



**Jewish Community
Relations Council**

MILWAUKEE
JEWISH FEDERATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elana Kahn-Oren
Director, Jewish Community Relations Council
Office (414) 390-5736
Cell (414) 403-3705
elanao@milwaukeejewish.org

No Boycott at the Riverwest Public Hours

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Last night, the board of the Riverwest Public House Cooperative voted to table the issue of boycotting Israel. Mindful that such requests distract the co-op from its mission, the nine-member board voted to form an internal committee to develop a policy regarding responding to requests on international/political issues.

History: As you may know, the co-op was approached with a request to support an economic and cultural boycott of Israel. Because it was the first such request of its kind in the co-op's short history, the board invited the requesting organization – the Milwaukee Palestine Solidarity Coalition (MPSC) – to present at a "public speaking event" on July 31. At that event, which drew about 35 people, MPSC representatives presented a distorted survey of the conflict, followed by questions and comments from both sides. About 15 pro-Israel community members attended that event, effectively communicating to the co-op the strong opposition to a boycott. Afterward, many members of our community wrote letters to the co-op, reinforcing that any boycott would be divisive and may have negative consequences for the co-op.

Last night, the board approached this issue thoughtfully and carefully – and chose not to support a boycott of Israel. Two anti-boycott community members spoke at the meeting, one from the JCRC board and the other is a co-op member. Special thanks to them and to all who showed up at the public speaking event, wrote letters and shared concerns with the co-op. I encourage you to visit and support the co-op, and consider joining as a member/owner.

We will continue to follow this issue at the co-op and other possible targets for boycott.

Elana Kahn-Oren Director, Jewish Community Relations Council Milwaukee Jewish Federation.

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