

Member Affairs Committee Minutes 1/25/06

Present: Judy Willis, Rosalinda Guillen, Sharon Souders, Brooks Dimmick, Jeff Maudsley, Jean, Ginger, Frank James, Dana Lyons **Absent:** Philip Buri, Burke Mulvany

MAC Donation Follow Up Report by Responsible Development (RD): Frank James stated that the City of Bellingham has some unique opportunities right now to define its future size. The amount of land to be preserved is limited. The 100-acre wood is one of the last prime areas needing preservation. Even though the woods is a critical wildlife corridor, the city is advocating strongly to cut it down to build the largest development in city history. The project is a model for other large-scale developments (King Mountain and Guide Meridian). The high level of development advocacy within city government puts the community in a very difficult position. Rather than developing downtown where jobs and facilities are clustered, we stand to lose our public land and subsidize developers to do it. We need every tool possible to respond. The Co-op donation provided the seed money for yard signs. The signs were so popular that RD couldn't even meet the demand. They focused on arterials, but everywhere they went people wanted one in their yard. Dana noted that it has been an important communication event and a way for people to be active and to protect their community. The signs were pivotal in raising public awareness and decisive in raising over \$45,000 to pay for lawyers and technical experts. The signs also built morale and showed the level of concern among the people. RD was able to leverage the original Co-op donation to triple the funds. Dana and Frank thanked the Co-op for their support and quick response, allowing for community involvement and access. While it was a stretch, the issue is huge and the quality of our city hangs in the balance. RD's future plans include a library of materials, website access for people opposing developments and legal consulting. They hope to work with future issues in Bellingham, possibly as part of an umbrella group under RE – Sources.

Action Follow Up: MAC Brochure: MAC recommended adding the Co-op mission, vision and values to the back of the brochure, making sure the descriptions match the new member input system, adding Board candidacy to the Board section, making the wording on the cover more engaging ("tell us what you think"), and prominently printing the website on the brochure. The brochure will be featured at the service desk. **Member Input System:** Ginger reported that we got good suggestions from the people who tested the system and incorporated their input into the format. We should be able to launch it by next week. We will also collect input from member forums and the annual meeting and post summaries on line. **Bylaw election:** The mail back envelope seemed to make a huge difference. We're hoping to do this for the Board election. It is costly, which is why we haven't done it before (\$1.04 per return in the U.S.), but very successful. There were suggestions to print on the envelope, "save your co-op some \$ - add a stamp" or that the Board President could make a newsletter request to "add a stamp if you can." **Annual Meeting Speaker:** MAC agreed to designate \$500 of their funds for educational speakers towards hiring a speaker from Northwest Environment Watch for the Annual Meeting and Party.

Monitoring P6.4: We were a little under budget for the year on donations. It's tricky to hit the budgeted figure exactly. It could be difficult logistically to determine who would designate an organization if we tried to go back and allocate surplus funds, and would require a policy if it was even possible. Every first part of the year you'd have to go into discussion about breaking out extra funds. MAC agreed it would be better to have a consistent raise to a portion of the donation policy. Brooks suggested that if there was a remainder in the donation budget we could make a policy to even up the CSD totals, donate to the alternate CSD group or raise MAC's donation amount. These are options that

could be proposed to the Board. **MAC encouraged having a mid-year or November donation review in order to make sure the donation funds are spent.**

Community Shopping Day (CSD) Process: Brooks proposed creating a list of questions for MAC to use in making initial CSD selections. A synopsis of the selection process would also be sent to MAC with the CSD candidates every year. The synopsis would have a brief review of the voting process so new MAC members would be prepared. Jean and Holly could write a draft and ask MAC for suggestions on what to consider when reviewing CSD groups. The guidelines could be used year after year and would help MAC's decision-making process. It's essential to come to the selection meeting having done one's homework. It was suggested to add info on conflict of interest to the document.

MAC also discussed how much weight to give to the CSD group categories. Brooks feels like merit should be more important than a category. Rosalinda noted that the categories would always be dependent on MAC and Co-op values and what's going on in our community. Judy feels the categories provide a way to be fair to all organizations. Otherwise it would be too easy for her to choose from her own area of expertise and bias. It's a way to keep us on track and be fair to all organizations. It's most likely there will be one organization in each category that deserves a CSD. Jeff stressed weighing the group's importance with the criteria by which they ended up in a category. There's a certain amount of randomness. **MAC agreed to hold the categories lightly, using their balance as a tool, and to look at specific needs if an urgent situation arises.**

MAC then heard a proposal to have a period of advocacy or questions during the CSD selection process. The group would go around with a show of hands for the first tier of groups. At that point there would be a period of advocacy (three minutes each) to discuss groups that didn't make the list, ask for more info about a group or mention a group's strong points. If you were the only one to vote for a group, it would be a chance to revote for a more likely candidate. Groups that are mentioned would be added to the first tier list. MAC would vote again on the revised first tier list, and then continue voting rounds as usual. Towards the end the group might want to engage in some more discussion. It would offer a chance for comebacks. Responses included that many groups still wouldn't have advocates, it's unlikely to convert a group from no votes to five votes, and if MAC grows to 10 or 12 members it could add advocacy for some groups and none for others. It's an imperfect process--we can't be absolutely objective. The CSD selection will be important as the Co-op grows. If we have an advocacy component in it should be the first step of a larger process. Otherwise we should keep with the current system based on the data and the strength of a group's proposal. The applications are each group's opportunity to advocate for themselves. The letter going out to CSD applicants could inform them that MAC's decision is based on the strength of their application and its relationship to the Co-op's mission, vision and values. MAC also appreciates having info on each group's current funding. Several MAC members were interested in having more time with the proposal and seeing it in writing. **MAC agreed that they needed to have a discussion to clarify the purpose and definitions of the CSD alternate group.**

Scheduling of 2006 Priorities: MAC agreed to schedule the priority of strengthening our system for recruitment and orientation to MAC (adding one or two more solid members) for the February agenda. Jean will talk to Holly about scheduling a facilitation training session.

Closing & Evaluation: Jeff will facilitate the February meeting. Comments: thanks for coming to the meetings, hope we get more folks, learning more and more, liked the packet info, very good meeting, really appreciates the thoughtfulness. Thanks to Brooks for bringing such good info to the group on the CSD process.