



New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC)

Meeting Minutes October 16th, 2013

Attendees:

Council members: Tagan Engel, Alycia Santilli, Anika Thrower, Maria Tupper

Guests from NHPS: Garth Harries, Superintendent; Will Clark, Chief Operating Officer; Gail Sharry, Food Services Director

Affiliate and community members: Nicole Berube, Catherine Bradshaw, Caty Poole, Billy Bromage, Cara Donovan, Jacquie Lewin, Robin Golden, Sonja Ahuja, Abby Shelton, Hannah Croasmun, Caitlin Aylward, Adriel Infantino, Susan Nappi, Susan Weisselberg, Tracy Helin, Ellen Pendergast

Presentation by New Haven Public Schools Superintendent Garth Harries

- As part of his "listening tour" at regular meetings of various New Haven entities, Supt. Harries provided an overview of his vision for NHPS, as well as an opportunity to hear the NHFPC's priorities and concerns as they relate to NHPS.
- Supt. Harries first outlined his beliefs – to create a context for students to rise; to collaborate with parents and all stakeholders; and to "change the world" – to make things different tomorrow from how they were today.
- He believes that NHPS has a strong foundation and that the need is to deepen and extend it.
- He has four areas of focus:
 1. Students at the center of the work – higher standards for academic development; college, career and life ready; personal development including character, emotional development, etc.
 2. Educators – includes all staff, not just certified staff – cafeteria workers, custodians, etc.
 3. Schools – what happens in the building is distinct and different depending on who is there – the school team is where student experience happens.
 4. Wraparound services – partnerships with parents and community, e.g., bringing Parent University into local communities, schools. (Sue Weisselberg is NHPS Chief of Wraparound Services.)
- In the context of food, Supt. Harries has a personal interest and awareness of organic farming and the importance of healthy food. Relative to school system, he believes that the core issue is to build a level of shared vision – healthy, sustainable, affordable food that supports students' personal development. Although budget is a significant challenge, Supt. Harries indicated that he is willing and open to having conversations and making tough decisions. He noted that recess has been re-instituted and that K-6 health curriculum is being implemented – not perfect but it is happening.
- Will Clark noted that the budget/deficit is a significant challenge. Conversation about budget/deficit ensued. Noted the implementation of K-6 health curriculum this year – not perfect but is happening.
- Gail Sharry stated that while there is room for improvement, we should keep in mind that NHPS is a well-run food services program; a lot of food is being made from scratch.
- Anika asked about the kind of support NHPS would like to see from parents. Gail indicated educating and familiarizing kids about new fruits and vego so that they will choose and eat them at school – e.g., kiwi, kale. Support from local grocery stores to coordinate access to foods that schools are introducing would be helpful.
- Tagan noted that the NHFPC has been involved in helping to improve school food since 2008 and is very familiar with strides that have been made. The NHFPC functions as collaborative group – to stimulate change more efficiently, effectively. We want help facilitate, provide a forum for collaboration. What can NHFPC do concretely to encourage kids to eat new foods in cafeteria?
- Will and Gail mentioned the cafeteria as an extension of the classroom, PSAs, marketing efforts. Use other schools/principals with which they have successfully worked as examples for others. Maintain the conversation about a higher baseline, emphasizing the strides that have been made. In public, the conversation tends to go back to square one. But improvements have been made – central commissary, salad bars, gotten rid of fried foods and flavored milks. We need to take credit, re-establish baseline and expand from there. NHFPC can help with how to shape that.

- Robin and Caty noted that the School Food Working Group could assist in these efforts – it's been on hold pending new leadership for this group. If we could get representation from school staff and parents, a lot of this work could happen there.
- Gail was interested in our view on affordability issue. Tagan stated that scratch cooking did not come from the NHFPC. She suggested helping food service workers to feel more empowered, understand the challenges, creating lead workers at schools to clarify issues. Also, would like to help students have feedback to food service workers, improve communication issues.
- Gail noted that Abby Shelton from Food Corps can help with gardens, cooking classes, be part of education process.
- Garth stated that we should develop a clear vision of our priorities that include budget issues and keep going back to it; how food policy intersects with kids. If we all speak with same voice, it's easier for the City to hear; less confusion. If we're all together, we can take high road with the budget.
- Alycia agreed that we do share the same vision. Robin suggested we focus on reintegrating the working group collaboration with school food at Board of Education. We need a strong leader to help move that forward.
- Tagan noted that we need to collaborate at the Wellness Committee also. Make sure goals match what's going on at Board of Ed.
- Discussion of meal costs/subsidization followed.

Policy Advancement Committee (PAC) – Alycia

Update on NHFPC presentation of Food Action Plan to BoA Human Services Committee on September 25th

- The FAP was presented to the Human Services Committee at a public hearing. The Committee was very supportive and voted to pass the FAP on to the full Board of Alders for a vote. Vote is scheduled for Monday, October 21st. Alycia has a prior commitment and can't be there. There is no public testimony but turnout shows support; plus the alders caucus beforehand in Meeting Room 1. It would be good to have some NHFPC members/affiliates during the caucus to answer questions.
- **Action**
 - Ellen to send email invitation to NHFPC members and affiliates to attend the caucus on October 21st, with RSVP.
 - Ellen to send email invitation to entire NHFPC list to invite people to come to show support for the FAP.

