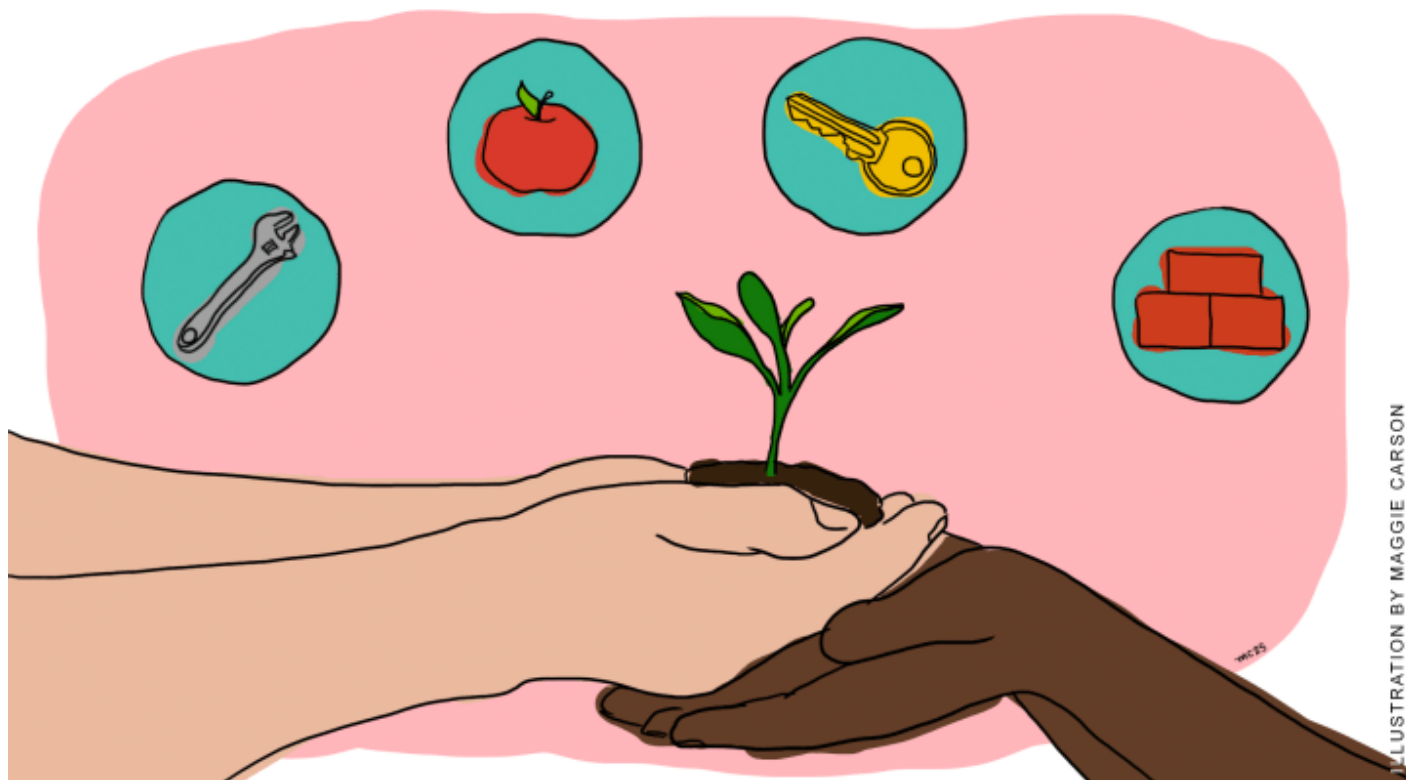


REVOLVING LOAN COMMITTEE REPORT

April 1, 2025



April 1, 2025

By Kathy Martino and Wendy Fleischer for the RLC

The Revolving Loan Committee manages the Fund for New Food Coops.

The Fund for New Food Coops supports start-up food coops that rely on member labor. Using donations from the Park Slope Food Coop, its members and other supporters, the Fund for New Food Coops offers low-cost loans to help new food coops pay for the critical items that enable them to grow and to generate income. Examples of appropriate uses for loan funds include rent deposits, refrigeration and other major equipment and physical upgrades to shopping or storage space.

The purpose of the Fund for New Food Coops is to expand the role of member-run cooperatives in bringing healthy food at low prices to residents across Brooklyn and beyond. New, strong food coops will ultimately help the Park Slope Food Coop better sat-

isfy its burgeoning membership and help meet the skyrocketing interest in food cooperatives. Providing favorable financing and, thereby, demonstrating the credit worthiness of new coops is one concrete way the Park Slope Food Coop supports nascent food coops and is aligned with the Cooperative Principles that encourage mutual support.

Currently there is more than \$60,000 available in the Fund.

The fund has made two loans to the Greene Hill Food Co-op, which serves Bedford-Stuyvesant, Clinton Hill, Fort Greene and surrounding areas. The PSFC loans have been a key support for the stability and growth of the member-run Co-op. While there has been little demand for loans by the Revolving Loan Committee of late, we expect interest in member-run coops to grow in the next period.

The Committee consists of two members, with Joe Holtz as the staff liaison. It continues to manage the loans to Greene Hill. The Committee will be asking the May 2025 General Meeting to re-elect one of its current members for a new three-year term and to elect Committee Co-Founder Joe Holtz to the Committee effective on June 28th, 2025, which is the day after he retires.

EQUITY, ACCESS AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE REPORT

April 1, 2025



By Azi Khalili for the EACC

December 17, 2024

Founded in 2004, the Equity, Access and Community Committee (EACC) was established to uphold the Park Slope Food Coop's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. The EACC is a team of academics, researchers, attorneys, educators, artists and activists united by a shared passion for equity and social justice within the Coop.

Dedicated to creating an accessible and welcoming space, the EACC advocates for diversity, challenges discrimination and promotes equal participation. Working alongside Coop staff, managers and members, the committee investigates cases of discrimination and offers support to members who have experienced or observed discrimination based on racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, religious bias, etc.

We review reports, mediate conflicts and propose structural changes to address and

prevent discriminatory practices. Though the EACC does not impose penalties, our mission is to foster a fair and inclusive environment for all members.

In an effort to better understand and serve the Coop's community, the EACC is launching an anonymous demographic survey. Approved by the General Meeting, this survey will gather insights on the Coop's membership to inform outreach, recruitment and programming and to ensure the Coop reflects the diverse Brooklyn and Greater NYC communities it serves.

Key goals of the survey include understanding member demographics, identifying underrepresented groups and shaping policies that enhance inclusivity. By addressing potential barriers to participation, the EACC hopes to improve Coop accessibility and make data-informed decisions to meet members' needs. The EACC hopes to launch the survey in late December or early January. We will notify Coop members as soon as it's available.

To further support its mission, the EACC is also building a new website. This resource will provide members with information on the committee's role, how to report incidents and ways to engage in the Coop's efforts to build a more equitable community. Stay tuned for updates as the site develops!

JOIN THE AGENDA COMMITTEE

April 1, 2025



ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHEN SAVAGE

November 5, 2024

The Agenda Committee is seeking new members! The Committee's work is scheduling the agenda for the monthly General Meeting, and it meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. over Zoom.

Prospective applicants should be:

- Members in good standing for at least a year before the pandemic.
- Able and willing to regularly attend Agenda Committee meetings. These occur on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m. ten times a year. There is no meeting in June and December. Currently, the Committee is meeting via Zoom.
- Willing to work in a collaborative committee environment.
- Interested in the ongoing business of the Coop.
- Willing to attend the General Meeting at least five times a year. The General Meeting meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Please send statements of interest to psfcac@gmail.com. The Committee will interview applicants and then select candidates for election at the General Meeting.

We are seeking an applicant pool that reflects the diversity of the Coop's membership.

COOP COMMITTEES LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

April 1, 2025



Join the Equity Access & Community Committee (the EACC) in doing important work for our Coop. Formerly known as the Diversity and Equality Committee, we are preparing a survey for members to answer anonymously. It will provide for the first time, an idea of the diversity of the Coop membership, to inform policies and practices going

forward.

If you have experience with SurveyMonkey or can help in other ways with sharing this information, you can assist. There are also other areas of EACC work for new members to collaborate on after the survey is completed and distributed. If interested, please contact us at EquityAccess@psfc.coop.

Calling all communications, graphic design, grant prospecting and translation pros! The Cooperative Economics Alliance of NYC (CEANYC) is a home for co-ops of all kinds in the five boroughs, including of course Park Slope Food Coop! We gather together for shared learning, advocacy and camaraderie, all with the intention of growing cooperation and a solidarity economy across NYC. Come volunteer with us! CEANYC is seeking talented and reliable PSFC members who want to receive work credit for providing support in any of the following areas:

- 1) Regular, ongoing communications services, particularly helping us create, edit and send our quarterly newsletters and member updates.
- 2) Graphic design services (to create event flyers and more).
- 3) Foundation grant prospecting research to help us fund our unique and critical work.
- 4) Spanish-English translators to help us uphold our commitment to language justice for the many CEANYC members who speak Spanish.

In each of these areas, we are seeking two freelancers who can each commit a minimum of one work shift (2.75 hours) per month. You can apply by sending an email to organize@gocoopnyc.org with: 1) a brief cover letter about your professional and co-op-related experience, as well as why you are motivated to support NYC's growing solidarity economy; 2) your résumé; and 3) your general availability for a regular

monthly check-in. Please use the following subject line: “PSFC-CEANYC Work Shift Opportunity.” Learn more about CEANYC at: <https://gocoopnyc.org/>

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

April 1, 2025





**ENVIRONMENTAL
COMMITTEE IS
LOOKING FOR
NEW MEMBERS**

The Food Coop's Environmental Committee is looking for multiple new members!

The mission of the committee is to provide education, research, and policy motivation to ensure the Food Coop operates with fidelity to its official environmental policy which mandates that the Coop "support the best products and practices with regard to the health, safety, and preservation of humans, animals, and the overall biosphere." You can learn more about the Environmental Committee's history and activities here: <https://sites.google.com/site/psfcec/home>

The Committee meets approximately quarterly to set plans for action between meetings. We are looking for members with education and/or professional experience in environmental topics relevant to the Food Coop's operations and impact. If you're interested, please send an email with a short description of your related experience to: psfc.environmental.committee@gmail.com.

The Food Coop's Environmental Committee is looking for multiple new members!

The mission of the committee is to provide education, research and policy motivation to ensure the Food Coop operates with fidelity to its official environmental policy, which mandates that the Coop is to "support the best products and practices with regard to the health, safety and preservation of humans, animals and the overall biosphere." You can learn more about the Environmental Committee's history and activities on the Park Slope Food Coop Environmental Committee website.

The Committee meets approximately quarterly to set plans for action between meetings. We are looking for members with education and/or professional experience in environmental topics relevant to the Food Coop's operations and impact. If you're interested, please send an email with a short description of your related experience to ps-fc.environmental.committee@gmail.com.

THE RETURN OF PLOW TO PLATE

April 1, 2025



Safe Food Committee Report

By Adam Rabiner

Well, dear readers, it is great to be back writing to you again after a two-year break about the *Plow to Plate Film Series*. I am here to tell you that *PtP* is back too, although not as you remember it. Our official return takes place this September, but you won't have to come to the small and sometimes cramped second floor room at 782 Union Street to enjoy the show. Rather, you can enjoy *The Pollinators*—"a cinematic journey around the United States following migratory beekeepers and their truckloads of honeybees"—from the comfort of your own, hopefully air-conditioned, home.

We were inspired to bring back *PtP* in this new form by the confluence of several factors. After the world seemed to shut down in 2020, we observed the onset of telework and other ways of connecting via our computers. We also noticed a proof of concept in the Flatbush Food Coop, whose film series carried on, via Zoom, with nary a pause

in their screening schedule. We recognize that the world has changed, and although some face-to-face contact has returned, if Covid endures, which is likely, many members will be wary of attending in person. Finally, our squad was informed by the Coop that the second-floor room has been set aside for other purposes that make further screenings there impossible. All of these factors led us to conclude that we either had to adapt or change circumstances to avoid the end of our squad.

So, several months ago, our committee began to slowly coalesce again. We reached out to one another, tentatively at first, via email and then regularly by Zoom. We asked ourselves: can we viably come back and pull this off? During this time, we lost a key member who had overseen our newsletter and website and so we would have to modify our roles and learn new technologies and ways of interacting with our audiences. Also, as you undoubtedly have noticed, this very publication, on which we strongly rely for film reviews and to get the news out about upcoming events, has radically transformed itself from a print biweekly available on the shopping floor, to an entirely digital newspaper. The last print issue of the *Linewaiters' Gazette* is archived on the website from August 10th, 2021. What would this new format mean for our work and our squad? We are still not entirely sure.

What can you expect moving forward? While we can no longer provide the healthy snacks which everyone loved, you can watch at home with your favorite version of an organic Cheez Doodle. Don't worry, you'll be muted. You will also appreciate that the hard, no-frills bridge chair that you previously sat on has been significantly upgraded to your beloved couch.

We have also made a curatorial decision to screen shorter films. Zoom burnout is a real thing and we really have no intention of competing with Netflix or Amazon Prime. *Plow to Plate* has always been as much about the small but dedicated food-loving community we have created over the years, as it is about the films themselves. Part of what made the community, of course, was meeting in person. But a larger ingredient was the involvement of film makers, directors, producers and others we brought in to explain their work and to answer audience questions. *Plow to Plate*, at its core, is

really about your curiosity and engagement. In that regard, we will continue to bring in the experts and encourage dialogue and Q & A. In fact, by going online, we hope to broaden access to our film series to more attendees since logging in from anywhere is a lot easier than showing up at a particular location. Recognizing tradition, and with no compelling reason to further rock the boat, we will continue to host screenings on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

There remain a lot of unknowns, but we are so excited to be back. Please look for our review of *The Pollinators* soon in an upcoming issue of the new and improved *Gazette* and please check in with us on Tuesday, September 13th at seven o'clock p.m. for our inaugural virtual screening after our two-year hiatus. We will be providing a link in our soon-to-appear *Gazette* review. Until then, be well.

The Pollinators: Tuesday, September 13th, 2022 7:00 PM, Streaming Via Zoom, Link TBA.

A veteran of the Coop bathroom cleaning squad, Adam Rabiner is a member of the Safe Food Committee where he helped organize the Brooklyn Food Conferences' movie screening and founded the Plow to Plate series.

THE HUDSON VALLEY FARM COOP COMMITTEE REPORT: UPDATE AND CALL FOR NEW MEMBERS

April 1, 2025

By Jonathan Farber

The Park Slope Food Coop Hudson Valley Farm Coop Committee is recruiting new members. This is an exciting venture and an opportunity to join a diverse team creating positive change in our food and farming systems. Committee members receive PS-FC shift credits for their work. Agriculture and food-related business experience are

not required to join.

The Coop voted at the April 2021 General Meeting to become the original sponsor of this new and separate cooperative business. Our website is under development at hv-farmcoop.com. PSFC members interested in joining the committee may contact us at info@hvfarmcoop.com.

The HVFC is a proposed enterprise that will acquire, improve and operate fifteen farms in the mid-Hudson Valley for the benefit of its shareholders and the wider community. The start-up budget for this project is \$30 million. The Farm Coop will raise funds through a unique financial mechanism called a Direct Public Offering. The HVFC will provide its members the rare opportunity to own a stake in socially progressive and ecologically regenerative farms. Their investments will help to recreate, sustain and protect this wonderful corner of our threatened and critical agricultural region.

Our immediate needs are in three broad areas. First, we are looking for experienced accounting, business management and finance professionals. The tasks at hand include refining the business plan, preparing our financial model and proforma statements, establishing the cooperative corporation, and structuring the direct public offering. Second, we need professional planners and geographers to round out our design team. And third, we need seasoned marketing and sales pros to help us sharpen presentations to attract project cosponsors in the public, private, and not-for profit sectors—and, eventually, individual Farm Coop shareholders. Community organizers and public relations professionals will further hone and deliver our message.

Most recently, HVFC members have participated as a client in a semester-long Engaged Learning Project of the Cornell University Cooperative Enterprise Program, SC Johnson Business College, Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management; presented the Farm Coop at the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs Sustainable Finance Seminar; enrolled in a four-session module of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Agricultural Workforce Supervisory Leadership Course titled, “Organizing Farm Work for High Quality Results”; met regularly with the Hudson Val-

ley Devon Cattle Community Breeding Project; participated in a hands-on workshop at the SUNY Cobleskill Meat Processing Lab; and corresponded about the Farm Coop with numerous farmers, agricultural specialists, organizers, and others.

GM ADDRESSES MASKS, FINANCE, ADDING NEW WORK SLOTS AND MEMBERS

April 1, 2025



By Hayley Gorenberg

Members played out a miniature version of a national debate in the open forum to

kick off the October 26 General Meeting, as one member objected to the Coop's mask requirement. The member deemed masks a personal choice for adult decision-making, and asserted that the Coop should consider temperature checks and junk the current mask requirement.

All responses voiced support for masks in the store. One member recast masks as a measure to "protect each other and our community," including people who cannot medically tolerate or qualify for a vaccine, and noted widespread mask requirements at other establishments.

The next speaker referred to their professional background in infectious diseases and public health, and called masks a key part of "ending the pandemic."

The final member who spoke added that absence of fever does not medically confirm that an individual with COVID-19 cannot transmit it, so a fever-check system would be insufficient to protect members' health.

FINANCES STILL TOUGH

Coop General Manager Joe Holtz shared a new financial report on the Zoom screen, noting that slow IRS credit processes ought not obscure the fact that financial "trend lines" for the Coop, while improving, still show the Coop losing money weekly, "and we shouldn't be complacent about that."



