

Minutes of the Tuesday, February 27, 2024 Park Slope Food Coop General Meeting

The monthly General Meeting (GM) of the Park Slope Food Coop (PSFC) was held at ShapeShifter Lab (837 Union Street, Brooklyn, NY) on Tuesday, February 27, 2024, beginning at 7:15 p.m. A few weeks beforehand, an announcement about the scheduled meeting and the agenda were posted on the PSFC website, foodcoop.com, inviting members to participate. Meeting materials were made available to all Coop members by email before the meeting. Chair Committee members Imani Q'ryn and Josef Szende served as chair and secretary.

Open Forum

Topics raised by members included requests for an update on locating a venue to hold a GM discussion about boycotting Israeli products, the expression of opinions on boycotting Israeli products to protest the war in Gaza, and a request that membership receive more notification about upcoming GM proposal items.

Financial Report and General Coordinators' (GC) Reports

GC Anne Herpel made a report which included a number of updates:

- Progress is being made to find a venue to rent for a GM discussion on a boycott of Israeli products.
- Failure to find a childcare insurance carrier, despite months of effort to do so, thereby preventing the return of childcare at the Coop.
- Efforts being made to enable the type of local advertising, previously done using the stairwell hall walls prior to 2020, to be done in the *Linewaiters' Gazette*, as the hallway exit must not be obstructed due to Fire Department of New York and New York State Insurance Fund's rules.
- New area coordinator hires.

General Manager, GC and treasurer Joe Holtz presented a preliminary (due to the ongoing annual audit) financial report, referring to notes and statements for the 52-week period ending 1/28/24. GC Joe Szladek made a report regarding the new electronic shelf labels. The meeting discussed the reports.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

Agenda item 1 – Proposal – Revisions to the Procedures that Govern the Coop's

Disciplinary Process

Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) members Deb Magocsi, Grace Cosachov Protos and Helen Koh presented the proposal, referring to two documents that had been made available to attendees prior to the meeting: the current Dispute Resolution Procedures (as amended February 27, 2018) and the proposed revised Dispute Resolution Procedures. After discussion, a motion was made by Deb that the GM approve the proposed revised rules. Member Jesse Rosenfeld raised an amendment: to insert the word xenophobia at the bottom of page 4 (Article III, Paragraph D, number 6), which was voted down by member hand count. Member George Olken moved "to table the vote until there is a public, some form of hearing made available to Coop members outside of the GM," which was voted down by member hand count. After further debate, the members voted by ballot to approve the new procedures proposed by the DRC, with 115 in favor and 5 opposed. The approved Dispute Resolution Procedures have been attached to this meeting minutes.

Presentation of Minutes

Coop secretary Elizabeth Tobier presented the minutes of the January 30, 2024 GM, which were approved by general consent.

Board of Directors' Meeting

Brandon West chaired the Board of Directors' meeting. Four board members were present: Joe Holtz, Viren Mehta, Imani Q'ryn and Brandon West. Tim Hospodar and Shayna Moliver were absent. All members of the board present voted in favor of accepting the advice of the members on the minutes of the January 30, 2024 GM. All members of the board present voted in favor of accepting the advice of the members on agenda item 1, Proposed Revisions to the Procedures that Govern the Coop's Disciplinary Process.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:01 p.m.



Elizabeth Tobier, Secretary
Park Slope Food Coop
Brooklyn, NY
February 29, 2024
(Approved by the March 26, 2024 PSFC GM)

PARK SLOPE FOOD COOP

Dispute Resolution Procedures

As adopted October 25, 2005; most recently amended at the February 27, 2024 GM

I.	INTRODUCTION	Page 2
II.	COMMITTEES INVOLVED	Page 2
III.	PROHIBITED CONDUCT	Page 4
IV.	DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS	Page 6
V.	HEARING OVERVIEW	Page 9
VI.	HEARING CHRONOLOGY	Page 11
VII.	COMMUNICATION	Page 13
VIII.	CONFIDENTIALITY	Page 14
IX.	RECORD-KEEPING	Page 15
X.	METHOD FOR AMENDING THESE PROCEDURES	Page 15

