCO could be part of that.

Kriss – Asked about what happens if ELFCO dissolves... also concerned that any money that we don't have does not go back to the owners...

Holly Jo – this is a one year position starting March 17... SHC will take the risk... But any money paid in by ELFCO would be in perpetuity ...

Kriss – Big question – what is in the proposal for ELFCO in the short term?

Chris - we might consider half of the VISTA host fee, and commit to raising fund

John moved that we commit to the we commit to paying half the host fee (\$1919) and would commit to a good faith effort in fund raising to cover other costs. Second, Michelle...

Unanimous approval with 1 abstention (Marshall)

EMBA Board – Peggy and Chris will meet with the EMBA team this coming week. Others welcome...

Chris: What will bring students into ELFCO? -- Retailing... Bagels, Coffee, Tea, Art... Marshall will begin querying Student Housing Coop...

New Business

Steve Andre – Maybe we should start recording meetings and storing on a secure web site...

The board discussed the matter. It was generally felt that we need to think about how to record the discussions better.

The board needs to reply better when Peggy requests

NEXT MEETING

7pm, February 28, 2018, 780 West Lake Lansing Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823

Meeting Adjourned: 9:54pm