

Prospect Park Co-op

COLLECTION SUMMARY

Collection number: B592, Accession #: 2021.217.001

Collection Repository: Hennepin History Museum
2303 Third Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Collection Title: Prospect Park Co-op

Dates: 1950-1996 (bulk 1970-1980)

Extent: 3 cubic feet (2 records carton, 1 Hollinger box, 1 scrapbook box)

Creator: Unknown

Language of Materials: English

ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY:

Prospect Park Co-op began in 1937 in Southeast Minneapolis. Ann Barnum, Mrs. Roth, Mrs. Weidner, Mrs. Visscher and Mrs. Haga were at the first meeting. At this time, Minneapolis was city of Co-ops. The aftereffects of the great depression was still occurring in 1937.

These five women began a food buying club where they would buy food in bulk and store it in their basement. They then charged 10% over the wholesale price of the item. The membership shares were \$5 each. As the operations grew, so did the bills and “advanced payments” by members were needed to be in good standing with the vendors. Mrs. Visscher’s basement was first used to store the food.

In the 1940s, World War II caused food shortages and made the co-op model difficult to manage. None the less, Prospect Park Co-op overcame this challenge by working with the government and accepted ration stamps from their members.

When rationing was over, the group grew to 80 members. The Co-op then banded together and bought a commercially zoned property at 1 27th Ave. Southeast, Minneapolis. They remodeled the top floor, rented out the second floor to the Prospect Park Nursery (and other non-profits organizations for meetings) and the ground floor was the food co-op in 1975.

Each member was expected to work three hours and attend meetings. The members were the employees and customers. This commitment was too much for some people and people resigned.

The issues of the 1970s were people not attending meetings and aging members. The Freeport house was treated as community property. Most of the 1980s minutes revolve around the issue of owning an old property. They didn’t want to profit off the sale of Freeport, In the 1990s, they sold the house and slowly moved to becoming a non-profit. Instead, the sales of the house funded the non-profit and eventually a foundation.

The minutes show an organization that had distinct goal of getting low-cost food to an organization that was obsessed with maintaining an aging commercial property. In 2014, the Prospect Park Co-op became legacy fund.

SCOPE & CONTENT:

This Co-op began in 1937 and this collection begins in the 1950s. There is a gap in the collection.

The archivist series is in box 1 & 3. It contains research notes, finding aids and redacted files. The membership files that are redacted are in box three. The archivist must give you permission to access these files.

The second series is administration and ranges from the 1950s to 1996. These documents focus on running the Prospect Park Coop and eventual Non-profit. The store management file is the only folder where prices of goods are written out.

The correspondence series ranges from 1967-1986. The topics written about are a New York Times article, AOI, Bylaws and real estate.

The Director's Manual series consist of two similar manuals. This is the reason there are two TOC folders. If you are interested in how this organization was run, you should look at this series.

The finance series ranges from 1950-1990s. It discusses the Land O Lakes investments, CDs, shares, reports, and audits.

The history series were items or documents that had historical items. These items are a coop published cookbook, an artwork and some of their publication.

The membership series is in two boxes (2 & 3) because the membership applications have sensitive information. Permission is required to access box 3. In box 2, there are documents given to new members, reports and resignation letters. These documents were fascinating to read.

The membership chair series was a binder that the membership chair used to manage membership. This would be of interest to anyone who wanted to see the innerworkings of the membership chair.

The minutes series range from 1970s-1996. The minutes show the transition from a food co-op to a non-profit and eventually a foundation. Most of the minutes talk about home ownership cost.

The non-profit series was research done to become a non-profit and other non-profits they worked with. The archivist suggests reading folder 83 because of the rich correspondence.

The publication series has ledgers and share books that were used to manage the co-op.

The real estate series ranges from 1967 to 1990. They purchased Freeport West to house the coop. The archivist thinks the aging members and the intense amount of work needed to keep up

the coop was a reason the house became such a burden. They sold the house in 1990 and used the money as a non-profit to aid the community.

The final series is taxes and ranges from 1970 to 1985. It covers property taxes, mortgages and government documents.

