

Minutes  
Annual Meeting  
April 10, 2024

Attendees: Steve Deutsch  
Melinda Cirillo  
Michele Halstead  
Abby Selnick  
Corinna Carracci  
Rachel Rigolino  
Michael Cavaleri  
Kevin Saunders  
Stella Turk  
Lisa Mitten

**Others present: Max Olshansky of Topanga**

**Recording Secretary:** Melinda Cirillo

**Call to Order:** 10:07

**Agenda**

**Steve** greets the members and introduces Max from Topanga. Steve continues by noting that our current reusable container program is half effective because currently there is no tracking system. Folks are paying the \$1.00 "to go" fee or just not returning their containers. They are just not engaging with the program the way that we need them too. As we push toward zero disposable use items in all of our outlets, we have been trying to find a way to better track the containers. We have been working with Max for over a year about implementation and currently have signed a contract. **Steve** introduces Max.

**Max** begins the presentation of the Topanga ReusePass program. Max is one of the co-founders of Topanga. Topanga is a technology company on a mission to prove that sustainability and the right technology paired with the right operators can drive positive environment and economic benefits for business, campus etc. (The Topanga presentation is attached.)

**Stella Turk** comments that she loves the dashboard and asks what the containers are made of. **Max** states they are container agnostic. **Max** asks Steve who New Paltz purchases containers from. Steve says Ozzi and **Max** offers data on their containers. **Stella** then asks if a student uses the container for future reheating, is it safe. **Max** confirms they are microwave safe and adds the RFID tag are microwave safe as well. **Stella** asks if the chip is deactivated, will we know? **Max** states there is also a QR code that is on another part of the box which will keep the box usable, and if the RFID is deemed unusable it will be replaced for free.

**Max** finishes his presentation with a sentiment, they pride themselves with being our partners beyond the technology, from planning to launching to growing the program. New Paltz should expect communication with student sustainability ambassadors to increase excitement and information about the program through tabling and advertising. They will be on campus at launch, and they will continue to find ways to grow the program through incentives, promotions and impact reporting. **Max** asks if anyone has any additional questions. **Annalynn** asks about the penalization for not turning in a container in

three days? And who decides that Topanga, or the school. **Max** states that is decided by the campus, and the penalizations typically range from \$3- \$10. Topanga will work with New Paltz to help make a decision on what works best. **Max** adds if we decide to institute late fees, they handle that as well through Grub Hub. **Max** asks if we have made these decisions. **Steve** says no.

With no further questions **Steve** talks about introduction of the program in the Fall of 2024. **Steve** moves on to discuss the best methods to make the students comply with the program. **Steve** mentions that we are currently charging \$1.00 for to go materials if you're not using your container, which is having zero impact. **Steve** believes to get more people to use the program we need to have both late fees and higher to go fees. **Steve** asks Mike C. to discuss how, where and when we will implement. **Mike C** explains that they are trying to eliminate as much single use as possible, Elemt 93 will become 100% reusable packaging, the SUB will become 80%. **Mike** states they need to set up the scanners and install the RFID tags on the existing boxes, but for the customers it should be a seamless transition. **Mike** would like to see an increase our inventory and our return locations. **Mike** adds a final note that overall, the program is going to save the environment and save lots of money on paper goods and he feels we are going in the right direction.