I. INTRODUCTION

The Park Slope Food Coop (Coop) Dispute Resolution Procedures ("Procedures") are intended to safeguard the Coop, its members, and its fiduciary interests in a fair manner, by:

- A. Enumerating the rules to which all members are subject;
- B. Setting forth a clear and explicit system for the resolution of disputes among members; and
- C. Providing a fair and transparent process to determine whether a member has violated Coop rules and, if so, to determine the appropriate consequence for that violation.

The aim of this process is to uphold and protect the values of the Coop by investigating reports of member misconduct and conflicts, and by recommending and implementing respectful solutions to issues reported to the Dispute Resolution Committee.

Members of the Coop who have violated the standards of conduct of the Coop are held accountable and are subject to Coop disciplinary action as provided in these Procedures.

ABOUT THE COOP COMMUNITY

The Park Slope Food Coop is a member-owned and operated food store. Working members build trust through cooperation and teamwork. We strive to be a responsible and ethical employer and neighbor. We are a part of and support the cooperative movement. We are committed to diversity and equity. We oppose discrimination in any form. We strive to make the Coop welcoming and accessible to all, and to respect the opinions, needs and concerns of every member. We seek to maximize participation at every level, from policy-making to running the store. We welcome all who respect these values.

II. COMMITTEES THAT ASSESS AND RESOLVE DISPUTES AND MISCONDUCT

The functions of the Dispute Resolution Committee, the Hearing Administration Committee, and the Hearing Officer Committee are to assess and provide solutions to member misconduct in accordance with these Procedures, to recommend revisions to these Procedures, and to make recommendations to the General Coordinators and/or the General Meeting with respect to improvements in Coop operations and security.

The Dispute Resolution Committee, Hearing Administration Committee, and Hearing Officer Committee shall act independently in fulfilling their committee's purpose. Decisions are to be made by majority vote of the members of each Committee, with a quorum required. A quorum shall be more than 50% of each Committee's membership.

Up to two Coordinators may serve in an advisory capacity on each committee.

The Dispute Resolution Committee, the Hearing Administration Committee, and the Hearing Officer Committee shall be composed of their members at the time of the adoption of these Procedures. Thereafter, each of these committees shall be responsible for filling any future committee vacancies by advertising for and interviewing prospective members and then selecting proposed new members for election by the General Meeting.

A. DESCRIPTION AND MISSION OF THE COMMITTEES

Members of the following committees shall be elected by the Coop General Meeting to serve renewable three-year terms. A member's work on these committees shall be credited to the member's work requirement.

1. DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

The Dispute Resolution Committee ("DRC") shall consist of up to 16 and no fewer than seven members.

The purpose of the DRC is to facilitate the resolution of disputes among members. The DRC is responsible for the review, investigation, and disposition of complaints of member misconduct. Complaints received regarding the conduct of most Coop staff will be referred to the General Coordinators, while complaints regarding the conduct of a General Coordinator will be referred to the Personnel Committee. Complaints regarding the conduct of another Coop committee or of its members in fulfilling its committee's mission shall be referred to that committee.

The DRC may impose a probationary period upon newly-elected members and is empowered to resign committee members whom the DRC deems, by a majority vote, are not fulfilling their committee responsibilities.

2. HEARING ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Hearing Administration Committee (HAC) shall consist of up to five and no fewer than three members. The purpose of the HAC is to perform those administrative functions necessary to arrange and facilitate Hearings as provided in Sections V and VI.

3. HEARING OFFICER COMMITTEE

The Hearing Officer Committee (HOC) shall consist of up to nine and no fewer than five members.

