



**Board of Directors  
March 21, 2024, 6-8:30pm**

Board members present: Andie Giron, Dave Toler, Ike Kineswa, Jeni O'Connor (*Staff Rep*), Jennifern Falknor, Jim Hutcheon, Kate Cox, Linda Myers, Ruth Brownstein, Trudy Springer

Other members present: Janelle Sanders, Theo Hedderly

Notes: Max Crabapple (*exiting Board Coordinator*) and Miles Batchelder (*incoming Board Coordinator*)

**Agenda Review**

**Announcements** – Jim shares an upcoming training opportunity with the Dispute Center (they are running the upcoming Listening Circles)

**Member Comment**

Janelle and Theo are observing the meeting, but have no comment.

**Previous Commitments**

- Harry will talk to the task-force working on DEI / anti-oppression related training and connect Andie with them to talk about what trauma-informed training might look like. – *Harry did send emails to training and the DEI CAT about this.*
- Harry will work with Breanne to bring the staff survey results about the scheduling system - *Harry is reviewing this commitment and wondering what the results or info that the Board is looking for. Scheduling for operations is clearly about operations. While we are happy to present survey results we are wondering what the purpose is of this request. What would the Board want this info for and what would they do with it? Perhaps it is more appropriate and more in sync with the intent of policy governance to provide a report on Staff coverage/hiring/flex/etc? Once or twice a year? I am happy to provide and present this survey but would rather do it when the intent and need is clear.*
- Harry would like to know (and will ask Corey and NCG Coordinators) how many co-ops have 5-year plans. - *I have just asked Corey to do this. I did some on-line research and mostly found that organizations do 1 year budgets. We will have more info on this by next meeting.*
- Harry thinks a strategic plan is a fantastic idea, and a 5-year budget without a strategic plan doesn't make sense. ...bring this to the Finance CAT, as those who see to the budget process, get feedback and come back with that next month. \* *Kate's 5-year budget proposal: Harry brought this*

*proposal to the Finance CAT for discussion. There was some agreement that a multi year budget could be a useful tool. There was also some agreement that creating a multi year budget without a strategic plan that outlines specific goals is not a useful tool. Thus, the Finance CAT is willing to work on a multi year (to 5 yr) budget if it has an approved and consented to Strategic Plan.*

*The bulk of the yearly budget planning happens between August and November. Since we are approaching April, it seems unlikely that the Board would create a 1 yr, 3 yrs, and 5 yr strategic plan in time for the Staff to work on it this year. We are recommending that the Board work on a strategic that they can send to Finance CAT by Feb or March 2025 that would allow us to work on it for awhile before the August yearly budget work.*

- *Harry agrees that having unknown capital plan expenditures in the budget is preferable, and will be bringing that feedback back to the Finance CAT. I have brought this feedback consistently to the Finance CAT for the past two years. I brought the Board feedback on this in addition to my own. I will keep working to get the Finance CAT to include as many projects as possibly known in the cash flow of the budget. In the meantime, Bradley and Kitty are bringing the ES Remodel proposal back to the Board for more consideration. It is on the agenda for the March meeting.*
- *Linda wants to know what size building will fit on that lot. Harry says we have that information. Linda says she's asked and asked, and has never gotten an answer. She would also like to see the full report from the expansion plan done around 2014. Harry has requested this info from various people and has yet to turn up the report on the previous proposed expansion of the ES. He will keep working on this.*

### **Advocacy Proposal (Dave)**

Dave introduces this item, and that Olympia for All is based on Tacoma for All. Renters 40% in 3 years, and an 88% increase over the last 7 years. When the monthly income has more than 33% going to housing, and ½ of Tacoma's renters are in this position. This makes losing housing much more of a risk. This wouldn't solve that problem but could stem the tide. Rent caps are illegal in Washington state, and that was almost reversed statewide – it passed one part of legislature but failed to pass in the other by a few votes.

Jim adds that as a food store, we're not primarily addressing rents, but it's a community problem that affects people who shop at the co-op and who work at the co-op. We are seeing ourselves within the role of 'coalition partner'.