**Steve** again reiterates the need to roll the program out in a systematic direction, he states the SUB and Element 93 were chosen partially because they have dish washing equipment in those locations. One of the biggest challenges to the program is the limited amount of dish washing equipment. The only real dish washing equipment is at Peregrine which is getting ready to close down. **Steve** notes that the main challenge is to get the containers clean and back into circulation, that is something for Mike to solve, he might have to add a graveyard shift in the SUB because that will be our best machine. **Max** adds he will help with the process and states their role at Topanga is to make sure operators are comfortable, even larger programs have started small to ensure that the teams have everything working. Once everyone is comfortable, we can grow the program and increase locations. **Kevin Sauders** asks is Topanga a tracking system on top of Ozzi and asks for clarification of Topanga vs Ozzi. **Steve** clarifies Ozzi is a container making company and is all about the containers only. The Ozzi return machines was their attempt at tracking returns, you returned you got a token, which you gave back the next time you got a container. **Steve** states the problem with that it was confusing, and tokens were easy to lose. Students would try it once or twice and be out of the system. **Max** says to think about Topanga as providing the technology in the background for New Paltz to operate a highly efficient program that encourages diners to return their containers and participate in the programs in retail environments where Mike and his team are doing lots of transactions. Topanga is providing a tracking system, so you are aware of where your assets are. **Kevin** then asks if our relationship with Ozzi be phased out if we find a different container company? **Mike** states the way we work the program is not going to change. The container drops and procedure will remain the same. **Steve** adds it could be confusing because we are removing the token system, so we need to make sure will clarify. **Mike** notes that Topanga will help with the return of the containers since we need to keep buying them because they are not being returned, which becomes very expensive. **Kevin** states he is confused why we would keep this elaborate vending machine when we could just throw them in a large cardboard box. **Steve** agrees and states it is something we might consider. **Steve** again agrees having the Ozzi machines might be confusing. **Max** adds Kevin brings up good points and this is something they are working on now. **Steve** clarifies with Max that New Paltz will be the first SUNY on the program!

**Steve** again mentions the need to determine what the cost of paper goods will be once the program is in place and what the fees will be, if any, for boxes not returned on time. **Steve** adds we can discuss it at the May board meeting and adds the \$1.00 fee is not discouraging anybody. Some institutions who are

doing this are currently charging more than a \$1.00, and we should consider the impact to students and how to keep people on the program. **Steve** states there is no cost for people to be on the program. **Max** signs off. **Steve** adds in over a year of negotiations we were able to reduce the cost of the program almost 100%. In year 1 it should cost us about \$40,000 and approximately \$25,000 every year thereafter. **Steve** states we will quickly recoup those costs in lost containers and packing materials. **Steve** is very excited and feels we can make a real difference. **Annalynn** asks if the cost of getting on the program going to be seen in the meal plan cost. **Steve** states in a generalized way yes, because it factors into our overall budget. **Steve** then adds it won't be driving up meal plan cost.

**Steve** shares a file with the board of survey results gathered by Bianca the food service representative. **Steve** reiterates the fact that next year we are looking for additional food service venues while PDH is shutdown. **Steve** adds the Terrace will be the new all you can eat, and they will be adding a small size version of PDH that will be operational seven days a week. **Steve** mentions the addition of Yadis to the Student Union as well as a new coffee concept to replace Starbucks, and possibly something at the Roost. **Steve** refers to the survey data. 200 students were surveyed, and the results indicate the students would like a chicken concept and more ethically diverse foods. When asked specific brands they wanted to see, Chipotle was number one. **Steve** mentions Chick-fil-A and other concepts like Panda Express and Panera were possible. The overall choice was Chipotle. **Steve** then says unfortunately Chipotle is not an option because they do not do college campuses but mentions the possibility of getting another Mexican Burrito concept. Bianca is once again polling the students based on the concepts we can have. **Steve** says we are including local places like Bubacoo's and Mexicali Blue and other places that are in Newburgh and Kingston as possibilities, as well as a couple of Sodexo Mexican concepts. **Steve** mentions its possible we could put this in the Roost or the Student Union, and states that he wanted to keep the board aware of what we were considering.

**Steve** mentions meeting with student groups who are interested in having more halal options, and again states that he wants to have an open conversation about the types of options we should be considering. **Steve** asks **Mike C** to discuss the increase in halal offerings on campus. **Mike** says that we will have a simply to go program which is our prepackaged foods that we make here on campus. They are available at every location. All simply to go options will have similar halal options, for example halal chicken, Caesar wraps, etc. **Mike** adds this will be rolled out in the next couple of weeks, and they are adding approximately 5 options. They also have an idea to make Simple Serving at PDH a halal station. **Mike** asks for feedback and clarifies they would be only serving chicken at that station going forward. In addition, **Mike** states they are also currently providing a kosher option in peregrine, and the microwave has been blessed by the rabbi. The Kosher Corner is prepackaged frozen meals that are isolated from everything else.