ACCESS:

This collection has file 96-101 restricted. The collection is otherwise open.

COPYRIGHT:

The researcher assumes the responsibility for ensuring copyright is followed. When and where possible the archive will provide information related to the copyright owners, but it will be the responsibility of the researcher to ensure copyright laws are followed. Requests for permission to publish material in this collection should be directed to the Archivist.

RELATED COLLECTIONS:

- Hennepin History Museum: 562-Prospect Park Neighborhood Collection, 590-Ann Barnum, 592-SEMPACC
- Minnesota History Center: Minnesota Food Cooperatives
- University of Minnesota: American heart Association (Maurice Visscher connection)

ACQUISITION:

This collection was donated by an unknown donor.

CONTENT LIST:

Series 1: Archivist Notes

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	1	Archivist Notes
3	94	Archivist Future Projects
3	95	Archivist Future Projects: Notes
3	96	Redacted Files

Series 2: Administration

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	2	1950s
1	3	1970 & 1980s
1	4	AOI & Bylaws
1	5	Foundation
1	6	Graphics
1	7	Membership
1	8	Store management

Series 3: Correspondence

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	9	1960s
1	10	1970s
1	11	1980s
1	12	Undated

Series 4: Director's Manual

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	13	TOC
1	14	Calendar
1	15	Rules
1	16	Duties
1	17	General
1	18	Finance
1	19	TOC 2
1	20	Rules 2
1	21	Duties 2
1	22	General 2
1	23	Finance 2
1	24	Rules & AOI 2
1	25	History 2

Series 5: Finance

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	26	1950s
1	27	1960s
1	28	1970s
1	29	1980s
1	30	1990s
1	31	Audits: 1960s
1	32	Audits: 1970
1	33	Audits: 1980s
1	34	Audits: Correspondence
1	35	Budget
1	36	Correspondence
1	37	Debts
1	38	Land O'Lakes
1	39	Loans
1	40	Shares

1	41	Extra Shares
1	42	Misc & undated
1	43	Treasurer Report 1
1	44	Treasurer Report 2

Series 6: History

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	45	Artwork
1	46	Bulletin
1	47	Cookbook
1	48	History of Co-op Movement
1	49	History of Prospect Park
1	50	Newspaper Article
1	51	Prospect Park Guide

Series 7: Membership

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
1	52	Misc.
1	53	New members
1	54	Reports
1	55	Resignation letters 1960-1967
1	56	Resignation Letters 1967
3	97	Resignation letter F. 1
3	98	Resignation Letter F. 2
3	99	Resignation letter F. 3
3	100	Resignation letter F. 4
3	101	Resignation Letter F. 5

Series 8: Membership Chair

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
2	57	Bylaws
2	58	Committees
2	59	General
2	60	Misc.
2	61	Member list 1
2	62	Member list 2
2	63	Withdrawal

Series 9: Minutes

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
2	64	1980s
2	65	1993-1994
2	66	1994-1995
2	67	Annual: 1970s
2	68	Annual: 1980s
2	69	Annual: 1990s
2	70	Board: 1960s
2	71	Board: 1970s
2	72	Board: 1980-1991
2	73	Board: 1991
2	74	CACA: 1990
2	75	Committee: 1960s
2	76	Committee: 1970

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
2	77	Misc.

Series 10: Non-profit

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
2	78	Co-op Future Articles
2	79	Feasibility Report
2	80	MN Association of Co-op
2	81	Prospect Park Community
2	82	PPERIA
2	83	Twin Cities Peace & Justice
2	84	Notes

Series 11: Publication

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
4		1960-1964 Ledger
4		Prospect Park Co-Op 1960-1965 Sharebook
4		Prospect Park Co-Op 1967 Sharebook

Series 12: Real Estate

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
2	85	Blue Prints
2	86	Empty Forms

2	87	Freeport West 1
2	88	Freeport West 2
2	89	Leases
2	90	Mortgage Values
2	91	Zoning

Series 13: Taxes

<u>Box No.</u>	<u>Folder No.</u>	
2	92	Folder 1
2	93	Folder 2