

Apple Street Market Owner Meeting

9/19/21

Online

Board Members: Kristen Barker, Paloma Correa, Clement Tsao, Krystal Ying, Heather Zoller
Owners: Ballard Borich, Rothko Borich, Will Bronson, Chris Cooper, Christopher DeAngelis, Claire Darley, James Heller-Jackson, Edith Holder, Mary Hutten, Nada Huron, Lisa Lemen, Steve Lemen, Paulette Meier, Anne Peterson, Matthew Peterson, Deborah Reed, Mira Rodwan, Chris Seibert, Mary Steele, Heather Sturgill, Barbette Thompson, Laurel Tinsley, Pat Youngblood, Roger Brown, Robert Moore, Bavi Rivera, Guion Lucas, Jasper and Heather Strudgill, Tyree Fields A

I. Agenda Preview

II. Connection Exercise in Small Groups - People described strategies for dealing with disappointment.

III. Project Status and Dissolution Rationale

A. Board voted to dissolve in July 2021. How did we come to this point?

- o The project was close to breaking ground in 2019 when we lost access to a final, important source of funding from New Market Tax Credits due to a changing tax environment.
- o Soon after, NEST selected to develop 4145 Apple Street as affordable housing.
- o After an exhaustive search, supporters could not find a path to open a financially viable worker- and community-owned grocery: the two viable locations in our area are not currently available for Apple Street Market.
 - Associated Wholesale Grocers was a key partner in assessing viability. Their market assessments have been within 10% of actual sales over the last ten years.
- o Apple Street Market has debts and liabilities that must be addressed. If we dissolve now, we can return loans that have been waiting in escrow for the project to start since February of 2019, and can pay back 10/20% of loans that were provided previous to February of 2019 that have already been disbursed and used, at least partially, for expenses in opening the store. Owner shares cannot be returned because those funds were used to develop the project.
- o We recognize this is an emotional issue and a great disappointment to the many people who supported the project through their time, treasures, and talents.

IV. VOTE

- Vote Language:
 - o I approve the dissolution of Apple Street Market or

- o I oppose the dissolution of Apple Street Market
- Vote Method: Owners will register their attendance by entering their name in the chat. They then enter their vote in the chat. One by-phone participant texted their vote.
- Discussion:
 - o What is the Buyer's Club? Buyer's clubs lower prices for residents by buying in bulk. Apple Street supporters are working with groups on this idea across Cincinnati, including one in Walnut Hills, Price Hill, possibly Mount Airy, Evanston, and Westwood. Staple foods, fruits and vegetables, and personal care items will be able to be purchased, and volunteers will help sort and make ready to be picked up from a central site in each neighborhood.
 - Laurel, who lives in senior housing believes the Council on Aging would be interested in getting involved.
 - o What alternate locations exist for Apple Street Market?
 - After an exhaustive search, we find that there are no locations foreseeably available.
 - o How will funds be returned to those that loaned into the project? By mail.
 - o Can loaners choose to donate back the funds that would be returned?
 - We will look into how we might accomplish that.
 - We have sent a letter to all 39 loaners to let them know what is happening. None of them have been returned, so we believe they are all good addresses.
- Vote: All in favor, with one abstention.

V. Steps in the dissolution process:

- Today's members vote on the dissolution proposal.
- Notification of Apple Street Community Owners (postcards, website, social media)
- Notification to Government Agencies, Bank
 - o Ohio Department of Taxation
 - o Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation
 - o Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
 - o Hamilton County Treasurer
 - o Ohio Secretary of State
 - o Internal Revenue Service
 - o Bank
- Publication of Notice of Dissolution in Local Newspaper

Next Board Meeting: Monday October 11th at 6 PM.

- Will discuss returning funds and paying debts
- The board moved this to the following Monday, because some had a conflict with time to be able to participate. It was moved to **Monday the 18th at 6 PM** instead.

VI. Positive Contributions of the Project

- Volunteers have been working to create a buyer's club, which would allow people to buy in bulk at lower prices, with food delivered to a central neighborhood point and then distributed from there.
- However, that project cannot be organized from within Apple Street Market's articles of incorporation, because the club is not a worker-owned cooperative.
- We are glad to see that the Apple Street Market multi-stakeholder model that combines a worker-owned cooperative with member ownership, is thriving at the Dayton Gem City Co-op. Gem City brings affordable food and high quality jobs to an area of Dayton with food access challenges. Apple Street Market participants lent expertise, our business plan, and other assistance to help Gem City open quickly. We wish them continued success!
- The former Save-a-Lot store is now LGBTQ senior housing.

VII. General Concluding Discussion

- Although some individual food cooperatives have failed, cooperatives remain a viable and important alternative to capitalist approaches that do not care about workers or the public.
- Today's discussion and being together helps to manage the disappointment.
- Members expressed gratitude to those who persisted to move forward. "Our economy makes these endeavors hard to realize." Asked to acknowledge the current and former board members and volunteers and give them thanks on behalf of owners.

Adjourned

Minutes: Heather Zoller