

**Cooperative Planning Team  
Friday January 22, 2010**

**Present**

- Pam Brown (Brownie)
- Sharon Deane
- David Parkinson
- Giovanni Spezzacatena
- Julie Thorne

**Regrets**

- Jan Burnikell
- Heather Wheating

**1. Old business**

**1.1. Whether to incorporate as a for-profit or as a not-for-profit cooperative**

On hold until we speak with the consultant that the BC Cooperative Association is providing.

**1.2. The pros and cons of charitable tax status**

On hold until we speak with the consultant that the BC Cooperative Association is providing.

**1.3. Our Statement of Purpose**

We looked over David's annotated statement of purpose (see addendum A), and we suggested a few changes:

- Adding the word "offer" before the word 'healthful' in the third clause ("...at a living wage and offer healthful food");
- Making it more obvious in the main purpose area that the production of agricultural products (like beeswax, soap, wool) are also part of the purposes, and not just mentioned in the annotated sections as they are now;
- Keeping the main purposes down to three bullet points, collapsing the bottom three into one concise point; David said he would do this;
- Giovanni asked that seeds and agricultural products and amendments be added at the very last line of the document in addition to bulk purchase of organic staple foods.

David will update the Statement of Purposes and circulate it for feedback.

**1.4. Rules**

With Jan not present, David said we would review the rules together at a future meeting.

**1.5. Cost of membership share**

We discussed the cost of the membership share, and agreed that \$25 was reasonable. This amount would be returned to the member once s/he decides to leave the cooperative. We discussed a sliding scale and also having the option to have people complete payment within a set time as opposed to paying the full amount at once. Sliding scale seems complicated and unnecessary, and we'll need to consider whether and how we handle partial share payments; this would be expressed in our rules.

**1.6. Projects**

We discussed some potential projects again, and these arose:

- cider press;
- fruit tree projects;
- land-sharing;
- book-share;
- tool-share;
- potato patch;
- dehydrating fruit/vegetables (esp. tomatoes) on a large scale;
- bulk buying of everything from soil amendments, to seeds, to oysters (perhaps even cooperation between existing oyster cooperative and ours).

David and Sharon met with Anne Michaels of the Fruit Tree Project on January 12, 2010. She is interested in working with a cooperative. There was no formal agreement to work together, but that is probably too soon to get into.

## 2. New business

### 2.1. Awareness-raising activities and the cooperative

We talked about the 50-Mile Challenge and the Edible Garden Tour and how the cooperative might fit into the organization of these. David took on the 50-Mile Eat Local Challenge last year (with Giovanni) through his Food Security job, with the Edible Garden as a new part of that event. The 50-mile challenge took up a lot of time especially with the podcast and internet aspect, but also physically being present to sign people up at the night market, etc.

Brownie asked if it is really necessary to have people sign up at all, and maybe the time has come to retire that aspect. We talked about the prizes people could win if they signed up (another new elements added onto the Challenge last year), and the Wordpress blog and Facebook pages (which are still updated), and the Podcasts. Julie asked if the challenge could just be kept online only through Facebook, where the number of friends = the number of people on the challenge. There are problems with this, as just being a 'friend' doesn't mean you're taking the challenge, but there could be an online registration through Facebook to make this clearer. David said that running the Edible Garden Tour as an educational day and also as a potential fundraiser might be a better project for the cooperative.

David mentioned that the Chamber of Commoners (Feb 10<sup>th</sup>) might be a good place to launch the idea of the cooperative and others agreed that it could be a good way to get project ideas and start the buzz. Also, David asked if it was okay with the cooperative steering group if he were to mention the cooperative when communicating with listservs or to the public here in PR, and we decided it was, but if members who were absent from this meeting have any problem with this, they need to let us all know as soon as possible. We will have another meeting (Feb 5) before the Chamber of Commoners, so we can have a clearer idea of what we want to reveal at that time.

### 2.2. Naming the cooperative

We reviewed some of the names, adding Food Matters and Mandate on Locavores Living on the Sunshine Coast (MOLLOSC), and Skookum. We looked at Razor Fern and Rain Shadow, and thought these were maybe misleading and obscure. We discussed Skookum at length, and consulted Wikipedia and Google to see what would come up from this. We decided to think about this one, and ask around to see what reaction people have, locally. Skookum might have negative reactions due to 'perceived cultural appropriation'.

We agreed to come back with community reactions to Skookum for the next meeting.

### 2.3. Vision Quest

We talked about the vision statement for the cooperative. From Wikipedia:

*A vision statement outlines what the organization wants to be, or how it wants the world in which it operates to be. It concentrates on the future. It is a source of*

*inspiration. It provides clear decision-making criteria. There are various styles of vision statements, and it can be quite short and dynamic.*

Features of an effective vision statement include:

- Clarity and lack of ambiguity;
- Vivid and clear picture;
- Description of a bright future;
- Memorable and engaging wording;
- Realistic aspirations;
- Alignment with organizational values and culture.

We talked about our vision of the world where a cooperative such as ours is not needed, and came up with the vision of Powell River as a completely self-sustaining region, and how this may be so 'out there' as to make the vision an unattainable and even impossible goal that could turn people off. So, we gave ourselves the task to come up with a snappy and realistic vision statement that includes ideas like feeding ourselves and community, where as Julie put it "if everything collapses, we might not have coffee or chocolate, but we could still survive on the food we grow here".

Brownie recommended we copy and paste our writing into <http://www.wordle.net/> and see what comes up. (See <http://www.wordle.net/show/wrdl/1573351/coop> for what came up from the purposes.)

We agreed to each produce a vision statement for the next meeting.

## 2.4. Cooperative Principles

We discussed what the cooperative principles might look like, and this included ideas like the need to respond the community's real needs and not some members' hidden agendas, corporate giving restrictions or bending projects toward funding opportunities that may not have much to do with what the community or the membership of the cooperative needs or wants.

We discussed the idea of "fair price" and "fair trade" and how this would not necessarily translate into "lowest price". The idea being that the prices charged for food now are often actually not fair, whether to the environment or to the people involved in producing the food, or maybe even to the extent where the quality of the food is low and unfair for the price, since it has been depleted of nutrients through bad agricultural practices or excessive transportation. We will need to be aware of this potential criticism from the buying public.

We discussed ideas like zero waste, as local as possible, member-funded projects whenever possible, agriculture that doesn't depend on imported inputs (e.g., compost from Ontario), fair wage/equity, transparency and openness, and no rapping of the landscape.

## 3. Next Meeting

We decided to meet again in two weeks from today: Friday February 5, 2010 at 5:30 pm at Gianni and David's house.