Any questions? Ike asks how much the coupons/gift cards would cost the co-op. A: a one-time maximum of up to \$1,000.

The Advocacy Committee recommends that the Olympia Food Coop join the Olympia for All coalition and provide the following support:

- Provide tabling opportunities for signature gathering or advocacy to the City Council
- Place article(s) in the Coop Newsletter about Olympia for All
- Provide a maximum of \$1,000 of coupons/gift cards to be used toward signature gatherers/volunteers

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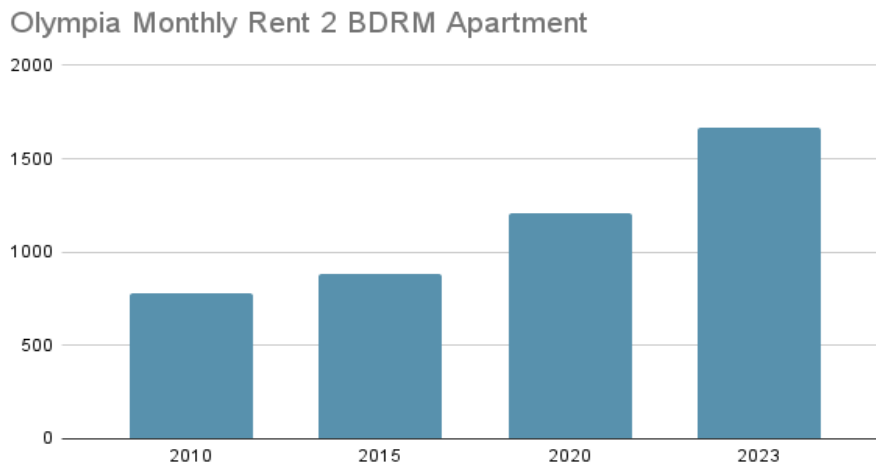
## OLYMPIA FOR ALL - A HOUSING JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

Olympia For All will::

- Stop high rent increases by mandating that landlords to pay a relocation fee to tenants who must move due to an increase in rent over 5%
- Prohibit Landlords from raising rent if their rentals do not comply with all rental health and safety regulations
- Limit other fees charged by Landlords
- Prohibit school year evictions when households have students
- Prohibit winter evictions for safety

### OLYMPIA, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

Like so many other communities in Washington, Olympia is reeling from a housing crisis that is crippling our community.



**RENTS HAVE RISEN 40% SINCE 2020 AND 88% SINCE 2015**

These extreme rises in rent have pushed most Olympia renters into housing instability, which is defined as when the cost of rent rises above 30% of an individual's monthly income.

Research concludes that housing instability is the primary cause of homelessness and explains why homelessness continues to rise in our community. Housing instability also disrupts children's school performance, employment stability, and increases mental health instability.

Rents rising more than double the cost of living also puts tremendous pressure on employers like the Olympia Food Coop to raise wages or lose employees who must move to communities with more affordable housing.

Fast rising rents are pushing most working families in Olympia into Housing Instability and this is destabilizing our community in so many ways.

Olympia for All Coalition Partners

- League of Women Voters (Thurston Co)
- Olympia Education Association
- WFSE Local 443
- WFSE Local 872
- UCFW Local 367
- AFSME Local 3758
- South Salish Progressive Alliance
- Olympia Democratic Socialist of America
- South Sound Green Party
- Tenants Union of WA
- WA Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Thurston/Lewis/Mason Labor Council

**Proposal: The Olympia Food Co-op joins the Olympia for All coalition and provides the following support:**

- \* **Tabling opportunities for signature gathering or advocacy to the City Council**
- \* **Place article(s) in the Co-op Newsletter about Olympia for All**
- \* **Provide a maximum of \$1,000 of coupons/gift cards to be used toward signature gatherers/volunteers**

Stand aside: 0

Block: 0

Consent: 10

**CONSENT**

**Removal of Linda and Trudy from BOD (Andie)**

Board discusses proposal.

Board tables the proposal, will revisit next meeting.

~ break ~

**Eastside Remodel Proposal, take 2**

Bradley (staff) and Kara (consultant) provide background and answer board questions.

