

Council Resilience Discussion

To: HMC Council

From: Eva Schectman for the Dinner and Discussion Ad Hoc Committee

July 2024

A big thank you to HMC Council members for supporting the Dinner and Discussion on community resilience this year – your participation helped make it a success. Special thanks to Rowan and the Community Relations staff for organizing the Dinner and Discussion event. They provided a comprehensive summary of the Co-op's community initiatives and operational strategies for the future, along with a valuable list of Member-Owner ideas on community resilience.

I couldn't be happier with the result, and I look forward to the Council coming together, to consider policy changes that reflect back to the community the ideas they brought to us.

First things first – I suggest we commence forming the Member Outreach and Engagement (MOE) Committee, the Governance Committee and re-establish the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee so that we can start discussing how to make policy changes based on the Member-Owner's ideas on the Co-op's role in community resilience.

Here's some phrases from the Member-Owner lists of ideas, that jumped out at me as policy discussion starting points:

- Increase culture of community
- Increase support of marginalized people
- Local democracy, building trust. Love is the power.
- Resilience: organic, not preconceived
- Resilience: a shared sense of vulnerability that goes beyond immediate crisis. We are all in the same boat and need each other.
- Clear, defined roles
- Co-op must change to continue to join with communities
- Could the Co-op support a cooperative housing model?* (*Primarily an operations focused idea, there may need to be input from the Council and Member-Owners to make such an idea a reality).

There are three places the Council is likely to either modify or create new policy:

1. HMC Bylaws

As you may know, Bylaws revisions are formed by Council committees in partnership with the Council and are voted on by Member-Owners at a special member meeting. The most recent vote on changes to the bylaws was in 2022, and the most recent Bylaws Committee recommended that the bylaws be re-examined every five to ten years; our use of the new bylaws has already produced some issues to be addressed. The Governance Committee could start working on a list of bylaws modifications this year, with the understanding it is likely to be a couple more years before we bring them to a Member-Owner vote.

2. HMC Governance Policy

Where does the support of a more inclusive culture fit into Governance Policy? If you have ideas on where the above ideas would fit into the Council's Governance Policy, please bring that to the Governance Committee for further discussion.

3. HMC Mission and Ends Policy:

Hunger Mountain Cooperative exists to create and sustain a vibrant community of healthy individuals, sustainable local food systems, and thriving cooperative commerce.

(This sentence is the HMC Mission; the Mission and the bullet points below are the Ends Policy)

More specifically, we will have:

- *A cooperatively-owned retail outlet for natural and organic food-based goods and services that meet our Member-Owners' and customers' needs.*
- *A community increasingly educated about food and health and considerate of the impacts of its purchases.*
- *Local ownership and control of a comprehensive, sustainable food economy.*
- *Financially sustainable operations that support and yield economic, social and environmental returns*

It's been about twelve years since the Council had a reconsideration of the Ends, so now may be a good time to start that conversation.

Changes by the Council to the Ends policy require the General Manager to re-interpret their monitoring reports to reflect those Ends, because the monitoring reports are interpretations, with data, on the Ends. If the Council wants to see a difference in how the Co-op serves the community, Ends modification is how the Council helps guide that change.

It seems to me many of the ideas from Member-Owners highlighted above are JEDI values and the Council may find it helpful to look at Ends policy revision through that lens.

I suggest the JEDI, MOE and Governance Committees all look at these ideas through their respective lenses and bring them back to the Council, for consideration.

What do you think? We'll discuss this on July 9.