

Sweatfree Purchasing Consortium, Interim Steering Committee

May 5, 2009, 1-2pm Eastern

Present:

Bjorn Claeson, SweatFree Communities (facilitator)
Liana Foxvog, SweatFree Communities (note-taker)
Victoria Kaplan, SweatFree Communities
Betty Lamoreau, State of Maine
Roxana Dietz, State of Pennsylvania
Eric Dirnbach, UNITE HERE
Farshid Yazdi, City of Los Angeles

Vicki's transition:

Vicki: After 15 months working with SweatFree Communities full-time as Midwest Regional Organizer, Vicki will be transitioning to part-time work while attending graduate school. Her part-time work will focus on fundraising, communications, and other administrative activities.

Consortium status:

Bjorn: 10 public entities have committed to join the Consortium. Have not received the membership forms yet.

Update on independent monitoring contract:

Roxanne: Hoping to have a letter to the supplier tomorrow. Aiming to have contract in place by July 1. Cannot disclose additional information before the letter is out. The RFP includes open-ended line item so participating public entities may request additional services using it.

Company communications:

Betty: Sent letter to Neptune Uniforms, which is supplying Propper, a company featured in SweatFree Communities' new report "Subsidizing Sweatshops II." Neptune sent a letter to Propper and forwarded their response to Betty. Basically, Propper is claiming to uphold good conditions and that the report's assertions are false. The letter did not address the particular concerns that Betty had raised in her letter. Betty will respond to the supplier saying that the response was inadequate and will make additional requests. She will share the ongoing communications with this group. Betty said that this is a time when it would be nice to have an independent monitor for an investigation of the factory.

Question: Other communications with companies?

Roxana: Safariland responded saying they are committed to supporting employees' rights worldwide. Claims that mandated pregnancy tests ceased before the report's release.

Bjorn: Safariland/BAE and Propper responses were contrasting. SweatFree Communities has not received a direct response from Propper. Safariland/BAE asked to meet to discuss the

findings and responded to the particular concerns. Safariland/BAE says they ceased mandatory pregnancy tests a week after learning about it; the research partner in Mexico regards that as a victory.

Betty and Roxana: Want to be aware of other cities and states that are communicating with Propper and will share communications with each other.

Is the Consortium ready to engage with corporations as the Consortium?

Roxana: When the Consortium sends a letter to a supplier, it needs to be able to validate that the claims. Will be helpful to have our own monitoring and verification process in place.

Farshid: Information sharing, discussion, and coordinating steps is helpful. Not sure if we're ready yet to send letters to companies as the Consortium.

In person meeting:

The group agreed to look into holding an in-person meeting on Sept. 20 or 21 at Lake Tahoe, immediately before NASPO 2009 Annual Conference (Sept. 21-24).

(http://www.naspo.org/content.cfm/id/2009_annual)

The meeting will be ½ day or day-long.

Betty and Roxana both plan to be at NASPO. Farshid will request permission to attend the Consortium meeting.

Possible purposes of the meeting (to be finalized): Formalize steering committee and officers/roles of each representative, clarify decision-making structure, adopt by-laws, discuss tasks and timelines, etc.

Tasks:

- All: Pencil in both Sept. 20 and 21 on your calendar as it may be either day.
- Liana will confirm starting time of NASPO meeting.
- Bjorn will follow-up with other members of the committee about their availability.

Growing the Consortium:

What can we do to secure transitional funding?

Ideas:

- Joint letter to Department of Labor introducing the Consortium and asking for a meeting to discuss it further to see if there are resources to support it
- Write a letter to other state purchasing directors inviting participation in the Consortium, following up on contacts made at NASPO

Questions: Who is authorized to sign letters on behalf of the Consortium?

Decision: Betty Lamoreau / Chip Gavin. Betty will confirm with Chip who it will be.

Tasks: SweatFree Communities staff will prepare letterhead and information packet and share with all.

Next meeting:

Tuesday, June 2, 1-2pm Eastern / 10-11am Pacific

Preparation for that meeting:

- Packet of information, letterhead, sample letter (SFC staff)
- Follow up with others regarding their availability for Sept 20 or 21
- Confirm date for in-person meeting