3/2/24

To: The BOD

From: ES Remodel Team (Bradley, MaryJane, Kitty)

Revisiting the Architect/Engineer proposal

Thanks for reviewing our proposal at the last Board Meeting. We're sorry that none of us could be there to answer your questions, so we're going to try to address the issues that were brought up last month. With the frequent turnover on the Board and Staff over the years, it can be challenging to keep

track of all that came before, and we lose some of the continuity that can help us to maintain a longer vision. Here's an abridged history for context:

**2010:** Purchased 905 Rogers adjacent to the Westside

**2011:** Purchased 1004 Lansdale adjacent to the Eastside

**2012:** The BOD held a strategic planning retreat in which the following priorities were created:

1. The Co-op will expand its retail space in order to create comfortable and accessible shopping spaces that satisfy current customers and attract new members.
2. The Olympia Food Co-op will leverage its resources to meet community needs in the spheres of food systems and the local economy.
3. The Co-op will spread knowledge and skills on mission-related topics in order to empower and improve our community.
4. The Co-op Board and Board committees' work will serve the strategic plan and overall mission. (This is about looking at the functionality of the Board and Board committees in terms of our overall goals, and possibly making changes to them.)
5. Board and staff will understand their different spheres of decision-making; they will support and be accountable to each other.
6. The Co-op will improve internal and external communication to create alignment and increase our effectiveness in meeting our mission.
7. The Co-op will determine which legal structure accurately reflects who we are and our future needs and, if necessary, make a change. (This is about our current status as a WA not-for-profit corporation and whether we should change it, and if so, to what.)
8. The Co-op will improve our volunteer systems in order to
  - a) have enough volunteers to keep the Co-op functioning and growing
  - b) keep volunteers excited about their work and staff excited about working with them
  - c) increase skill-sharing and solidarity among volunteers.
9. The Co-op will respond to customer and member needs and communicate how we are doing so.
10. The Co-op will work with under-represented communities to co-create opportunities to "foster a socially and economically egalitarian society."

**2014:** The Westside Garden Center opened and Westside store did some remodeling, including new floors

**2014:** Hired Development Co-op (DC) who conducted Feasibility Study, Developed Eastside Expansion Process

**2015:** Created Statement of Unity, Project parameters and priorities, Market Study, Pro Formae for DC's plan

**2016:** BOD decided that the DC's plan was not feasible and not to go forward with it, Expansion Planning became Remodel Planning. The following ES Remodel priorities were created (not in order):

- removing some of the posts in the retail area
- replacing the flooring
- replacing the lighting and the sound system
- changing some of the shelving
- remodeling the bathrooms
- installing a central climate control system (HVAC)
- general store conditioning (painting, signs, decorating)
- remodeling the produce prep and WAC desk area

- expanding shoppers parking to staff parking lot
- moving the deli kitchen to a POD or off-site
- new roof

**2017:** BOD consented to new Plan of Action, Remodel Process, and Expansion plan for 3<sup>rd</sup> downtown Store. No downtown options were located

**2018:** An offer to develop a Downtown Deli in Traditions Building was considered and rejected

**2019:** ES Deli Remodel was proposed and implemented

**2020:** COVID

**2023:** ES Floors replaced, WS Garden Center closed

With this proposal, we are basically restarting the process that the Expansion Committee, BOD, Staff all agreed to in 2016. When we began looking at an Eastside Remodel, we learned that if we add square footage, it may trigger some City requirements that could be prohibitively expensive (frontage improvements such as sidewalks, lighting, drainage, utilities). Those plans were subsequently abandoned, and we decided to focus on just the Deli Kitchen. Now, 5 years later, we want to resume the remodeling idea, and to explore the feasibility of incorporating the costs of frontage improvements into the project.

To reiterate our purpose today: In order to begin planning any kind of addition, we need to know what limitations and requirements we will be facing, such as the scope and current costs of Frontage Improvements, parking requirements, lot consolidation process and costs, Design Review requirements, etc. It doesn't make sense to us to begin brainstorming and visioning without some understanding of the hurdles our plans would be facing. The skilled services of an Architect and Engineer will help us make plans that can actually be carried out. It is the very first part of a process that will include staff and the BOD in developing.