The purpose of the HOC is to conduct and facilitate Hearings as provided in Sections V and VI. The HOC shall select three of its members to conduct each Hearing. One of the three Hearing Officers shall preside over each Hearing. The Presiding Hearing Officer shall ensure that the Hearing proceeds in an efficient and unbiased manner. The Hearing Officers will also decide upon final disciplinary actions by majority vote.

III. PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Any member found to have committed or aided in the commission of any act of misconduct set forth below is subject to DRC action:

A. VANDALISM, including but not limited to:

1. Vandalizing or damaging Coop equipment, inventory, or supplies;
2. Making inventory unsalable.

B. THEFT OF PRODUCT, including but not limited to:

1. Shoplifting or stealing or removing property belonging to the Coop or to a Coop member, either from the Coop or from any venue being used by the Coop;
2. Consuming food without paying for it;
3. Failing to pay for all items that are checked out.

C. THEFT OF SERVICE, including but not limited to:

1. Falsifying work or attendance records, including claiming work credit after working less than a full shift;
2. Failing to fulfill the Coop's work requirement, including failure to make a good faith effort to resolve a negative shift credit balance;
3. Failing to perform work duties in a conscientious and deliberate manner, including but not limited to excessive use of mobile electronic devices, leaving the building without notifying the shift supervisor, shopping for more than three items during one's shift.

D. HARASSMENT, including but not limited to:

1. Knowingly making a false report against another member;
2. Hostile, aggressive, offensive, or threatening conduct or other inappropriate behavior toward another person;
3. Unwanted physical contact toward another person;
4. Gender bias;
5. Physical or verbal conduct which threatens or endangers the health and/or safety of another person;
6. Racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist, discriminatory, or other harmful conduct.

E. DISRUPTION, including but not limited to:

1. Disrupting or obstructing Coop activities;
2. Parking, loading groceries, or having any vehicle (including car service) stand in front of the firehouse, in the designated FDNY parking spaces, or in any other way block the firehouse driveway;
3. Leaving a vehicle unattended or otherwise blocking the street, sidewalk, or loading zone in front of the Coop;
4. Entering the Coop other than through the designated main entrance;
5. Failure to adequately supervise the conduct of a guest;
6. Unauthorized presence in the basement, receiving areas, or merchandise coolers.

F. FRAUD, including but not limited to:

1. Shopping while otherwise prohibited by using another member's number or having another member shop on one's behalf;
2. Permitting or enabling suspended members or non-members, including guests and Authorized Non-Member Shoppers, to shop;
3. Allowing a suspended member or non-member to use one's membership card to enter the Coop and/or make a purchase;
4. Shopping for a suspended member or for a non-member, including dividing purchases across two or more receipts;
5. Concealing adult household members;
6. Shopping for a business;
7. Providing fraudulent documents or intentionally providing incorrect information such as parental leaves of absence, temporary leaves of absence, or disability;
8. Switching of price tags or mislabeling items;
9. Misrepresenting the price or furnishing false information about merchandise that is being purchased or returned.

G. OTHER UNCOOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR, including but not limited to:

1. Failing to pay Coop fees, member investments or balances due in a timely manner;
2. Failing to present membership card or equivalent as required, including to entrance workers, checkout workers, and upon request of any Coop staff member;
3. Failing to comply with health and safety guidelines issued by the Coop;
4. Entering the Coop or any venue being used by the Coop while under DRC suspension;
5. Failing to cooperate with a DRC investigation;
6. Failing to comply with a duly imposed DRC action;
7. Violating the confidentiality of any DRC proceeding. It is considered extremely uncooperative to divulge the identity of any participant in a disciplinary proceeding without their consent.

IV. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

A. COMPLAINT SUBMISSION

Any member may start the dispute resolution process by bringing a complaint against another Coop member. The complaint should include a detailed description of the alleged conduct, including dates, times, and names or descriptions of the parties involved. All complaints should be submitted to the Dispute Resolution Committee as soon after the incident as possible, preferably within seven days of the alleged prohibited conduct. A complaint may be submitted by email to the DRC at FoodCoopDRC@gmail.com, brought or sent to the DRC Mailbox located in the Membership Office, or may be submitted to a Coordinator. Complaint forms are available in the Coop's Membership Office, but are not required when submitting a complaint.

