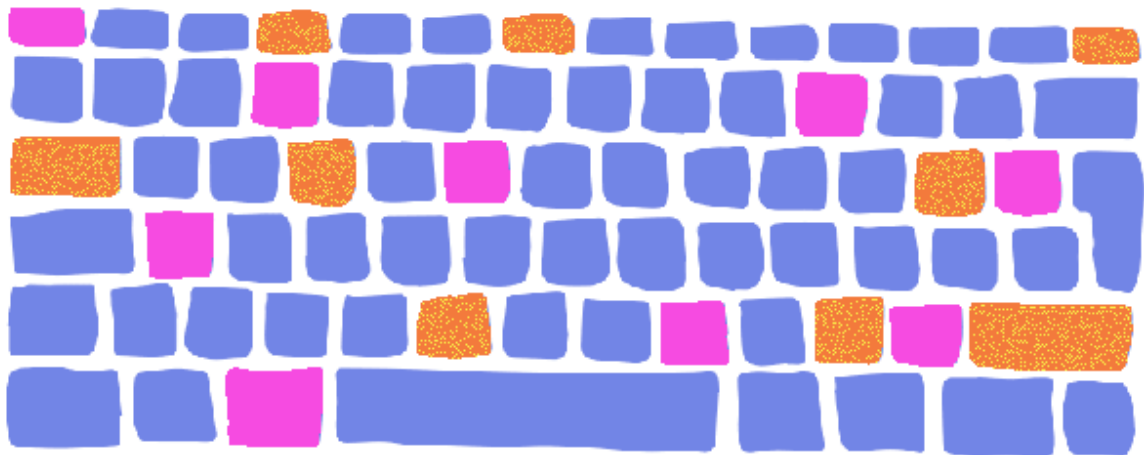


LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

February 7, 2023

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IS THERE AN OFF-RAMP FOR THE PSFC MASK MANDATE?

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the article “Mask Mandate, Demographic Survey, Child-care Dominate Discussion at October General Meeting,” published in the 12/27/2022 issue of the *Linewaiters’ Gazette*. Given that the General Coordinators have decided to retain the mask mandate for shoppers and workers, despite the recent majority vote from the membership to make mask-wearing optional, is there any procedural off-ramp for the mask mandate that respects the democratic decisions of the membership? If so, will the General Coordinators please publish and circulate to the membership what this process is? It doesn’t seem very cooperative that a small minority (the General Coordinators) have decided to maintain the mask mandate when a large number of Coop members (51 percent of the approximately 4,600 people who voted on the mask policy) voted to make mask-wearing optional.

In solidarity,

Amie Macdonald

MISINFORMATION ABOUT VACCINES

Dear Editor,

Words can’t adequately express my dismay at seeing a (Jan. 17) letter presenting anti-vaccine misinformation. The author is not incorrect that public health is vastly improved when people have access to clean water, decent housing, good food, and proper toilet facilities. But to claim that statements about the safety and effectiveness of vaccines are scientific “propaganda” is dangerous nonsense. The chief reason people are able to persuade themselves of these absurdities is that the very effectiveness of vaccines makes the harms they prevent nearly invisible.

I encourage interested persons to read about the horrors of smallpox, for example. Or the experience of post-polio syndrome. Or consider the flu: Many people apply the label “flu” to bad colds and stomach upset. The actual flu, influenza, is something else

entirely, as anyone who has had it can tell you: The debilitation is extreme and long-lasting.

The long and the short of it is that you can't be an anti-vaxxer if you know anything about the history of disease or if you know more about the biological underpinnings than will allow you to do more than make vague noises about unspecified "information coming out." People die because of rubbish like this.

Jolanta Benal

SECOND LOCATION (WITH THANKS TO THE SECOND LOCATION STUDY COMMITTEE)

To the Editor:

This multi-year process [to explore adding a second Coop location] deserves continued study, but not as presented. Much has shifted since 2018. Some concerns:

1. Strategic planning. We need it. Second location is an element of it. Bolstering the assertion:
 - a. Exhibit #1: We lack governance integration: a "Committee Oversight Committee," a new committee (which I favor) as oversight to other committees?
 - b. Top structure needs attention—to integrate, clarify decisions, plus put planning into operations. General Coordinators are empowered to run our shop (good!). How they report to a higher authority and integrate, feeding into a master plan, is unclear.
 - c. General Meetings average 225+/- [members] voting on behalf of 14,000. There's better response from surveys. Up our digitized game to tweak members' decisions?

d. Members have adopted multiple ways to provision pantries since 2020.

This is not second location “stuff.” But it’s all part of a master plan in a changed landscape. Who’s empowered? Are we ready? We need a parallel effort, or we do this with weakness. As evidenced: Our GM will retire, what’s the plan? The Board gave suggestions (its fiduciary role) to a key committee that stonewalled (saga of Personnel Committee & GM).

2. Threats/Opportunities?

a. Do other models serve more geographically? Have we considered: warehouse? services offsite? redeployment of upper floor? experiments in mobile options? Have we actively tested interest of neighborhoods or multiple neighborhoods (food truck mobile market). Is in-person shopping the only model?

b. The future is not assured. Grants pulled us through! “More members, more shoppers” to increase figures is not easy—more flow at 782 Union is not a given. Expansion has large operational and financial implications.

d. Re-examine the marketplace and need, update the survey results (who they represent, and overall findings).

Thank you,
Amita Rodman

See our letter submission policy [here](#).