

SEVANANDA NATURAL FOODS MARKET



2026 BOARD CANDIDATE PACKET

Board Candidate #1: Brandi Dawson



1. Why would you like to join the Board of Directors?

I have been a longtime Sevananda shopper because its commitment to wellness, sustainability, and community reflects the values I live every day. Serving on the Linkage Committee has deepened my appreciation for the cooperative model and the power of member ownership. I want to help preserve what makes Sevananda special while strengthening connections with our member-owners and the broader community. My goal is to help ensure Sevananda continues to thrive for generations to come. I would be honored to serve our cooperative.

2. What area(s) of expertise or experience do you currently possess that you believe would advance the interests of our member-owners, the Board, or Sevananda as a whole?

I bring experience in community engagement, communications, education, wellness, and relationship-building. As a caregiver, natural wellness advocate, educator, and community connector, I understand the importance of making resources accessible and helping people feel informed, welcomed, and included. My background in storytelling, outreach, social media, and practical AI education can help strengthen communication and member-owner engagement. I also bring a collaborative spirit, a willingness to listen, and respect for the Board's governance role. My focus is always on building connections that help communities grow stronger.

BRANDI DAWSON

Sevananda Board of Directors Candidate Questionnaire

Typed responses submitted as a separate sheet

Question 1: How did you become involved with Sevananda? Answer: I became involved with Sevananda first as a long-time shopper, with more than a decade of connection to the store before becoming a formal member-owner. I was drawn to Sevananda's natural foods, wellness resources, local/community focus, and the deeper idea that a store can be owned and shaped by the people it serves.	Question 2: Volunteer experience and teamwork/equity/consensus? Answer: My volunteer and community experience includes board service with One Columbus, community management with The Buy Nothing Project, outreach work with local markets such as the Westside Farmer's Markets, and current participation on Sevananda's Linkage Committee. These roles required listening, inclusion, shared decision-making, and creating spaces where people felt welcomed and informed.
Question 3: Current condition and future prospects? Answer: I see Sevananda as a valued institution with deep history, loyal supporters, and strong community relevance. I also see an opportunity to strengthen member-owner engagement, communication, visibility, and education so more shoppers understand the value of ownership and participation.	Question 4: Broader community role and impact? Answer: Sevananda can continue serving as a trusted anchor for natural foods, wellness education, sustainability, local producers, and cooperative values. I would help deepen impact through outreach, storytelling, member engagement, accessible education, and practical ways to connect people with the co-op's mission.
Question 5: Why join the Board and what energy? Answer: I wish to serve because I care about Sevananda's future and believe my background in communications, wellness, caregiving, community-building, digital tools, and outreach can be useful. I bring thoughtful energy, curiosity, lived experience, social media and AI knowledge, and a connector's mindset.	Question 6: Prior board/governance experience? Answer: I previously served on the board of One Columbus, Inc. and chaired the Dare to Dream Youth Conference. The positive experience was seeing collaboration create meaningful youth-centered programming. A challenge was learning that governance requires patience, clarity, and respect for process, not just good ideas.
Question 7: Skills/expertise? Answer: I bring experience in community outreach, communications, social media, event support, public education, wellness, disability/caregiver advocacy, content strategy, AI training, and local engagement. These skills can support member connection, education, strategic visibility, and accessible communication.	Question 8: Recent leadership example? Answer: On the Linkage Committee, I supported planning for member-owner engagement by preparing trivia and activity ideas while coordinating with committee members. The outcome was a practical engagement tool for the mixer. I learned that strong collaboration requires clarity, follow-through, and respect for governance boundaries.

Board Candidate #2: Elfreda Smith



1. Why would you like to join the Board of Directors?

Passionate about promoting health, wellness, and healthy food choices for families and the community.

- Committed to expanding Sevananda's impact through community partnerships and outreach.
- Dedicated to listening to member-owners, respecting all voices, and leading with integrity.
- Focused on Sevananda's long-term financial strength, sustainability, and growth.
- Committed to strengthening member engagement across teens, young adults, families, and seniors.