B. INVESTIGATION BY THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION COMMITTEE

After a complaint is received, the DRC may conduct an investigation. The investigation shall be confidential.

A complaint investigated by the DRC is randomly assigned to one or two members of the committee for investigation. The scope and method of the investigation will depend on the particular case, but generally, the DRC investigator collects copies of relevant paperwork or other material relating to the case (e.g., sign-in book pages, receipts, video, past reports) and then conducts a fact-finding interview in person or by telephone with the complainant, the accused, and available witnesses as necessary.

After completing the investigation, the DRC investigator presents the case to the committee. The committee may suggest further investigative actions. After any such actions are taken, the committee discusses the facts and issues as presented and then suggests a potential resolution. The full committee reviews and assesses all cases that come before it.

If the committee concludes that the complaint has merit, and that DRC action is warranted, the DRC shall take any Dispute Resolution Actions as described in Section IV C which they determine to be appropriate. The investigator will then notify the accused of the DRC's resolution.

If the committee concludes that no action is warranted, the case shall be closed.

C. DISPUTE RESOLUTION ACTIONS

After an investigation has been completed, the following actions may be taken by the DRC toward a member found to have committed any act of prohibited conduct set forth in Section III above, or any other act of misconduct that violates the rules of the Coop.

DRC actions may diverge from Coop attendance policies available to the general membership.

1. TEMPORARY HOLD ON MEMBERSHIP DURING INVESTIGATION

If a member fails to respond to and speak with a DRC investigator during the investigation process where efforts have been made to reach them through email, phone, or regular mail, the investigator may place a temporary hold on the accused member's Coop membership status. Under a temporary hold, the member will not be allowed to enter the Coop or any venue being used by the Coop for any reason until the member has responded to and spoken with the investigator.

2. WARNING

A verbal or written notice to the member that they have violated a rule of the Coop and advising them to refrain from further similar conduct in the future.

3. MEDIATION

The DRC may recommend mediation to resolve conflicts among members. Coop members who are certified community mediators or experienced professional mediators shall mediate disputes. Mediators may choose to co-mediate cases if deemed appropriate.

Mediation is a voluntary, confidential, and non-adversarial conflict resolution process with an impartial party. The role of the mediator is to listen and understand each party, facilitating the conversation to help the parties come to a solution that works best for them. A mediator is not a judge and will not decide the outcome. The mediator guides and supports the conversation for the parties to work through their conflict. An exception to confidentiality is the disclosure of credible information concerning abuse or serious threat of harm to anyone.

If the parties come to an agreement, the parties and the mediator may memorialize the agreement in writing. The agreement will be shared with the DRC and placed in the case file.

The DRC may take into account the written agreement to determine the outcome of the case. If agreement is not reached, the mediator shall inform the DRC that the mediation has ended without agreement. The Coop understands that no particular outcome is guaranteed and parties shall not be penalized for lack of agreement. The Coop or the parties shall not hold mediators liable for not reaching a particular result.

4. RESTITUTION

Demand that the member provide compensation for loss, damage or injury to the Coop, to any venue being used by the Coop, or to Coop property, in the form of work and/or monetary or material replacement.

5. PRE-HEARING SUSPENSION

When the DRC sends an accused member notice of an appealable sanction as described in Section IV C, a Pre-Hearing Suspension shall be imposed upon the accused member, including their household. Pre-Hearing Suspensions are mandatory in complaints that involve imminent danger to the Coop or suggest potential financial loss or threatened or actual violence, and in cases involving an accused member's failure to comply with a previously imposed DRC action. In all other cases, lifting a Pre-Hearing Suspension is within the DRC's discretion. Notice of a Pre-Hearing Suspension shall be given to the accused member by email and/or by mail.

6. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION

Suspension of the member and their household from the Coop, including any venue being used by the Coop, for a time period of less than one year, after which the member and their household are eligible to return.

7. WORK-SLOT ADJUSTMENTS

Including but not limited to the assignment of additional make-up work slots.

8. SECOND VIOLATION

If a member has been sanctioned after a Hearing and a subsequent violation of a Coop rule by the same member is reported to the DRC after the time of the first violation, and if, after investigation, the DRC concludes that the rule has been violated, the DRC will report its conclusion of violation in writing to the HOC. The HOC will then determine the appropriate sanction, which may include suspension and/or expulsion without a Hearing.

The following DRC actions are contestable except where otherwise noted:

9. WORK-SLOT REASSIGNMENT

The denial of assignment to work on a particular committee or particular job, or assignment to a different committee or job.

10. DRC SUSPENSION

Suspension of the member and their household from the Coop, including any venue being used by the Coop, for a time period of longer than one year, after which the member and their household are eligible to return. Conditions for re-admission including, but not limited to, restitution and work-slot adjustments, may be specified.

11. RESIGNATION

The DRC may recommend that a member resign from the Coop. Resignation is permanent and applies to the member's entire household. The DRC shall inform the Coordinators of any such resignations.

Resignation is not contestable when a member is found to have committed theft of merchandise or property from the Coop or its environs.

D. MEMBER RESPONSE TO DISPUTE RESOLUTION ACTIONS

For any matter where a Dispute Resolution Action has been taken, the accused member may respond in writing. Any such response will be added to the Coop file on the matter.

When the DRC takes a contestable action as described in Section IV C 9-11, the accused member shall have the right to seek resolution of the matter through Mediation.

When the DRC seeks a sanction of DRC Suspension for longer than one year or other contestable action as described in Section IV C 9-11 and the matter has not been resolved through Mediation, the accused member shall have the right to challenge the sanction at a Hearing. The decision issued by the HOC at the conclusion of a Hearing is final. There is no further appeal process.

A Hearing shall be scheduled only upon the written request of the accused member, which must be received by the DRC no later than 21 days from the date of the DRC's notification to the member of its sanction.

V. HEARING OVERVIEW

Hearings conducted under these Procedures are member-led community processes to determine only a member's Coop membership status. They are not trials, nor are they civil or criminal proceedings.

The HAC and the HOC shall be responsible for managing the Hearing. The HAC shall provide a written agenda to all participants. The presiding Hearing Officer shall ensure that the Hearing is conducted in a fair manner, that proper procedures are followed, and that the rights and dignity of all participants are respected. In the event of a dispute among participants regarding the Hearing's adherence to these Procedures, the HAC shall determine its outcome.

In order to protect the confidential nature of the proceedings, the Hearing shall not be open to the public.

The Hearing process commences when a Coop member requests a Hearing in writing as set forth below in Section VII B. The HAC begins their work to organize all aspects of Hearings, including: scheduling Hearings through coordination with the accused member, members of the DRC and HOC who are involved in the Hearing, a staff liaison, and witnesses called by the DRC and/or the accused; physical organization of the Hearing room; and filing all documents related to any misconduct.

A. SETTING THE HEARING DATE

The DRC shall notify the HAC when a Hearing is required. The HAC shall select a Hearing date after consulting with all necessary participants, including the Coop's Scheduling Coordinator.

If the HAC determines that the accused member has not been cooperative in the date selection process, they will send the accused member a selection of possible dates for the Hearing by mail and email, with a deadline for their response of at least two weeks hence. Failure to respond by this deadline will result in the accused member's permanent resignation from the Coop.

Once a Hearing date is set by the HAC, it may be changed only if the accused member or another key participant cannot attend due to a documented emergency. The HOC shall determine the legitimacy of the excuse and the validity of the documentation.

B. HEARING PARTICIPANTS

Only members of the Coop are permitted to attend a Hearing. No non-Coop members shall be admitted. All participants must be confirmed with the HAC in advance of the Hearing.

