



New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC)

Meeting Minutes June 18th, 2014

Attendees:

Council members: Tagan Engel, Kim Hart, Frank Mitchell, Alycia Santilli, Maria Tupper

Affiliate and community members: Jill Meyerhoff, Pat Hagen, Caitlin Aylward, Melissa Spear, Anne Somsel, Don Sanders, Lorenzo Gibson, Ellen Pendergast

Working Groups – Brief report from chair /council member representative

Policy Advancement Committee – Alycia Santilli

- PACS's primary focus recently has been the Food System Director position (covered as separate agenda item, below).
- PAC is also working with City Plan Department on changes to zoning ordinances related to health improvement:
 - Allow the sale of produce from community or backyard gardens
 - Allow businesses to display produce and plants in front of their stores
 - Strengthen the language about urban agriculture overall in ordinances
- There are several other, more controversial and therefore difficult zoning issues to be addressed, such as the restriction of density of fast food restaurants and corner stores that aren't selling healthy foods. The corner store aspect may be easier to tackle than fast food. PAC is starting to explore these ideas with City Plan; it is an evolving conversation.
- PAC has a summer law student intern working with them on these issues. The Conservation Law Foundation in Boston is a huge resource.

Food Assistance – Kim Hart

- Alex Dyer and Kim Hart are taking over co-chairmanship of FAWG from Billy Bromage in September.
- Neighborhood food guides containing the hours and locations of agencies that provide food, clothing, shelter and services, similar to the Street Sheet, are in process. Target for completion is this summer.
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program is a matter of funding at this point. They should get word soon if CT has been included in appropriations.

Summer Meals Blitz – Alycia Santilli

- There was a great turnout last Saturday for the event at Goffe Street Park -- over 75 volunteers came to canvass, including many alders.
- State and local officials in attendance included Governor Dannel Malloy, Rep. Rosa DeLauro, CT Commissioner of Education Stefan Pryor, State Sen. Martin Looney, State Rep. Pat Dillon, NHPS CEO Will Clark, an official from the USDA. Mayor Harp was out of town but Chief of Staff Tomas Reyes attended. There was coverage by WFSB, the NH Register, NH Independent.
- Alycia commented that Gail Sharry did an amazing job with food donations and even drove the truck, setting up lunch with help from Abby Shelton from Food Corps and others.
- PDFs of Summer Meals program literature will be sent out shortly.
- Big thank yous go out to Billy Bromage, the Food Assistance Working Group and End Hunger CT!

City Farm & Garden – Maria Tupper

- Focus is on Resource Center for community gardens. NHLT received a grant from the New Alliance Foundation for a staff person to oversee the Resource Center. The CFGWG is developing a hiring and work plan for this work.
- The group looked at a Project Storefronts location on Church Street. They are not sure that this is the right location and space – the physical location is up in the air and they are trying to think it through to determine how best to use their resources.

- Tagan noted that there was also a conversation about the need for someone to oversee the grant, which could be the same person that oversees the Resource Center.
- A Steering Committee has formed to discuss the implementation process for an Urban Agriculture Resource Center. Its first meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 25th, 9 AM, City Hall Meeting Room 1.
- Tagan noted that CFGWG was intended to be that steering committee; we need to engage community members and others involved in this work, make sure everyone knows what is happening so that work can move forward, decisions can be made quickly.
- Maria stated that 92 people are on CFGWG list – it's difficult to make decisions with that large a group but we don't want to leave anyone out. How do you bring people's voices in? The best way is to show up!
- Maria also noted issues with the Water Authority – in past years garden water bills have been very high, there are meters at the gardens but they aren't turned on, etc. On-going difficulty in working with Water Authority. Gardens would like to receive quarterly bills, like residents do.
- Melissa stated that this is likely a result of a lack of organization – each garden is treated differently rather than as a group. We need to get the city involved in helping us with this; we should discuss at the CFGWG and outline the issues. Alycia suggested getting Tomas Reyes, an urban ag supporter, involved, and setting up a meeting with all parties at table. Frank noted that this is probably a staffing issue; we need to find a new contact at the Water Authority and get them on our team.

