

The Board determined the following discussion items for the Working Meeting, which was agreed to take place on July 12th, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. at Sasona:

- Board Officer Elections
- Discussion on increasing racial diversity in Austin cooperative community
  - CTAP Partnership with ROC-USA

The Board determined the following discussion items for the Voting Meeting, which was agreed to take place July 24th, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. at Sasona:

- Check-in
- Review of minutes
- Discussion on increasing racial diversity in Austin cooperative community
  - CTAP Partnership with ROC-USA
  - Grant application authority
  - Membership Survey Results
- Board officer description bylaw amendments
- Require house treasurers and bookkeepers to communicate questions to Natalie San Luis and not the paid bookkeepers because it would be more efficient/cheaper

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

### **Working Meeting July 12th at Sasona (minutes by Indya)**

Meeting started around 7:40pm. Gatlin is our new board rep from La Reunion. Everyone was present:

Natasha  
Natalie  
Josh  
Gatlin  
Trip  
Indya

We voted on officers of the board to take certain positions.

Chair: Joshua 4 in favor 1 abstaining

Treasurer: Gatlin 4 in favor 1 opposed (Gatlin)

Secretary: Indya 5 in favor

HR: Trip 4 in favor 1 abstaining

Note: we may need to review our bylaws in a systematic way due to issue with not having defined a term for the election process. Question over whether you can vote for multiple people.

*Discussion on Increasing Racial Diversity in Austin cooperative community*

Natasha and Natalie have talked about this before. Part of Natasha's advocacy work. The question is why are there not a lot of people of color who live at co ops?

Ideas:

- People in general don't know about co ops, minorities might not know just bc they are proportionally less people
- Segregation of communities of color - possible outreach in the future when we have openings to advertise to these communities
- Non student co ops started in student co ops which are mostly white, colleges mostly white
- Austin's demographics changing to be mostly white
- Units don't become available on a consistent schedule with non student co ops, easier to get into one if you have the privilege/finances of breaking your current lease to move in
- Perhaps focus on making existing communities of color into co ops/autonomous communities
- Even if your organization establishes itself as progressive, if there aren't people of color in a place they may not feel comfortable moving in
- Our cooperative values do resonate the most with people of color who may have experience with disenfranchisement and bad landlords etc. the need is there to retain ownership of communities and ensure protection of established communities
- Perhaps we are perceived as counterculture, not decent, too liberal, group housing: living together with people who are not family - all of which could turn off prospective members, perceived as not safe for those on the wrong side of privilege; taboo that is constraining minorities to behave in "acceptable" ways, being extra careful and polite
- The privilege to enjoy edginess
- Propagating ideas cross culturally goes both ways, co ops do carry certain stereotypes with them and part of education around co ops is breaking down those stereotypes
- However, idea of co ops as less safe spaces for marginalized people certainly true in some ways, co op community could help bring more people of color into the fold by looking at what behaviors and practices are unsafe for people of color but safe for white folks and really interrogate whether those practices and behaviors should be tolerated
- For example, white people generally have less fear of doing illegal activities than people of color Ex: dumpster diving and asking for food at restaurants can be fun and subversive OR really scary and can draw the attention of police officers
- Maybe the way we do things now is not meeting other people's needs - perhaps expand in ways that communities of color would like rather than continuing to propagate a model that doesn't meet their needs
- Co ops may not be meeting marginalized people where they are at and providing what they need, perhaps help by empowering other communities with resources to take reins for themselves - are co ops as they are now a goal or a means?
- Co ops don't necessarily have to look like a group housing model (which can be perceived as more hippie etc.) La Reunion is a good example of this vs. Sasona
- Maybe CHEA is not networked with people in Austin who want to start equitable communities where they are already established to some extent, a great example of this

is ARNL - we can do a better job of sniffing out people who are already organizing in their communities and get in touch with them to offer resources as needed

- Could move to a network of more diverse houses with different structures and ownership models, we can be there to provide support and take the lead as a shared resource
- Things to make space safer could be to make space structurally to counterbalance structural racism in the world by explicitly writing down in the house rules acknowledging challenges of various people, getting specific about the problems
- Burden of people of color moving into a mostly white space having to explain the struggle to all of them would be an undue burden, reserve a space for them to just be and not have to explain by educating white members on the struggle so they act appropriately
- Sasona may price people out, it is price competitive for the neighborhood but the neighborhood is expensive and mostly white

### *CTAP Partnership with ROC-USA*

Natalie sent out materials before the meeting. Keeping people in the loop. ARNL is excited that we want to move forward with the partnership. Recap: ARNL is a group of residents in a mobile home community, abusive landlords. ROC-USA requires the mobile home communities it purchases to have a CTAP to help with organizing (which they already do) and ease them through the process of purchasing the property and all of the legal duties entailed, help to set up democratic governance. The reason ROC-USA hasn't purchased property so far is no one wants to be a CTAP. CHEA has agreed to step in but it is an intensive 3-6 month process and we don't have the capacity right now to do that. Natalie has been looking at grants. We do have a very compelling narrative, good for optics re: gentrification and affordable housing. Hopeful that we can get a grant to get through certification process. Once we do that ROC-USA will come here, and will fly Natalie and maybe some of the Board out for additional training. Since CHEA is small, partnering with NASCO to become dual certified could work, but we haven't hashed out what that means. Once we hash out those details we would go to the NASCO board with a proposal. Hard conversation to get started because it's hard to know what resources we would want from NASCO when we don't know what the process will be like. Once Natalie has a better grasp on the details we can have a better idea of what conversation would look like with NASCO. Depending on how conversations go with ROC-USA we may not need NASCO to be on board. TBD. Natalie is going to discuss with established CTAPs.

Concerns: Natalie has never bought a property before and is in the dark about how that happens.

We need to *elect another NASCO properties rep*, Natalie emailed Stewards from both houses to solicit nominations but haven't received any yet. Email both houses and set a date for when the ballots go out. We elect a director to sit on NASCO's board of directors. Natalie will communicate with Stewards from both houses to get those ballots out!

With the *proposed Sasona grant writer officership position* - a member of Sasona wants to create a labor position for benefiting the house exclusively. Natalie emailed him explaining that

Sasona is not technically an organization and it would be hard to get a grant. Secondly, it could create a problem for CHEA by competing for grants or negatively affecting reputation with people we are asking for money. Natalie recommends that this should go before the board to resolve - we can ask him to come to the next meeting. We have to make sure that we are legally compliant. Any person seeking a grant has to work with the Board which has final say over which applications go out so that we maintain control over our reputation and legal liability. Perhaps house officers could help do grant research but work closely with the Board who would ultimately submit it as CHEA.

Interested in further *round tables* to discuss community advocacy and co ops, perhaps at one of the houses? Put it on Sasona's agenda to see if we would be comfortable hosting a round table. Keep the conversation going while people are working with related issues, like the mayor asking for input from displaced persons in Austin.

*Membership survey*: see report, discuss next time. Next meeting changed to July 24th at 7:30 at Sasona.