1. Coop Advocate: The DRC shall designate one or more of its members to act as Coop Advocate. The Coop Advocate(s) shall present the case against the accused and demonstrate how the accused member has violated one or more Coop rules, introducing any evidence and/or witnesses to support these findings.
2. Accused Member: The accused member must attend the Hearing. In the event that they fail to attend, they will be deemed to have permanently resigned from the Coop unless and until they can legitimately establish a basis for their absence as determined by the HOC. Any documentation concerning this failure to appear must be received by the HAC prior to, or within 48 hours after, the scheduled Hearing time.

The accused member shall speak on their own behalf during the Hearing. However, they may apply to the HAC for permission to appoint a representative to speak for them if the accused member is unable. Such a representative is meant to give the accused member an equal opportunity at the Hearing. The representative must be over the age of 18, must be a current Coop member, and must have been a Coop member in good standing at the time of the accused member's alleged misconduct.

Reasons for seeking permission from the HAC for a representative include: the accused member requires a language translator or has a disability that would otherwise prevent them from speaking for themselves. The HAC's decision is final and not subject to appeal. This request must be submitted prior to scheduling the Hearing.

3. HOC Members: Three HOC members will determine the accused member's sanction, if any, at the conclusion of the Hearing.

4. Gazette Reporter: The HAC shall inform the Linewaiters' Gazette (Gazette) of all Hearing dates. The Gazette shall have the option to assign a reporter to the Hearing to confirm the accuracy of the HOC's report on the proceedings as described in Section VI. At their discretion, the Gazette reporter may write a factual report on the Hearing. Except with written permission, the report shall not identify any person whose name arises during the course of the Hearing. For the protection of the Coop, the DRC and/or the HOC may request that certain facts or statements of opinion not be published, and the Gazette shall comply with that request.
5. Other Participants: Witnesses for the DRC and/or the accused, HOC members assigned to the case, HAC members who are assigned to the Hearing, and advisory Coordinators. Witnesses may not be admitted to the Hearing room prior to their presentation. They may be asked to return to the Hearing room after their presentation in order to be available to respond to questions until dismissed by the Hearing Officers.
6. Training Members of DRC, HOC and HAC: Additional members of the DRC, HAC, and HOC may attend as non-participants for training purposes.

VI. HEARING CHRONOLOGY

A. OPENING THE HEARING

The Presiding Hearing Officer shall call the Hearing to order upon the arrival of the participants and shall briefly describe the Hearing procedures. In the event that the accused member does not appear within 30 minutes of the scheduled Hearing time, the Hearing Officer may extend the scheduled time or deem the member to have permanently resigned their Coop membership. If the accused member subsequently submits documentation pursuant to Section V B 2, the Hearing Officer may direct the HAC to schedule a new Hearing.

During the course of the Hearing, the Presiding Hearing Officer may remove for cause any person in attendance. If the accused member is removed for cause, that removal is deemed failure to attend, and the member will be deemed to have permanently resigned.

B. PRESENTATION OF EVIDENCE

The Coop Advocate(s) shall detail the information that underlies the accusations against the accused member, present the Coop's evidence against the accused member, and recommend that a finding be made that the accused member committed the violation(s) as charged. The accused member may then present evidence to disprove the accusations.

Evidence presented by the Coop Advocate(s) and the accused member may include, but not be limited to, witnesses' oral and/or written statements, Coop records and electronic recordings. Oral and/or written statements of character witnesses may be allowed at the discretion of the HOC.

A written statement may be used if the Coop Advocate(s) or the accused member represents that the witness is unavailable and that the statement was obtained from the witness.

If the accused member has taken part in a Mediation in connection with the complaint, those conversations remain confidential. The Coop Advocate and/or the accused member can share that a Mediation took place and no agreement was reached, but the contents are privileged and shall not be shared.