2. What I bring to the Board:

20+ years of proven leadership in corporate and wellness settings.

- Experienced in building collaborative, diverse teams.
- Passionate about promoting health and wellness for all.
- Committed to community outreach and member engagement.
- Dedicated to expanding Sevananda's impact and long-term success.

1. Describe how you came to be involved with Sevenanda? Share the length of time of your involvement, areas of participation and what initially drew you to the Cooperative Model?

I became involved with Sevenanda several years ago after it became the place I purchased most of my nutrition products. I found the products were what I needed to sustain my health needs. The staff was knowledgeable and introduced me to many of the books as well other resources that qualified their suggestions.

2. Describe any volunteer experience you believe may add value if you served as a Coop Board Member. How your contributions in past organizations reflected teamwork, equity, or consensus building?

I have volunteered in Health Expo's where I did not know any of the participants. The group was very diverse with regards to age gender and race. After being assigned a task, I was able to successfully work within the group and assist when needed outside the group. The overall Health Expo was a success and the host requested us to return.

3. What do you see as the current condition of Sevenanda and our future prospects?
That is a broad question, I can speak to what I am able to access as a customer. I see that Sevenanda is valued by the customers they serve. I see that they appeal to the immediate community as well as those outside this community. Conversations with customers reflect that people come there from other states near and far.

Over the years, I have seen change in leadership and staff. Change is good and should be constant. In the last few meetings as a member and visits as a customer, I have noticed the refresh of décor in the vestibule, new product, product specials and staff visibility. The customers have become more diverse. I am looking forward to what is ahead. I hope that I will be a part of the evolution as a board member.

4. How do you see Sevenanda's role in the broader community, and how might you help deepen its positive social, environmental, economic impact?
How might you help deepen its positive social, environmental or economic impact?

In the broader community I see Sevenanda needed in all aspects of the community especially health, the environment and the diverse community as it pertains to age, gender and equity.

Looking forward, the future of Sevenanda is bright. I see Sevenanda doing more promotions of the Coop. (Next Door, member newsletters), a reclamation campaign for members missing in action and a new member campaign to include our teens and youth)

5. Why do you wish to join Sevenanda's Board of Directors, and what unique perspective or energy would you bring?

I have a passion for health and wellness. I want the opportunity to work with a group that aligns with my passion. Currently, I promote health and wellness as a professional fitness consultant. The basis of my training starts with starts meals and eating plans then activity. I am a active senior and I enjoy listening to their challenges and also to give them an opportunity to hear another perspective.

6. Have you previously served on a board or in a governance role? If so, provide a summary of your experience on the board (please in your most positive experience and any drawbacks or negative experiences?)

I have not served on a board. However, I have served on executive boards. I have been president & vice president of organizations. Each office was different but rewarding. I understood each role and found that support and understanding of leadership styles is key to success.

The most positive experience was we learned to be accepting of what each of us had in common. I learned that it was more important for people enjoy their role and that they were not there to fill a seat but to make a difference in their designated role.

7. Which skills or areas of expertise from your professional, educational, or volunteer background would strengthen Sevenanda's Board and support the cooperative's strategic priorities (e.g. finance, marketing, governance. Community outreach, event planning, legal?)

Marketing, Community outreach and event planning would be areas suited for my expertise from my professional, educational and volunteer background.

8. Provide a recent example that illustrates your leadership style and ability to collaborate or make decisions in a group setting. What was the outcome and what did you learn?

I lead and coordinated with a team a 5K walk/run. The event required effective and detailed marketing, I wanted the race to be "qualified race recognized by the Atlanta Track Club. I contacted the Atlanta Track Club. A member of their team measured the route. We had sponsors to support the project. There were organized teams. I had a team to handle the calls and letters for that. Big Peach was one of our sponsors. We met and each person gave their report for their particular assignment. We had a successful race.

