

MEMBER BALLOT - BEER & WINE BALLOT

The Olympia Food Co-op Elections 2019

Voting open October 15 – November 15, 2019

The Ballot Measure

“Should the Olympia Food Co-op add beer, wine, and other low alcohol beverages to the product mix?”

Background

In 2000, the Co-op held an advisory ballot in which a majority of voting members were in favor of the stores carrying beer and wine, however the Board decided against carrying these products at that time.

In 2018, the Co-op Beer & Wine Task Force completed a Member Engagement Survey, Department Mission Statement, and Project Budget. Between September 25th and October 4th of 2018, the Beer & Wine Task Force surveyed 1588 Co-op members, of which, 1128 (71%) approved of the Co-op carrying beer, wine, and hard cider.

In 2019, the Co-op Board of Directors consented to placing a binding measure to carry these products on the upcoming fall election ballot. In 2019, there were two Co-op Conversations where members were invited to participate in discussion and feedback, with staff and Board Members.

Co-op Conversation & Member Feedback

During the Co-op Conversation, Board Members, Member Relations, and the Beer & Wine Task Force presented their research, and following a question and answer period, the Conversation participants wrote their ideas and concerns on large papers. Then groups were formed for discussions, the three main topics focused around: how shall we merchandise, how to support members in recovery, and our product line limits.

Suggestions coming out of these discussions included: carry only local, regional, organic, sustainable products to make us unique and distinguishable from other supermarkets; donate resources, coffee, goods, sponsorship funds to addiction recovery programs (Co-op should research reliable services); place product above children’s eye-level; locate distributors who already deliver to co-ops; sell beer on tap from keg to refillable growler; place products behind plastic or behind the Customer Service Desk; house the products in one store or an adjacent building; have a “no alcohol” line at the registers; place information for addiction recovery in product display cases; make products available for special order.

Statement Against

By Joanne McCaughan, Board Member

October 2019

Beer and Wine Sales at the Olympia Food Co-op: Statement Against

1. The Olympia Food Co-op has operated successfully for more than 40 years without the sale of beer/wine or other alcoholic beverages.
2. Our stores provide a safe space for shoppers in our community who choose not to have alcohol in their lives, either as a matter of personal choice, religious belief systems, or due to alcohol addiction.
3. We have very limited storage space available in either store, and alcohol products must be securely stored.
4. Modifications would be needed to each store to display, secure, and manage inventory to ensure it is not accessible to minors, and to prevent theft.
5. Training for staff and volunteers will be mandatory to ensure legal compliance; unlawful sales may lead to criminal prosecution of individual staff or volunteer cashiers.

Pro Beer and Wine Statement
Fred Medlicott Olympia Food Co-op Board of Directors
November 3, 2019

1. Sale of beer and wine would create a significant source of new revenue for the Co-op, with some estimates of a \$5 increase per average customer basket. (We are currently cutting hours and expenditures to cover budget shortfalls instead of expending into a larger store as requested by our membership.)
2. Due to the quick turnover and more frequent delivery of beer and wine, there will be little additional storage required for back stock.
3. No modification to store buildings will be necessary. Utilizing existing retail space more efficiently while placing one 4x5 wine rack and one 4x5 beer cooler at each location will not displace the foods Co-op shoppers are now buying.
4. Providing local, regional, organic, cooperatively and sustainably produced beer and wine would further our mission goals: a) to make human effects on the earth positive and renewing; b) support local production; c) provide information about food; d) assist in the development of local community resources; e) increase democratic process; and f) see to the long-term health of the business.
5. By not carrying beer and wine, we're losing grocery sales to stores that do (for the convenience of one stop shopping.)
6. By installing a software program at the registers, transactions involving beer and wine would be frozen until the customers' ID information was entered, ensuring legal compliance with age restrictions.
7. Cashiers who are underage or have religious or other issues with selling beer and wine would not be required to do so.
8. The Co-op is committed to acting responsibly in the community and will place resources for preventing addiction at each retail display featuring beer or wine.
9. In the year 2000, the Committee-op membership voted to carry beer and wine on an advisory ballot. Then again in 2018, an online member survey identified 71% of a total of 1631 members as favoring the addition of beer, wine and hard cider to the list of available Co-op product.

For additional information

www.olympiafood.coop > Quarterly News > *Table* Summer 2019 > Coop Conversation Beer & Wine
by Staff Members of the Beer & Wine Task Force