When the accused member has admitted, or does not contest, their violation of the Coop rules, but seeks to challenge only the Dispute Resolution Action issued by the DRC, the matter shall be heard at an abbreviated Hearing. In these abbreviated Hearings, the HOC shall limit the presentation of evidence to what is relevant to determine the appropriate disciplinary action for the accused member's violation of the Coop rules.

C. CLARIFYING QUESTIONS & POINTS OF INFORMATION

Following each witness statement, the Hearing Officers, accused member, and Coop Advocate may ask questions of any participant. Questions must be phrased in a way that seeks information or clarification. The Presiding Hearing Officer is responsible for ensuring that questions are proper, determining the appropriate time period for questions, and that the question period flows in an orderly and fair manner.

Throughout the proceeding, points of information may be offered via written note to the Presiding Hearing Officer.

D. REBUTTALS

After the Coop Advocate(s) and the accused member have made their presentations, either side may request, and the Presiding Hearing Officer may grant, time to respond to the substance of those presentations.

E. FINAL STATEMENTS

The Presiding Hearing Officer shall give each side the opportunity to make a final statement, with the accused member, or their representative, speaking first and the Coop Advocate(s) speaking last.

F. DETERMINATION OF FACTS

Following any final statements, the Hearing Officers will hold a recess for their deliberations. The Hearing Officers shall determine whether the accused member committed the violation(s) of Coop rules as charged. They shall decide by a majority vote. When the Hearing Officers have reached a decision, the Presiding Hearing Officer will reconvene the Hearing and announce their decision.

G. DETERMINATION OF SANCTION

If the Hearing Officers determine that the accused member did not commit any violation of Coop rules, they shall be immediately informed and will be declared a member in good standing.

If the Hearing Officers determine that the accused member committed a violation of Coop rules, the Coop Advocate(s) shall make a specific disciplinary recommendation. The accused member may respond.

The Hearing Officers shall then deliberate and determine the disciplinary sanction. They may announce their decision either at the close of the Hearing or within seven days of the close of the Hearing. The decision shall be memorialized in writing, sent to the accused member by certified mail, return receipt requested, and sent to the accused member and to the DRC by email.

The HOC shall inform the Coordinators of any change in the membership status of the accused member.

VII. COMMUNICATION

A. NOTIFICATION OF DRC HEARING ACTIONS

If the DRC concludes that the complaint has merit and the consequent DRC action is a contestable sanction, a letter shall be written to the accused member informing them of the complaint made, the nature of the charges, the DRC action, and setting forth the appeal process, including the requirement that a Mediation or Hearing be requested in writing within 21 days of the mailing of such written notice to the member.

The letter shall be mailed to the accused member by certified mail and by email and/or ordinary mail to the member's address as contained in the Coop's database.

The letter to the accused member should include a copy of the Park Slope Food Coop Dispute Resolution Procedures.

B. PRE-HEARING COMMUNICATION

In the event that the accused member elects to have a Hearing, the request will be forwarded to the HAC, who shall in turn inform the HOC.

The HAC shall be the sole point of contact between the accused member and the Coop from the time that a Hearing is requested until the Hearing commences. The HAC can call upon other committees and/or Coop staff to clarify procedural questions or to seek information needed to answer inquiries from the accused member. All other communication between the accused member and the Coop, including but not limited to Coop staff, the General Meeting, and the Linewaiters' Gazette, are prohibited.

VIII. CONFIDENTIALITY

A. Confidentiality Agreement Between the Park Slope Food Coop's Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) and the Equity Access and Community Committee (EACC)

The DRC and the EACC are charged with fostering and maintaining a Coop environment that is welcoming, safe, inclusive and fair. The DRC investigates complaints submitted to them of member misconduct while the EACC handles reports they receive of biased behavior.

Because of the potential overlap of their missions, the DRC and the EACC propose sharing relevant case-related confidential information when appropriate.