Board Candidate #3: Jerilyn Bell



1. Why would you like to join the Board of Directors?

I joined Sevananda in 2016. I was drawn to join the cooperative because I wanted to help educate more people about healthy eating. For me, showing up is always half the battle. So, I showed up.

2. What I bring to the Board:

I believe that Sevananda is in a dynamic space where we can grow and change for the better. We have made operational changes that are opening the door to growth that we desperately need. There is also a change in the energy around the store, and if the board can build on that energy, Sevananda could finally make the move to have our own building.

1. Describe how you came to be involved with Sevananda. Share the length of your involvement, areas of participation, and what initially drew you to the cooperative model.

I joined Sevananda in 2016. I was drawn to join the cooperative because I wanted to help educate more people about healthy eating. For me, showing up is always half the battle. Show I showed up.

2. Describe any volunteer experience you believe may add value if you served as a coop board member. How have your contributions in past organizations reflected teamwork, equity, or consensus building?

I have been volunteering since I was young. First, in the community and in church groups, then political campaigns, and eventually larger organizations more affiliated with my work. I have always been drawn to service.

My previous Sevananda board term ran for five years. When COVID-19 hit, Sevananda was already having a difficult time. We were facing financial and organizational battles amid a global pandemic. Board terms had to be extended, and board members stepped up to push through. I believe that experience on the board (while not pretty) reflected true teamwork and consensus building to make hard decisions and work together.

3. What do you see as the current condition of Sevananda, and our future prospects?

I believe that Sevananda is in a dynamic space where we can grow and change for the better. We have made operational changes that are opening the door to growth that we desperately need. There is also a change in the energy around the store and if the board can build on that energy Sevananda could finally make the move to have our own building.

4. How do you see Sevananda's role in the broader community, and how might you help deepen its positive social, environmental, or economic impact?

Sevananda has always been a beacon showing the way to healthy eating and healthy living; that has not changed since 1974. I believe that as the board we can

stretch more and be creative about how we carry the Sevananda message to the community.

5. Why do you wish to join Sevananda's Board of Directors, and what unique perspective or energy would you bring?

I want the board to be an energetic, creative, and caring board. Having been a team leader for the past 15 years in my profession, where we deal with intense and traumatic situations regularly, I have learned how to cultivate a productive environment on teams. Most importantly, you have to care about your mission and your team, and we must rely on each other to do their part. I believe that true accountability is the hardest thing to achieve with teams. Ultimately, a good team will produce exponentially more work product than a toxic or lethargic team. I hope I can support Sevananda's Board by being a positive team member.

6. Have you previously served on a board or in a governance role? If so, provide a summary of your experience on the board (please include your most positive experience and any drawbacks or negative experiences).

I was on the Sevananda Board from 2018-2023. During my tenure, I was the board secretary from 2019-2023.

7. Which skills or areas of expertise from your professional, educational, or volunteer background would strengthen Sevananda's Board and support the cooperative's strategic priorities (e.g. finance, marketing, governance, community outreach, event planning, legal)?

I have worked in public interest for the past 25 years, I have worked (on a volunteer basis) with political campaigns since I was in high school, I am the administrator for a not-for-profit, I have some training in event planning, and I am a lawyer.

8. Provide a recent example that illustrates your leadership style and ability to collaborate or make decisions in a group setting. What was the outcome, and what did you learn?

Recently, I had to make a particular decision as team leader even though the team disagreed with my position. Despite knowing what I was going to decide, I made sure that everyone had a chance to debate it, before saying what we were going to do. I also told them what my thought process was and what my strategy was with

the choice I made. The team was supportive and thought it made sense to wait to capitalize on a better deal in the future.

I discovered that if you take the time to learn how to be a leader (I read a lot of books) it will pay off.