Cooking & Food Education – Tagan Engel

- The second phase of the Master Cooks training class is scheduled for two upcoming Sundays, June 22nd and July 13th. Forty cooks will receive training.
- All Master Cooks materials will be made available on the CitySeed website.
- Tagan has an intern who has gone through all the Master Cooks evaluations and captured useful data.
- CitySeed raised money during Rock to Rock to build a kitchen at their Grand Avenue location. Through a series of relationships, Ikea has stepped in to help with design services and equipment. Ideally it will be commercially certified but at a minimum it will be a teaching kitchen for the community.

School Food – Tagan Engel

- This WG is not currently meeting but the steering committee that was formed through union negotiations, and of which Tagan is a member, has been meeting. It is a pilot project to improve school food, as well as worker and kid satisfaction. Gail Sharry, Will Clark and Frank Douglass are also on the committee.
- This is a collaborative, less contentious, effort. It includes fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as recipes, marketing, training, presentation. They want to make this pilot scalable in terms of geography, age, magnet vs. neighborhood schools, etc. It will incorporate four to six elementary and high schools – most economic impact can be seen at high schools.

Economic Development

- This group has not been meeting regularly pending a co-chair and NHFPC member representative. Tagan noted that Stephen Fries has expressed interest in becoming involved in this group. Stephen teaches at Gateway, conducts food tours in New Haven and writes a food column for the NH Register.

Structure Committee

- The Structure Committee has proposed amendments to the NHFPC by-laws regarding
 - the inclusion of individuals as affiliate members in addition to organizations
 - the intention to obtain diverse representation during recruitment of Council and Affiliate members by making a more public outreach into the community at large
 - identifying the process for ad hoc committee to determine new Council members candidates
- We do not have a quorum today so we will plan to vote on these amendments via email.
- Tagan noted that, prior to voting on the proposed amendments, we also want to duplicate the paragraph on Appointment and Recommendation of affiliate members (section B.2.1) in the comparable Council member section.
 - **Action**
 - Ellen will talk to Caty Poole about making this additional proposed change to the by-laws.

- Maria reported that the Structure Committee is having ongoing conversation about the need for all voices to be heard and considered at Council meetings, who is included in making decisions for the Council, process for how decisions are made, etc. We know that coming together for additional meetings is time-consuming, email chains are cumbersome, so how do we involve more/all voices?
- Maria explained that the Structure Committee has suggested a three-layer process to attain more input from the community prior to a Council member vote:
 - First, ask for input from community members regarding pros and cons of decision(s)
 - Second, ask for similar input from affiliates
 - Third, come to general consensus, have a conversation about next steps if needed, determine what we want to vote on specifically
 - Then ask for formal vote by Council members.
- Ellen compiled a draft Community Outreach Contacts list to expand our grassroots network based on a similar CARE spreadsheet that Alycia provided, input obtained during a Council member city mapping exercise and a prospective list of Council and affiliate members drafted earlier this year. The draft contact list was distributed at the last Structure Committee meeting to obtain input from committee members.
 - **Action**
 - After Ellen obtains and incorporates initial input from Structure Committee, she will poll the community for broader input to the list.

