



Bill Lindeke &lt;blindeke@gmail.com&gt;

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## Seward email to staff

1 message

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**Marjaan Sirdar** <popsemcee@gmail.com>  
To: Bill Lindeke <blindeke@gmail.com>

Wed, Jun 3, 2015 at 5:49 PM

Bill, here is the letter from Seward to their staff. It was sent by an anonymous employee who is "very supportive of your efforts, and appreciate that employee wages and the right to collectively bargain were included."

I will follow up later with contact names of member/owners for you to interview as soon as I get their consent.

Marjaan

**From:** Nick Seeberger  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 28, 2015 6:19 PM  
**To:** Nick Seeberger  
**Subject:** Community Engagement Update

Dear Staff,

I am writing to inform you about an active social media campaign encouraging Seward Co-op to enter into a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with CANDO, the neighborhood organization of the Central neighborhood. At the board meeting on Tuesday, May 26, a few owners presented the board with a letter that listed approximately 150 owners and their owner numbers as signatories. They continue to solicit additional owners to sign the letter and may reach out directly to staff and owners via social media or in the store.

Seward Co-op and the parties requesting a CBA have similar interests. We are all interested in fair compensation and treatment of staff, a diverse group of employees who reflect the neighborhood we are moving into, and investment of co-op resources and expertise back into the Central and Bryant neighborhoods. Since June of 2013, we have engaged the community and been transparent about our willingness to create a shared vision of the impacts the Friendship store will have on the neighborhoods it serves. We have attended dozens of meetings in the intervening months. As you may know, Seward has also implemented many of the suggestions that have been made as a result of this community engagement. We will continue to reflect on community feedback and adapt accordingly leading up to the store's opening.

In June 2014 we were asked by both Bryant Neighborhood Organization (BNO) and Central Neighborhood Development Organization (CANDO) to discuss the Friendship store. While we heard little from CANDO, we started a positive and productive relationship with the BNO. They were instrumental in our ability to move two of the four houses on the site, which was a concern of the community.

To the surprise of the co-op, CANDO eventually took the lead on forming a CBA task force that organized several meetings last fall. Neither the co-op nor its owners were ever invited to participate in these conversations, nor was BNO kept in the loop

regarding their activities. This led BNO and the co-op (Sean, Raynardo and LaDonna) to start conversations about the creation of a separate CBA. In that dialogue we came to the conclusion that a CBA was not the right way to approach the concerns heard by BNO and the co-op over the past two years. That is when the idea for creating a mutual benefits agreement (MBA) was developed. We invited CANDO to join this process, and they are interested in being a part the conversation.

To create the MBA, BNO invited the co-op to speak at their spring neighborhood meeting on April 25. A group of activists from around the city attended and disrupted the meeting. After this meeting the co-op and BNO both agreed that it was best if we put the conversation toward a shared vision and an MBA on hold until spring of 2016. Putting this MBA on hold also allows us to focus on two successful openings of our new businesses. As we draw closer to the opening of the Friendship store, we look forward to re-entering conversations regarding the development of an MBA for our Friendship store. In the meantime we are committed to listening and responding to the community's needs. After all it is a part of our Ends statement:

*Seward Co-op will sustain a healthy community that has:*

*Equitable economic relationships,*

*Positive environmental impacts, and*

*Inclusive, socially responsible practices.*

We will continue to use the co-op Ends as our guide as we grow and expand.

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**NOTE:** If you are contacted to lend your support or encounter discussions regarding this issue on social media, we encourage you not to engage. The co-op has a policy in place to address issues that arise on social media, and we ask that all issues are handled by the co-op's Marketing team. Please know that any engagement made on social media by owners or employees of the co-op may be construed as the opinion of the co-op as a whole. It is important to streamline all communications surrounding this issue in order to provide a united front and clear message.

If approached in the store, I encourage you to share that the co-op is, has been, and always will be a community cooperative, owned by our customers and dedicated to being a responsible community partner. We will resume our work with BNO and CANDO in the spring of 2016 to create a shared vision of the future and articulate the co-op and the community's role in it.

In Co-operation,

Nick Seeberger

Sean Doyle

Nick Seeberger // Co-op Operations Manager

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