We will try addressing concerns that were raised last month, and sorry if the comments are not verbatim:

1. *“Maybe we should close the Westside and just have one big store”*. Previous membership surveys have shown strong loyalty and attachment to both locations. Also, we've done financial analyses and found that the Westside store is quite profitable and is holding its own in terms of viability. In addition, we don't have staff capacity to research and implement a project of this scope.

2. *“This should have been included in the operating budget”* This was not in the budget because we didn't plan for it until after the budget was drafted. We are trying to be accountable to the BOD for spending money that wasn't in the approved budget, and this is the best process we've got for mid-year budget adjustments. Our final budget projects a cash increase of \$32K, and we started the year with a cash surplus. We aren't in actuality limited by our one-year plan to not spend any more than budgeted – we just need to decide to do so. We believe this is a prudent use of the Co-op's resources, and we don't need to wait until we create next year's budget to start a project that's sorely needed.

3. *“We're putting the cart before the horse. Before we start hiring people we need to know what we want.”* This may seem like cart before the horse, but actually it's the opposite. We need to know what we must include and what limitations we would face in a remodel, so that we can then make plans that would be attainable. This proposal is not for the architect to make building plans. It is for the architect, builder, and engineer to help us make informed decisions about what we want.

4. *“We just need more retail space”*. We totally agree, and want to include adding retail space to both the front and back of the retail building. But in order to plan for that we’ll need to know what the city will allow, in what ways our existing buildings can reasonably be modified, and how we can best use the lot next door. All of these questions would be addressed by these professionals.

5. *“We don’t need more office and break space”*. Staffing the Co-op is a physically and psychologically demanding job. More than 5000 people come through the doors of the Eastside every week. Besides the heavy lifting of literally tons of products, staff are constantly faced with a parade of all kinds of customer personalities, not all of them pleasant. Breaks are essential and encouraged. Currently the only heated space for breaks is in our back offices, which are usually cramped, busy, and crowded work spaces. During COVID, staff routinely took breaks in their cars (if they had one). Staff often use some of their break time waiting in line for one of the 2 rest rooms. Our mandated nursing/pumping station is crammed into a corner with a curtain and is heavily trafficked. The office workspaces are similarly stretched to capacity.

6. *“We should see if we can make a bigger plan for a newer, bigger store, and include the membership in the decision”*. In the past 5 years, we’ve made some significant investments in our existing space. The 30 year-old floor covering was cracked and uncleanable. We think the new flooring is a huge improvement and makes the whole store look much better. With the expanded deli kitchen, the working conditions are much safer and more productive, and this is reflected in deli sales figures. We’ve maxed out our electrical capacity and are about to invest in a huge electrical upgrade so that we can add more coolers and other equipment.

We expect that we’ll be staying in the building for the foreseeable future, but there are some major issues that we’ve needed to address for some time, and right now there are staff who are available to help make it happen. Opening a new store would entail many years of planning and development, and the staff simply does not have the capacity to do this.

Original proposal is attached and we’re re-proposing it. Thanks!

*THIS WAS THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL*

2/9/24

Eastside Remodel Project

From Bradley, MJ, and Kitty

After the completion of the Eastside floor replacement, there is renewed interest to research and bring to the Collective and Board a vision of a multi-phased remodel for the Eastside store. The collective has agreed to form a project team (that’s us) to begin this process. The problems we’ve identified as most significant are (not in order of priority):

- We need more parking and intentional use of the lot next door
- We need staff bathrooms and a breakroom
- The “courtyard” space between the buildings is wasted prime space
- We need more office space
- The front end is has many bottlenecks, is crowded and is hard to shop
- Your ideas here

The team met with the architect and builder who worked on the Eastside Deli and Westside Kitchen remodels, and they suggest that it would be most prudent to come up with a phased remodel plan, to be carried out over the next 2-5 years. Sections of the plan could be completed one part at a time, but with the other parts in mind and on the horizon, so each would be part of an overall “master plan”. This approach could help us save trouble and money because we won’t have to start everything anew as we go, and we’d be able to foresee major parts that might be consolidated, such as ground work and major plumbing and electrical portions. In this stage of the process, we’re just exploring what could be the vision for a remodel.