**Steve** adds the reason why **Mike** is going over this now is because one of the things that could go into the roost would be a concept like the Halal Brothers or Halal Shack, which are popular on college campuses. **Steve** adds his concern of making this effort to bring halal food to campus and not as equal for Kosher, he wants to be mindful of that and asks the board for their opinion. **Stella** asks if there is a crossover between halal and kosher? **Stella** adds at least you can have chicken that's both kosher and halal. **Steve** believes that is true and has been asking that question of some of the halal vendors or whether they can also be kosher. **Steve** adds he is unsure if vendors are particularly interested in maintaining and having the food be additionally blessed by a Rabbi. **Mike C** asks, halal can eat kosher, but kosher cannot eat halal. **Stella** adds without it also being kosher meat. **Steve** notes that the kosher standards are higher, they're stricter, and with halal, basically it just needs to be butchered the right way. **Stella** asks if you can combine dairy, meat and halal? **Mike C** and **Steve** say correct. **Steve** adds you can't

put non halal food in a halal place. **Mike C** explains that if you're cooking halal chicken on a flat top, that it can never be tainted by anything like a meat that's not halal, so they will have dedicated cook spots for those items. **Steve** asks for comments. **Steve**, asks if anyone thinks there might be push back if we put a halal concept in at the roost, let's say Halal Shack is a very popular college option. Syracuse University has like halal offered in almost every building. **AnnaLynn** says she sees for push back, and adds that you've taken the request from the MSA and other students on campus for halal food super seriously by engaging in all this research and holding that meeting with them, so it would almost be like penalizing them for the fact we do not have the facilities to maintain a kosher cooking kitchen. Which she doesn't feel they deserve even if we get the push back. **Steve** says we are going back to MSA and with the information and to show them we have take action as it relates to the halal options. **Steve** adds they are going to have the halal option on campus, and they will be informed of that, and notes that there will be a couple of Halal options and the kosher corner that exists in Peregrine dining hall. The question is if we up the game for Halal, which again, I think if we had a Halal Shack for instance, in the Roost, it would be great for all students, I'm just worried that then if we're doing that much more for Halal that there's going to be some sort of negative reaction. **Stella** understands Steve's point regarding the political ramifications about doing that but is also sensitive to the students requests and the fact that kosher is so much more difficult that it's very hard to translate when people are using food to sort of make a statement. **Steve** appreciates the feedback notes again that there are many options for what to put in the Roost, so he just wanted to take the temperature regarding the halal concept. Steve notes that there will be more discussions over the next year regarding these changes.

**Steve** moves to discuss the possibility of delivery robots. Steve asks Mike to share the image he has of delivery robots.

**Annalynn** had a question relating to what was said about the replacement for Starbucks in the Student Union Building earlier. **Annalynn** asks if Atrium Brew be serving different coffee (not Starbucks)? **Steve** confirms yes and hopes it will be PJS, which is the same parent company as Wow and it's a New Orleans style coffee concept. They have beignets and cinnamon rolls that are out of this world, and the coffee is really good as well. **Steve** thought it would be nice to do something that was really different from Starbucks and offer some new food offerings as well. So, there'll be no Starbucks at all in the student union building. **Annalynn** says cool.

**Steve** redirects back to Mike to discuss the robots. **Mike** says introduces Kiwi bots, which are basically a delivery system around campus. What would happen is the student would place their order through Grubhub. They would pick the delivery method of Kiwi bot. The product is made wherever they order from, and it then goes into the bot and takes it to your location. So, wherever you are, it'll drop a pin to the robot and the robot then brings you your food. **Steve** asks if there are fees associated with the service. **Mike C.** says there is a service charge (2%) and there are two different charges for use of it. There are different packages and different levels. We don't have all of that pricing structure in place yet, but let's say you want unlimited use of the Kiwi bot, you would pay to have that unlimited use of the Kiwi bot, or you can buy a pack of 10 orders, something to that effect. They have this available on several campuses. **Mike** adds one of the scores we were low on in customer surveys was delivery options, so this was something we were considering adding to campus during the renovations.

