

WELL CO-COM MINUTES, FEB. 20, 2012

Present: CC members Kimbal, Bill, April, Holly, Peter, Madge (Laura absent);
Guests Pat, Jane, Beth, Tim, Margaret Koster, Ron Cole, Steve Scalmanini, Annie
Esposito, and Richard Cooper
Peter facilitating; notes by Madge

Minutes of Jan. 16, 2012, were approved.

1. **Move to Amend:** Margaret Koster described the nation-wide efforts to get citizens' votes supporting amending the Constitution to end corporate personhood, of which Mendocino County's proposed ballot measure is part. The measure will be ready for signatures hopefully later this week, with a June deadline to get on the November ballot. If passed, it will "instruct our elected representatives to defend Democracy from the corrupting influence of corporate power by passing legislation and resolutions to abolish corporate personhood..." and clarifying that "money is not speech." The C.C. approved endorsing this measure. Peter and Margaret will write an article for TWN and the WELL newsletter, possibly using Tom Wodetski's talking points. Tim raised a concern about whether such C.C. actions should get prior notice to the membership.

2. **Local Wealth, Co-ops, etc.:** Madge introduced the idea that WELL might consider sponsoring a local investment group, with a goal of helping stimulate local businesses that meet appropriate criteria as to sustainability, local benefits, etc. This might supplement the start-up services that Ron O. is promoting at the Railroad Center. It also would offer a way to invest locally, albeit with higher risk than banks.

Richard Cooper, head of the Mendo-Lake Credit Union and also on the board of EDFC, gave excellent information on EDFC as well as other bank, credit union, and agency groups that handle business loans. EDFC passes gov't. funds out in loans, with usually 20 years to repay the gov't (USDA or IRL). With today's economy, several large loans have defaulted (true for other similar entities, such as Arcata EDC as well). It's "not for the feint-hearted," says Cooper, and you want to keep a reserve (out of the interest repaid on the loans) for such circumstances

Important questions include whether this can be legally set up under a non-profit organization, how to adequately vet potential loans, how to spread the risk (for example co-invest with EDFC or others), what kind of return would investors expect, etc. Ron Cole suggests getting thousands to invest small amounts (say \$100) instead of relying on large investments. He also notes that the Mondragon bank was the "gatekeeper" to coordinate new businesses to be synergistic and not competitive with each other.

The consensus of the C.C. is to further explore these issues at a public forum on Mar. 25. Madge, Jane & Holly will plan the event.

3. **Transition Town funds/Grange projector:** Pat & Peter polled all TT participants and received virtually unanimous OK to transfer their remaining funds (\$733.65) to WELL, earmarked toward helping fund the Grange projector equipment. The CC approved adding to that in order to allocate \$850 to the Grange, provided that the projector equipment be accessible for WELL events and that the Grange allow WELL use of the Grange facility for up to 12 events. It was noted this seems like a "win-win" idea and furthers the informal partnership of Grange & WELL on their similar missions. Holly & Peter will draft the proposal to go to the next Grange meeting.

Note that Feb. 25th is a volunteer work day at the Grange.

4. **Emergency Kit Day:** Holly is recruiting other folks excited to help on this, as well as local businesses to participate and sell various kit supplies.

5. **Label GMOs Initiative:** This statewide initiative (that the CC endorsed Jan. 16) is now in signature-gathering. Volunteers should contact Sara O'Brien.

6. **Keep the Code:** This involves a proposed zoning code change that would allow mineral processing (e.g. asphalt plant) at the Harrison quarry as well as potentially other heavy industrial uses county-wide (e.g. oil refineries on the coast). Margaret Koster reports that there are on-going hearings at County Planning and Board of Supes; letters or attendance are encouraged. Steve Scalmanini will make sure we get notices.

7. **Bypass:** Madge reports that the Corps of Engineers issued the wetlands permit, but that there are still unresolved conditions and potential legal actions before the Bypass is a "done deal". This will be a hot issue in coming months! (Steve S. will send Madge copies of recent media coverage.)

8. **Community Alliance:** Jane announces that a group has been meeting to support a sustainable Willits future and to help elect City Councilmembers who will lead toward that goal. The next Alliance meeting is Mar. 12, 6:30 at the Grange. All are invited.

9. **Newsletter Ads info:** Holly did a sample spread sheet; possibly can get same info in Quickbooks instead. Pat & Peter will work with Jennifer on getting good quality copy in newsletter & pro-rating if advertizers start late or get a credit.

10. **CC Election:** Bill announces he is doing more travel now and will give up his seat on the CC. His position will be the third opening to be filled at the Mar. 25 meeting, with Madge & Peter both running for re-election.

11. **Next CC Meeting, Mar. 5:** We decided to hold an extra meeting on Mar. 5, with Holly volunteering to facilitate. (We still have a meeting scheduled Mar. 19.) Following are pending agenda items from this and prior CC meetings:

- WELL seed grants follow-up
- Now & Then Films asking WELL to show economy films
- Farm-to-school programs at Brookside School
- Table for WHAT Walk
- Garden Tour
- Planters on W. Commercial
- Member follow-up & polling
- Website update/computer hardware?
- Events procedure template
- Potential co-op rebuild store in Willits
- "State of WELL" flyer &/or ads