Jerilyn Bell

Board Candidate #4: Nadia Giordanni



1. Why would you like to join the Board of Directors?

I would like to join the Board because I am deeply committed to Sevananda's mission of providing healthy food, education, and community. Having previously served on the Board, I understand the cooperative's governance model and the responsibilities of board service. With my prior experience, I can contribute immediately and help support Sevananda's continued growth and success. I value thoughtful, transparent leadership and enjoy working collaboratively to achieve shared goals. It would be an honor to once again serve our member-owners.

2. What area(s) of expertise or experience do you currently possess that you believe would advance the interests of our member-owners, the Board, or Sevananda as a whole?

I bring experience from both my previous service on Sevananda's Board and three years on Airbnb's Host Advisory Board, where I represented hosts and collaborated with leadership on strategic initiatives. I also hold a master's degree in Finance and a MS in Clinical Nutrition, giving me a strong foundation in evidence-based nutrition that aligns with Sevananda's mission. I am analytical, collaborative, and committed to asking thoughtful questions that support financially sound decision-making. Most importantly, I care deeply about the cooperative's success and the value it provides to its member-owners and the community.

Describe how you came to be involved with Sevananda. Include amount of time spent and specific activities, if appropriate. *

I first became involved with Sevananda about 40 years ago when I worked as a cashier. My older brother was the Housemate of one of the store managers at the time and it was then I was introduced to vegetarianism and eating whole foods. Throughout the years, I've shopped at Sev, attended many member meetings and more recently, been a member. I was a weekly working member for several years in the Supplement/Herb department until the program was suspended.

Describe any volunteer experience you believe may add value if you served as a coop board member. *

I currently serve on the Host Advisory Board at Airbnb. Being a Board member is an amazing experience that gives us the opportunity to have impact, which is a responsibility I take very seriously.

What do you see as the current condition of Sevananda, and, our future prospects? *

I see the current condition of Sevananda as possibly needing a look at growth and how we can change to continue to meet the needs of our current customers and best meet the needs of potentially new customers.

How do you see Sevananda's role in the broader community? *

I see Sevananda as representing ourselves as a true and reliable venue for access to the tools (food) we need in order to lead healthy and productive lives. There is an immense outreach from people who are seeking the knowledge and the resources they need to be healthy. I think Sevananda can be that place for those searching for that in our Community.

Questionnaire (cont.)

Help Sevananda Members Learn More About You

Why do you wish to join Sevananda's Board of Directors? *

I wish to be a member of the Sevananda Board of Directors in order to help suggest and facilitate ideas that can help our Co-op become the successful beacon of Light for Health that it can be.

Have you previously served on a board? If so, provide a summary of your experience. *

Yes, I just started my 3rd consecutive year of serving on the Host Advisory Board at Airbnb

What expertise (through your professional, education, and/or volunteer experience) would you bring to the table to make you a good fit for this Board? *

I am a Nutritionist with a Master's Degree in Clinical Nutrition. I am very passionate about gaining optimal health through diet and would love to see Sevananda as a great resource for more people seeking the same.

Provide a detailed and recent example of your leadership experience. *

I own and operate 2 Airbnb's, one in the city of Atlanta, and the other in Brunswick. As a Host, I work with many Guests and the outcome of their stay is largely dependent on the actions I take as a Host. The service I provide, the way I communicate and the actions I take to make them feel welcome. In a more direct way, I am also a volunteer Community Leader at Airbnb for the city of Atlanta. I am responsible for scheduling at least 4 events throughout the year for the over 2000 Hosts on our FB page. I work with Hosts to help them become familiar with Hosting and how to navigate through the Airbnb platform. My style of leadership is through example. I believe it is important to be what we expect from others.

Board Candidate #5: Shelli Price



1. Why would you like to join the Board of Directors?

I want to be a part of something bigger than myself; an organization that puts the needs of the people first. Sevananda is that organization! Sevananda plays an important role in creating healthier communities because they prioritize making health and wellness accessible to everyone. As a member-owner for nearly 20 years, I've been able to see first-hand the impact they have on the community. I'm passionate about health, wellness, and education, and I'd love the opportunity to contribute those values through board service. I enjoy helping organizations grow strategically while staying true to their mission. Serving on the board would allow me to use those skills to support Sevananda's continued success while representing the interests of its members- owners. I'm also excited about the opportunity to collaborate with other board members who bring diverse perspectives and expertise. I believe thoughtful governance, strong communication, and a commitment to the cooperative model can help ensure Sevananda continues to thrive for years to come.