**Kevin** mentions his son's campus had implemented these during COVID and they got rid of it this academic year. It seemed students didn't really take advantage of it that often, and when he went to visit, he didn't think it was that great of a thing. **Steve** thanks Kevin for the feedback. **Mike C.** adds, there was a lot of issues with the program, and it's only been around for a few years. From Mike's understanding, Kiwi Bot and Sodexo have made a lot of changes to their contract and are addressing the

maintenance and technical side including having on campus technicians to address issues. **Annalynn** says she has seen on social media other campuses that have implemented robot delivery services are not doing super well. **Annalynn** adds concern by the hierarchy it creates in terms of students who can afford or students whose families cannot afford to pay for the delivery service. She believes students with disabilities might really benefit from them, but those are probably not the students who are going to get first dibs on the use of these delivery machines. It doesn't seem like the purpose is to level the playing field in any type of way, and she believes it's another way for students with more financial support to have a benefit over students with less financial support. Lastly, **Annalynn** adds that the SUNY New Paltz campus vibe is not a delivery robot vibe and does not think it reflects who we are as a campus. **Steve** agrees with **Annalynn's** concerns and mentions that he is not yet sold on the program either. **Steve** notes that they are about to go into a sales pitch and bring some bots on campus. If they did decide to go ahead, **Steve** mentions the possibility of making aiding disabled students a priority of the program. So, if you are registered through the disability center, maybe you don't pay any fees. **Steve** asks **Stella** if she has any comments. **Stella** says she had similar concerns about the hierarchy that it could create with who can afford it and who can't. And if there's a way in which we can mitigate some of that, that would be of interest. **Stella** continues by noting that she likes the idea of what we can do during a time of construction, what we can make food service a little bit more exciting. **Stella** adds she is not against the robots, but she would worry about the New Paltz vibe, however she understands the challenge of keeping students excited while construction is going on. **Steve** agrees and asks if there are any other thoughts on, on the robot takeover. **Annalynn** adds that she thinks that this is maybe another example of like where students might be willing to do this kind of work. For example, students offering someone \$10 to bring them their food. **Annalynn** furthers that although maybe not a full delivery service, this could be a possible job opportunity that could be created for students without having to bring robots on campus. **Steve** notes that this is an interesting point, and something they could explore although it wouldn't be easy, but definitely interesting. **Steve** asks for other comments or questions. **Kevin** adds his experience with pushing around computers on campus and notes the importance of doing mapping of how you would transport said item to its location since there are paths a human can take but not a robot. In his experience, he had to jump through lots of hoops to get from one place to another because there wasn't a ramp, a set of stairs, or a broken elevator. **Steve** likes this point. **Mike C.** adds he knows they come to campus to do some sort of scan of the whole campus. They have a whole bunch of programming that goes on behind the scenes that somehow, they learn the routes.

**Steve** notes again the purpose of sharing all this information is to consider new concepts and get some feedback in order to keep dining exciting and interesting during construction. **Steve** continues saying he will keep updating everybody and just keep moving things forward, and ask if anyone has anything else to say before closing out the meeting?

**Kevin** comments on his experience visiting Fairfield recently and notes the food trucks that they bring on campus four days a week. **Kevin** furthers by explaining two of the trucks and permanent and the other rotate, and they are available all semester long. **Kevin** notes the excitement students that he spoke with had about the food trucks, some of them even saying it was their favorite place on campus to eat. **Kevin** concludes by saying it is just something for us to consider, since we're on the topic of excitement in dining. **Steve** mentions that he thinks food trucks are something people seem to get excited about, however he knows that there are some issues with that on the Sodexo side. However, **Steve** believes the trucks are something that could keep students excited about our food program.

**Steve** asks if there are any further questions. There are none. **Steve** concludes by setting out the agenda for next meeting which will be budget presentation and programming recipients reports.

Meeting Adjourned: 11:36