THE ROWLAND CO-OP

Meeting Minutes

Sunday, February 17, 2019

Attending: Bruce Bentley, Caryn Christianson, Kenny Christianson, Madison Christianson, Chuck Clark, Joan Clark, Alan Engvaldsen, Christine Foland, Patricia Giordano, Laurie Guzda, Karen Havens, George Herland, Robin Hoose, Marian Keegan, Maggie Lehrian, Karen Meneghin, Karen Moyles, Moriah Moyles, Randy Nilsen, Jane Olsen, Scott Olsen, Todd Pletnick, Carol Pletnick, Diana Mae Potts, Gillian (Buonanno) Skisland, Jason Skisland, John Sullivan, Charles Weissman, Bob Wicksnes

After meeting: Eric Abrahamsen, Carl Magnussen, Bergit Pinkston

Prior to calling the meeting to order, Kenny gave a tour of the first floor of the Rowland Café building. This area includes the original café dining area, a kitchen, and back room area, which can be used for meetings and music venues.

 Attendance: The meeting was open to the community. Approximately twenty-five people from the community were in attendance, as listed above.

1. Call to Order: 2:05 pm
2. Kenny described the goals of the Rowland Co-op. The café building and the toll house across the road will house the Co-op. (The toll house was most recently a bait shop.) The goals are intended to support Rowland and the surrounding community and to contribute to the local economy. The Rowland Co-op hopes to provide:
* A small grocery story, which will stock staple items such as bread, milk, eggs and other frequently needed items.
* Pizza to eat in and to carry out.
* Breakfast
* Farmer’s market
* Ice cream
* Local craft items and gift items
* Showcase of local history
* Launch for tubing
* Fishing supplies and tubing supplies
* Opportunities for employment
1. Kenny explained that a co-op is a legal structure of people coming together according to established principals that are found on the Rowland Co-op Website (rowlandcoop.com).
* Membership is now open to the community
* Dues for membership is $25/year.
1. Both the café and toll house are presently being renovated. The roof of the café has been replaced and solar panels are on order. The clearing of shrubbery is in progress. The Co-op plans to add decking along the river side of the café and the river side of the toll house to take advantage of this beautiful vista. The property adjacent to the toll house and the café are not in the hands of the Co-op. Penndot owns the property next to the toll house. Access to these properties remains to be negotiated.
2. All labor at the Co-op will be volunteer in the beginning. Later, as the Co-op grows, labor will be paid. The expected rate will be $15/hour. The Co-op plans to provide employment opportunities for the handicapped. The Pike Co. Human Resources Center may be a source of employees. Kenny is considering starting an electronic currency at the Co-op.
3. Much sharing ensued, which included food items brought by attendees, and sample crafts as well as questions, comments and ideas:
* Will the Co-op be subject to regulations? Yes, fewer regulations will be required if items for sale are only available to co-op members. More regulations will be required if items for sale are available to the public.
* Will produce be available? This is a possibility. If farmer’s sell their own produce at the Co-op location, then the Co-op is not responsible for the product. If the Co-op buys the produce for resale from the farmer, the Co-op is responsible for the product. How produce would be marketed is a question that has not been resolved. The Co-op has a list of farmers who are interested in selling their produce at the Co-op.
* The Lackawaxen Township is very willing to work with the Co-op.
* The sale of unique local crafts such as artist created maps of the area and Lenape crafts will provide incentive for people to stop at the café and toll house.
* A reading room at the toll house would be welcome.
* The facilities at the toll house prevent the Co-op from using the term “museum,” but “gallery” is an acceptable term for the showcasing of local history.
* Cooking classes, nature walks and other educational activities were suggested.
* Several attendees expressed enthusiasm for the Co-op partnering with other local organizations. A representative from the Care Cabin, a newly formed food bank targeting children, was especially interested in involving the Co-op in supporting their initiatives.
* An article with the headline “Landmark Rowland store to reopen in spring,” appeared in the News Eagle. (https://www.neagle.com/news/20190201/landmark-rowland-store-to-reopen-in-spring)
* An attendee from the local publication the “Lackawaxen Connection” requested that an article about the Rowland Co-op be prepared for that publication. Two members of the Co-op agreed to write the article.