Recap of discussion at PAC meeting on Tuesday, October 15th about Ending Hunger in New Haven policy platform

- The Committee is putting a platform together on Ending Hunger in New Haven. Goal is to have a draft available for the December 3rd Committee meeting. Alycia will invite key alders to come to that meeting to review the draft and get their feedback.
- If anyone would like to participate in the platform development, PAC meetings are held the first Tuesday of the month at City Hall, 9:00am.

CEIO Capacity Building/Training Proposal – Anika/Sonja

Recap of results of Core Group meeting on October 9th

- Core Team met and held a discussion around the training proposal. Several training tracks being offered – first is *Let's Talk About Race*. Tentative date is December 14th, Saturday all-day meeting. Encourage NHFPC members, affiliates, working groups to attend, also CitySeed staff and board.
- Is that a good date? Sonja/Ellen to invite people, have them RSVP about their availability on that date. If that date is good, can find location, can provide child care if needed.
- Robin noted that it would be advantageous to get diversity to the training via the Working Groups – invite people personally. Call council members, get a critical mass of people.
- Sonja noted that 15-25 people at the training is the target but fewer is doable. What do we need to get the word out? Ellen will help with email invitations; Tagan will help with Working Group contacts; Catherine will talk to Jamilah; Anika and Alycia will speak to council and affiliate members. Will try to get as many people involved as possible – new voices and active participants.
- Working Group training series – Sonja would like to send training proposal back to WG chairs to get their feedback before the training is scheduled.
- **Action**
 - Ellen to set up another Core Team meeting date.

Youth Coalition

Progress report on youth engagement work to date – Caitlin Aylward, VISTA

- Presented a Youth Leadership Development proposal developed in conjunction with Tagan and CitySeed for 2013-2014.
- Caitlin is one of five VISTAS in Connecticut working with the Food Justice Youth Corps charged with connecting various organizations and youth on food justice issues. She is working with four organizations in New Haven to build this network.
- Proposal recommends establishing a Youth Coalition Coordinator as NHFPC council member or affiliate. Best forum for engagement with NHFPC for youth to have greater voice.
- Caitlin is here as a resource to us all. Her primary role is to build capacity so that the work will be sustainable after she has left the position.

NHFPC Administration

Ad hoc committee for new member selection update – Anika

- Alycia, Tagan and Anika have been doing some targeted outreach to the faith-based and business communities. Perhaps should also consider school food-related people? Emphasizing people of color so that Council reflects the community.
- Alycia or Tagan will have more information available at November's meeting; Anika cannot attend.

Working Groups - Brief update from chair

Food Assistance - Billy

Food Advocate Training

- Obtained 26 applicants for 12 positions!
- Finalizing food resource brochure that includes all neighborhoods; should be out before end of year. City has agreed to help with Spanish translation.
- Still advocating for assistance with the Commodity Supplemental Food Program funding.

Urban Agriculture - Catherine

- Received a response to letter to Mayor's office requesting Urban Agriculture support – Urban Ag Working Group has been named the official urban agriculture resource/hub for the City.
- Tagan noted that the group is working with New Haven Farms about 2 acres for a community farm. English Mall on Peck Street is being considered. Not a done deal yet. Tagan will forward Rebecca's email to people at New Haven Land Trust.
- Construction is beginning at the Ivy Street garden greenhouse. It is a collaboration; Neighborhood Housing Services spearheaded it. 16x30, passive heat.
- At the next Urban Ag Working Group meeting the group will start to envision the Urban Ag resource center and who they need to bring to the group to figure out how to make it happen.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

- Cook & Care Walkathon, Sunday, October 20th, 1:00pm registration, 2:00pm start at Albertus Magnus. Benefits The Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, Community Soup Kitchen, FISH of Greater New Haven and The Interfaith Volunteer Care Givers. <http://cookandcarewalkathon.org/>
- New Haven Land Trust Quinnipiac Preserve work day for invasive plant removal, Sunday, October 20th, 9:00am-2:00pm. Contact Catherine for more information: catherine@cadence-consulting.com

Next Food Policy Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 20th – 8:00-9:45am
City Hall Meeting Room #1
Contact: Staff@NHFoodPolicyCouncil.org

Upcoming Meeting Dates for Working Groups:

Cooking & Food Education	Monday, November 18 th	6:00pm-7:30pm	City Hall
Economic Development/Food Business	Meet w/ Urban Ag Working Group		
Food Assistance	Thursday, November 7 th	4:00am-5:30pm	Community Action Agency community room, 419 Whalley Avenue, 4 th floor
School Food	TBA	6:00pm-7:30pm	Neighborhood Housing Services
Urban Agriculture	Thursday, November 14 th	8:30am-10:00am	City Hall