Food Systems Director – 10 minutes

- Alycia reported that CitySeed submitted a grant to the Kendall Foundation for funding of an implementation plan to set the groundwork for a successful launch of the Food System Director position, which was awarded to them. As previously reported, the Kendall Foundation has indicated a commitment toward funding the FSD position itself. It has been made clear that these are two separate asks and that the award of one does not affect the other.
- Also as previously reported, the Food Systems Director position has been included in the City budget as a line item with a \$1 earmark that includes a benefits package valued at 40-50% of annual salary, indicating real backing and a high level of commitment to the position. Alycia noted that there have been three or four meetings with the Mayor's office, and that Chief of Staff Tomas Reyes is very supportive of the position. There should be a lot of movement on this over the next couple of months.
- We are targeting \$250,000 over two years for the position – \$70K in salary, 40-50% for benefits, plus programmatic support. A work plan and logic model requested by the Mayor's office is in process, which will define spending of programmatic funds. We are relying on the Mayor's office for help in locating additional funding for the position through local matches.
- Tagan will coordinate the gathering of information for the implementation plan – what the biggest opportunities are, garnering buy-in from city departments, identifying key contacts in departments and community organizations, identifying where there may be overlaps, developing coordination. The Mayor's office has indicated that we can use their name, cc them on emails, to add authority and legitimacy to our implementation efforts.
- Tagan noted that there is a job description and there will be as much transparency around it as possible but it hasn't been widely distributed as a process for that hasn't been determined yet. The logic model and work plan should be sent out to Council members, affiliate members and active working group members.
- Melissa asked about reporting structure for the position. Tagan stated that there has been a lot of discussion as to whether it should report to the Mayor's office, which would make it a political appointment, or to a department like the CSA, which is a unionized city service position – there are pros and cons of each. Initially we were advocating for it to report to Economic Development but there is a strong feeling that there is more administrative support for the position within the CSA without adding more cost. This is an on-going conversation.
- Melissa asked about the timeline for the position. Alycia stated that depends on when funding is established for it. Developing the implementation plan and seeking funding are parallel efforts.

NHFPC Administration

- There was no fiduciary update or discussion of the financial request/approval form as Treasurer Diana Richter was unable to attend today's meeting.

Question from Don Sanders, community member

- Don asked if there is a program in New Haven, like City Harvest in NYC, that collects rescued food from restaurants in refrigerator trucks and delivers it to food pantries, etc. Tegan explained that people have been trying to work on this for a long time; the CT Food Bank had a similar program for a while but there just wasn't enough food available to make it viable. There is some direct food access between food makers, such as the various Yale food services, local restaurants, etc., and food assistance providers, like the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen. Danyel Aversanti is the local site director for Community Plates, a food rescue organization that does this kind of work in New Haven. The Food Assistance Working Group is a good place to become involved in issues like this – its next meeting is Thursday, July 10th, 4-5:30pm, location TBA.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

- CitySeed's Downtown Farmers' Market opens today! On Green 11am-2pm.
- Michael Twitty will be at Yale British Art Center at 5:30pm today, part of Festival of Arts & Ideas, free event.
- New Haven Healthy City/Healthy Climate Challenge during month of July to raise personal awareness of living in ways that have a smaller environmental impact. Go to <http://www.healthyclimatechallenge.org/>
- CT 10% Campaign launch – sign up to pledge to spend 10% of food and gardening dollars locally. Builds advocacy for local foods and is useful in giving the food community voice at the state level. Go to <http://www.buyctgrown.com/ct-10-percent>

Next Food Policy Council Meeting
Wednesday, July 16th – 8:00-9:45am
City Hall Meeting Room #1
Contact: Staff@NHFoodPolicyCouncil.org

Upcoming Meeting Dates for Working Groups and Committees:

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| Structure Committee | Thursday, July 10 th | 9:00-10:00am | CitySeed, 817 Grand Avenue |
| Policy Advancement Committee | Wednesday, July 2 nd | 8:45-9:45am | City Hall, Meeting Room 1 |
| City Farm & Garden | Friday, July 11 th | 8:30-10:00am | City Hall, Meeting Room 3 |
| Food Assistance | No July meeting Friday, August 1 st | 9:00-10:30am | Fellowship Place – 441 Elm Street |
| Cooking & Food Education | To be announced | | |
| Economic Development/Food Business | Meet w/ City Farm & Garden Working Group | | |
| School Food | To be announced | | |