The strategy for sharing case-related confidential information includes the following parameters:

1. Representatives from the DRC and the EACC will be identified and authorized to act as the conduits of information exchange.
2. Any and all exchange of information will be considered on a case-by-case and need-to-know basis.
3. Conduit-representatives will determine, in collaboration with their committee members, whether information exchange is necessary and appropriate. They can also choose to decline exchange when it is deemed in the best interest of the case.
4. All information exchanged and the names of DRC and EACC members will be held in confidence.

B. WAIVING ANONYMITY

If an accused member voluntarily discloses the details of a DRC investigation in a public forum, they are considered to have waived their anonymity in all contexts. Other participants are no longer obliged to maintain the accused member's anonymity. This is retroactive to include all past proceedings and investigations involving them.

Should the accused member waive their anonymity, the DRC or General Coordinators may respond publicly to any public claims made regarding their case.

Waiving one's own anonymity does not mean that the anonymity of any other participant is waived. It is considered extremely uncooperative behavior if any member knowingly divulges the identity of any participant in a disciplinary proceeding without their consent. It is also considered extremely uncooperative behavior if a participant in a DRC Mediation violates the confidentiality of that Mediation.

IX. RECORD-KEEPING

The DRC shall maintain a confidential file of every reported incident in the Coop. In addition to the complaint and disposition of the case, the file may also contain witness statements, correspondence with witnesses, investigation notes, correspondence with the accused member, and statements of the accused member.

The HAC shall record Hearing proceedings. This recording shall be the official record of the Hearing and shall be maintained in the official Hearing file. This recording shall remain in the custody of the Coop in a secure location. No recording of a Hearing other than this official record is permitted.

The HOC and HAC may also maintain confidential files in the Coop. All files shall be maintained in locked file drawers with access limited to the DRC, HAC, and HOC members, and Coordinators working with any of these committees.

The HOC assigned to a Hearing shall provide a brief factual summary of the Hearing, including date, offense, and outcome of the proceeding, to be published in the Gazette. The summary shall preserve the confidentiality of all Hearing participants.

The HAC shall inform the Gazette of all Hearing dates. The Gazette may assign a reporter to observe the Hearing, confirm the accuracy of the factual summary to be published in the Gazette, and write their own report about the Hearing, if desired.

X. METHOD FOR AMENDING THESE PROCEDURES

The DRC may amend these Procedures from time to time by submitting the exact text of an amendment or a complete restatement for approval by the General Meeting. Upon approval by the General Meeting, the amendment or restatement shall become effective.

In order to protect the integrity and internal consistency of these Procedures, piecemeal amendments by individual members are discouraged. Nevertheless, any Coop member in good standing may propose an amendment to the Procedures by submitting the exact text of the amendment or a complete restatement to the DRC, HOC, and HAC with a brief explanation of the reason for the amendment.

The DRC, HOC, and HAC shall review the proposed amendment, and a delegation from the committees shall make good faith efforts to meet with the member proposing the amendment to discuss issues with the amendment and make suggestions. After meeting with the delegation from the DRC, HOC, and HAC and receiving comments, the member proposing the amendment shall submit the exact text of the amendment or a complete restatement, as revised, to the DRC, HOC, and HAC, with their brief explanation of the reason for the amendment. Within 30 days of receipt of such amendment as revised, the DRC, HOC, and HAC shall issue a written statement expressing its opinion regarding the advisability of the proposed change.

The member may then submit the proposal, which must include the exact text of the proposed amendment and the place in the Procedures where it is to be inserted (or a complete restatement), together with the brief explanation of the reason for the amendment, along with the written opinions of the three committees, to the General Meeting.

At the General Meeting, the Coop member and each committee shall be granted time to be heard. If the DRC, HOC, and HAC agree to the proposed amendment, the proposed amendment shall become effective upon approval of a majority of the General Meeting. If the DRC, HOC, or HAC disagree with the proposed amendment, the proposed amendment shall become effective upon the approval of a two-thirds majority of the General Meeting.