The Team’s process will be to research and detail out remodel plans, consistently communicating with Finance CAT, Facilities CAT, Big Picture Cat, the Expansion Committee of the Board, Eastside department managers, and the Collective to build consensus and evolve the vision. Consent for the overall vision and separate phases will be with the Collective and Board.

The first phase of this project will require the services of an Architect and a Civil Engineer. This is similar to the process that we went through before beginning construction on the Eastside and Westside Kitchen projects. For the Westside, we had to pay for architectural drawings before we could get a bid from the contractor to build it. For this project, the preliminary Architect fee is estimated to be \$4,500-5,500. The Eastside project will also require services of a Civil Engineer, who will oversee the overall site plan and pre-submission issues, as well as creating preliminary site plan construction cost estimates. Their fee estimate is \$7,500-8,000. In addition, if we consolidate the lots, we’ll need to work with a land surveyor. Their estimate for services is around \$12,000, but that work can be completed at a later date.

**Therefore, we are proposing that we hire the Architect and Civil Engineer, estimated cost \$12,500-14,000.** This is a necessary step if we want to consider building additional square footage at the Eastside Store. It will allow us to develop long-term remodel plans that are informed, realistic, and attainable. Proposals for services are all attached. Please let us know if there are any questions. Thanks!

**Proposal: The co-op hires an Architect and Civil Engineer, estimated cost \$12,500-14,000, as a necessary step to consider building additional square footage at the Eastside Store, allowing for the development of informed, realistic, and attainable long-term remodel plans.**

Block: 0  
Stand aside: 0  
Consent: 10

**CONSENT**



**Round Up Proposal (Kate)**

The Member Relations Committee has worked on this proposal.

**Proposal: A temporary Round Up at the Register Campaign begins on March 25, 2024 and continues for 6 months, ending on Sept 30, 2024, distributing funds to Meals at Unity Commons shelter.**

Stand aside: 0

Block: 0

Consent: 9

**CONSENT**

**Parking at Governor Hotel (Jim)**

**Proposal: Jim will contract with the Governor Hotel for 3 spots**

Stand aside: 0

Block: 0

Consent: 9

**CONSENT**

**Staff, Committee, and Task Force Reports**

A written staff report was provided ahead of the meeting:

*Jeni has been approved to succeed me as the Staff Rep. We plan a 2-6 month transition and training period. Harry will return as the Staff Rep to the Board in April.*

*For the past month, in addition to managing the store, the Staff Collective has spent some time in dealing with Board issues, both the Policy Governance and some of the Board/Staff conflict issues.*

*Sales at both stores remain fairly strong and are growing at a level above inflation.*

*There will be a Finance report but the Finance Committee does not meet until Mon 3/18 so I am hoping Linda and/or Kate can bring a report from that meeting. Since I cannot be at the Board meeting, the Finance Committee could discuss asking Corey to present info and reports from the end of 2023.*

Jeni provided an update on the RV situation at the Eastside: they've been removed.

**Finance Committee** There are currently 4 board members interested in being on the committee, and is that going to result in updating the charter, or selecting only 2 be consenting members. There's support for board members to come even if they're not consenting members.

Is it really fine if all board members come? Kate supports this: there's more time for questions, generally on zoom, easier for screensharing documents.

No committee reports were provided ahead of the meeting.

## February 2024 Meeting Minutes Approval

**Proposal: The Board approves of the February 2024 meeting minutes.**

Stand aside: 0

Block: 0

Consent: 9

**CONSENT**

### Commitments

Jim will contract with Governor Hotel for 3 parking spots.

Kate will follow up with the Member Relations Committee, let them know the Round Up proposal passed.

Kate will follow up with the Finance Committee that all board members be invited to attend, and an email go out in advance.

### Meeting eval

Ike and Jeni would like to see the proposal to ask for Linda and Trudy's resignation come back to next month's meeting. Andie supports this.

### Next facilitator:

**Next meeting:** April 18 (3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday)