JULY GM: PLASTIC USE AT THE COOP, A LOTTERY SYSTEM FOR NEW MEMBERS AND MORE

September 8, 2026



September 8, 2026

By Jess Powers

On the muggy evening of July 28, 107 Coop members attended the General Meeting despite the looming threat of rain. Lisa Pacenza of the Chair Committee deftly chaired her first meeting.



Members queue up to sign in for the general meeting.

During a relatively quiet Open Forum, the Equity, Access and Community Committee (EACC) presented information about a forthcoming virtual town hall. There were unanswered questions (due to staff absences) about security measures and threats made to the Coop, as well as about how the process of determining when to start or stop stocking items works.



Matt Hoagland addresses the attendees.

Another inquiry about fewer shifts being available during the summer was confirmed by General Coordinator Matt Hoagland, who cited more members taking temporary leave, a seasonal dip in sales and “[building] shifts out proportionally” according to demand.

The General Coordinator’s report compared the availability of new member orientations to scoring tickets to a sought-after Broadway show. With so much demand and limited supply, the Coop moved to a lottery system in mid-August. Roughly 700 people attempt to join the Coop in a given month, and the new system aims to make the experience less stressful and more equitable.

The Plastic Reduction Committee was first up during Member Committee reports. Their presentation detailed an inaugural survey’s findings. Coopers who responded affirmed that they are “moderately to extremely” concerned about plastic use at the Coop and that plastic consumption influences their buying choices. The committee identified increasing self-serve bulk options, providing alternatives to plastic bags, reducing the number of plastic clamshells in use and minimizing the impacts of plastics in food processing as top priorities.



Members of the Plastic Reduction Committee.

Committee members researched other cooperatives in Brooklyn and found that automatically emailing receipts, providing bulk options for refillable liquids such as laundry detergent, charging a small fee for plastic bags and a taring system (weighing bring-your-own containers for bulk items) are potential solutions.

Committee members acknowledged that the very high foot traffic and sales volume of our Coop might make these approaches challenging because of space, sanitation and other concerns. They plan to provide tip sheets in the coming months on how to store produce so that it stays fresh without the use of plastics.

In the survey, members shared that their current favorite low-plastic items include loose produce; items like nut butters and yogurt in glass jars; bulk goods; cherry tomatoes in cardboard containers; bar soaps wrapped in cardboard or with no packaging; Hibar deodorant, solid shampoos and conditioners; Meliora dish soap and laundry detergent; Blueland foaming hand soap and detergent; and Dr. Tung’s dental floss,

made from polyester fibers but free of PFAS and other potentially toxic chemicals and sold in cardboard packaging.

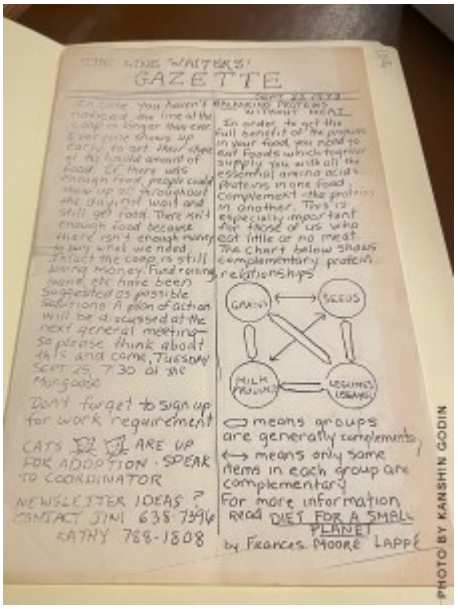
Committee members shared that the Coop currently spends $15,000 annually on face masks and TerraCycle plastic film and wrapper recycling costs. They are still in the “idea generating state” and can be reached at: ReducePlasticPSFC@gmail.com.



Kanshin Godin speaking about the print Gazette.

The Linewaiters’ Gazette Print Exploration Committee provided the next update on the agenda. The committee grew out of a desire to recapture some of the “weirdness” that was lost when the Gazette went solely online during the pandemic. Committee members said they believed that the online publication is “so efficient, less communal, less wacky” and wanted to explore other options.

Meeting attendees agreed that they missed the tactile experience of reading the publication while on the checkout line. They also expressed a desire to be able to communicate with other members after the loss of classified listings and the bulletin board in the stairwell.



An example of an old print Gazette page.

Kanshin Godin of the Linewaiters' Gazette Print Exploration Committee shared historical images of old Gazettes, including a handwritten flyer written by the author Frances Moore Lappé. The archive can be viewed at the Center for Brooklyn History in Brooklyn Heights (appointments are preferred).

Committee members said making a recommendation was outside the scope of their exploration, but they said they believed that the current editors of the online Gazette would be open to collaboration. To discuss further or for more information, you can email hello@kanshin.computer.

The meeting agenda then moved to votes for or against members of various committees.

First up was the Financial Advisory Committee, created to examine the financial performance and economic conditions facing the Coop, to provide advice and to publish reports in the Gazette. Committee members seek to "strengthen the financial knowledge of the membership" beyond financial reporting that is obtained via the Treasurer's Report given during General Meetings and summarized in the Gazette.

The committee has no decision-making authority. After a short presentation, introductions were made to a slate of seven candidates with financial planning and analytics expertise at social change groups, the hospitality industry and financial services organizations.



Michael Freedman-Schnapp of the Financial Advisory Committee.

General Meeting attendees commented on gaps in the selection process and the professionalism of the candidates despite stated initial intentions to include diverse candidates who don’t have strong financial backgrounds. Michael Freedman-Schnapp, the founder of the Committee, explained that there is a “provision to bring in others to help” at a later date. All of the candidates were elected to the committee.

Next the Revolving Loan Committee, which supports start-up Coops, had one member up for reelection, Wendy Fleischer. Attendees inquired about how the Committee would work with other Coops or with the new city-owned groceries that Mayor Zohran Mamdani’s administration prioritizes. Fleischer explained that the committee’s fund doesn’t currently have a lot of money, but they could advise or would need to raise additional funds to support a new Coop with low interest loans. She was reelected.

Finally, the Pension Education and Report Committee, which monitors the performance of the staff pension fund, had two members up for reelection for three-year terms: Allison Thrush and Kathy Martino. Although neither was present for the General Meeting, Committee Member Avi Fisher read their statements about their experience and desire to continue serving on the Committee. Both were reelected.



Ballot Closeup.

Next, an agenda item with Updates to the Guide to the General and Annual Meetings, which fixed typos and clarified “mailed” to “emailed,” among other minor edits, was also passed.

The Presentation of the Minutes followed and there were no corrections. Finally, the Board of Directors accepted the advice of the members present and unanimously accepted the election and agenda votes.

With the meeting over, attendees exited into the humid air in Prospect Park.