The Coop's infamous "cash burn" has improved to the best level in the pandemic. If the Coop had not received the IRS credits that did flow in over the previous four weeks, the Coop would have lost \$155,000, Holtz noted. That said, the "cash burn" has improved to its best level during the pandemic, he added, as the Coop was down \$125,000 per week early in the pandemic.

The Coop has lost \$6.8 million over the course of pandemic operations, and sales volume remains \$300,000 less per week than it was before March 2020, which Holtz termed "really troublesome."



Donum

ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN DONOHUE

Possibilities to grow sales might include adding more hours, adding more capacity (shoppers on the floor and checkout lines) and adding more members, Holtz suggested. The Coop routinely loses about 2,300 members per year, but that number increased to about 4,000 over the course of the pandemic. Holtz opined that adding more members was the most important measure, and that in addition to shopping and boosting sales, more member workers would be needed for the Coop to expand hours and operations.



Major credits owed to the Coop were recently paid by the IRS.

One member suggested applying lagging IRS credits to offset Coop payroll taxes, adding that some local restaurants had adopted that measure to mitigate cash flow. Holtz noted payroll taxes are below \$10,000 per week, “and our problem is much bigger than that.” He said the Coop is considering a bridge loan secured by money it is owed by the IRS.

Asked whether the Coop’s higher markup might have contributed to member falloff, Holtz acknowledged that “as the world of groceries gets more competitive,” with some stores running checkouts “with no human labor,” it was all the more important to try and return to earlier prices, but that “we need some rebuilding first,” and the Coop is working on a system for recruiting members.

NEW WORK SHIFTS



PHOTO BY JOHN MIDGLEY

General Coordinator Elinoar Astrinsky reviewed the Coop's operations including plans for new work shifts.

The Coop is rolling out new work shifts, including bulk packaging upstairs in what was previously the childcare room, and three nightly cleaning shifts with “not many people . . . basically working on your own,” ideal for members who want a very sparsely populated shift, reported General Coordinator Elinoar Astrinsky. She highlighted new receiving shifts, as well as deep-cleaning and repair shifts Monday through Wednesday at 8:30 p.m., “if you're handy with tools.”

Members will soon be able to book shifts further in advance and shop a little later in the evening, and with good planning and safety measures, the Coop is experiencing “almost no no-shows” for work, a record Astrinsky pressed with pride.



New work shifts are being rolled out, including pre-packaging the most popular bulk items.

SUPPLY CHAIN

As Coop buyers continue to seek out good options and alternatives, “I don't think

there's any need to panic-shop," Astrinsky said. She supported buying staples members know they will need, and highlighted an "amazing selection" of pears, which ripen from the inside out and should be stored in the refrigerator till the "shoulder" around the stem has a little give, indicating "juicy, lovely flavor."

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A member of the International Trade Education Committee reported about objections from Brazil to vaccine cost and intellectual property constraints under a contract with Pfizer, and about low vaccine access in Africa.

The Labor Committee, focused on workplace fairness, announced committee vacancies and a desire to recruit more members of color. The committee reported on the Coop's participation in the tomato workers' Fair Food program, in which Coop members pay a "6% premium on tomatoes" and are now sending a check of over \$4,500 to the campaign, modeling small-store support.



Fran Hawthorne was also reelected to the
Agenda
Committee.



PHOTO BY EVA WALTER

Pirco Wolfframm successfully ran again for the Agenda Committee.

Three Agenda Committee members successfully sought reelection: Fran Hawthorne, Kate Spota and Pirco Wolfframm. They responded to GM member requests for more transparency in advance about agenda items and the potential for innovation.

PARENTAL LEAVE DISCUSSION



PHOTO BY DAVID BARTNER

Member David Bartner is campaigning for the Coop to make parental leave more flexible.

Member David Bartner teed up a proposal for discussion, suggesting the Coop allow parents to time parental leave as they choose, sometime before a child turns 3 years old—rather than requiring leave start upon the birth of the child. His proposal also included a provision to “backdate,” for members who had a child during the pandemic member-work suspension, so that they could take a year of leave from subsequently required work.

Bartner asked to table his item and delete the suggestion of backdating leave, given the GM’s discussion of worker needs, saying “it may not be the right time to change things, given what’s going on at the Coop.”

Members nonetheless commented, expressing support for flexibly timed leave.

Hayley Gorenberg joined the Coop in 1993. When she’s not writing for the Gazette, she’s working as a community-driven civil rights lawyer—or playing the surdo for a local women’s/TGNCl+ samba reggae band.