2. What area(s) of expertise or experience do you currently possess that you believe would advance the interests of our member-owners, the Board, or Sevananda as a whole?

My strengths and expertise are as follows. Project Management, Proposal Writing, Certified Scrum Master, Quality Control Specialist, Operations Specialist, Trained Facilitator, Revenue Retention Specialist and I have a BA in Journalism, just to name a few of my expertise's. I've helped organizations improve processes, communicate more effectively, and develop strategies that strengthen engagement and growth. As a small business owner in the wellness space, I also understand the importance of balancing mission with financial responsibility, listening to customers, and building trust within a community. I bring a collaborative leadership style, strong organizational skills, and a thoughtful approach to problem-solving. Most importantly, I'm committed to listening first, asking good questions, and making decisions that serve the long-term interests of Sevananda's member-owners while supporting the cooperative's mission and future success.

1. Describe how you came to be involved with Sevananda.

I became involved with Sevananda as a member-owner in 2011, seeking access to high-quality natural foods and a business model that prioritizes community and shared ownership. Around 2012, Sevananda became my second home. I was shopping there several days a week and unbeknownst to me at the time, I was also building community. What initially drew me to the cooperative was the wide range of healthy foods - but I stayed for the community. Over the years, I have supported the co-op as a shopper, member-owner, and advocate for local and values-driven businesses.

2. Describe any volunteer experience that may add value.

My greatest and most rewarding experience with volunteering was at the homeschool cooperative my son attended in Long Beach, CA. Each parent donated 4 hours a week and we were responsible for running the school. It taught me that the community can come together and build a non-eurocentric educational model that is effective in fostering the growth of children. I collaborated with diverse groups of all races and we were able to achieve shared goals and create inclusive environments where different perspectives were respected.

3. What do you see as the current condition of Sevananda and its future prospects?

Sevananda remains an important community institution with a strong mission and loyal membership base. I believe its future prospects are strong if it continues to deepen member engagement, strengthen financial sustainability, and communicate the unique value of cooperative ownership.

4. How do you see Sevananda's role in the broader community?

Sevananda serves as more than a grocery store; it is a community anchor and a staple that promotes access to healthy food and wellness items. When I mention Sevananda to people, most of them have never heard of it. I see that as an opportunity for growth campaigns to increase visibility and membership. People would support initiatives that expand community partnerships if they knew it existed and if they knew how significant it is

historically in the community. I see Sevananda's role growing into the broader community because of its unique business model. It is a wellness store that is selective on the items they provide to serve their members and that is important during a time when a lot of health-conscious brands are being bought out.

5. Why do you wish to join the Board?

I want to help ensure Sevananda remains a thriving co-op for future generations. I bring a strategic mindset, entrepreneurial experience, and a deep appreciation for community-centered organizations. I am energized by opportunities to listen, learn, and contribute to long-term planning that advances the co-op's mission.

6. Previous board or governance experience.

While I have not served on a formal cooperative board, I have led initiatives, received facilitator training, managed projects, and worked with cross-functional teams responsible for strategic planning and decision-making.

7. Skills and expertise.

My professional background includes marketing, project management, business operations, and proposal writing. These skills can support member engagement, strategic planning, organizational growth, and community visibility.

8. Leadership example.

I am currently planning and developing a 3-day virtual wellness summit. Execution of such an event requires coordinating multiple stakeholders, managing timelines, sponsorship outreach, booking speakers, creating a marketing schedule and balancing competing priorities. This experience has reinforced that effective leadership begins with listening, clear communication, noticing others strengths, and creating alignment around a common goal.