



# New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC)

## Meeting Minutes November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013

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### Items Voted on:

1. NHFPC endorsement requested by Food Assistance Working Group for letters they drafted, in partnership with End Hunger CT, to seven members of Connecticut congressional delegation advocating for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.

**(ITEM VOTED ON BY NHFPC MEMBERS SUBSEQUENT TO MEETING VIA EMAIL – APPROVED BY NHFPC.)**

### Attendees:

Council members: Tagan Engel, Diana Richter, Alycia Santilli, Maria Tupper

*Affiliate and community members:* Catherine Bradshaw, Caty Poole, Billy Bromage, Cara Donovan, Jacquie Lewin, Karen Seto, Rob Friedman, Staci Detwiler, Caitlin Aylward, Martha Deeds, Tracy Helin, Laura Luttrell, Kim Hart, Mark Firla, Augusta Mueller, Shannon Murray, Evi Steyer, Alice Buckley, Carolina Rivera, Phyllis Haynes, Cheryl Liburd, Brenda Goodwin, Jamilah Rasheed, Abigail Shelton, Hannah Croasmun, Tiffany Torres, Jacqueline Roberts, Donna Sewell, Ellen Pendergast

### Policy Advancement Committee (PAC) - Alycia

- Food Action Plan was presented to full Board of Alders on Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup> and was approved, an important step for us. The FAP primarily outlines goals and objectives, so the next step is to establish and prioritize solid plans to push the FAP forward.
- At the November meeting PAC members began to determine how to prioritize actions. It is not easy to determine what items have legislative impact, what are programmatic, etc. Alycia distilled the discussion from the meeting into a preliminary Policy Priorities document and distributed a draft for review. The five priorities outlined in the draft:
  1. Establish Food Systems Director position and obtain funding for the Council
    - PAC is leaning toward recommending that the position report to the Mayor's office.
    - Increase General Fund allocation to the Council, and ensure that we receive the funds.
  2. Develop comprehensive zoning changes to increase access to healthy foods, including:
    - Establish Healthy School Food Zones, encourage food establishments near schools to meet standards for healthy school businesses.
    - Restrict number/density of fast food establishments.
    - Allow residents to sell food grown in their backyards or community gardens/farms.
  3. Healthy food procurement
    - Mandate that foods/beverages procured using city funds meet strict nutrition standards.
    - Not a big impact but relatively easy to implement
  4. Breastfeeding ordinance
    - Pass local resolution mirroring state/federal laws giving women the right to breastfeed in public/pump at work to increase awareness of their implementation.
    - Again, attempt to get some smaller, easier things happening.
  5. Support action areas being addressed by NHFPC's Working Groups
    - Task city departments to engage with relevant Working Groups to communicate with residents and community organizations to create collaborations and effective solutions.
- Tagan noted that Alycia did a good job pulling everything discussed at the PAC meeting together into a cohesive structure.
- Alycia stated that several PAC members and others met with Karen Gilvarg of City Plan. It appears that Karen will remain in her position in the new administration. She is supportive of the Council's work. Her recommendation is to take a "project" approach – small, specific steps to chip away at some of the larger issues. She expressed interest in

the Healthy School Food Zones; she thinks zoning is a tough area to make changes but we might be able to make an impact with school zones to really see an effect, demonstrate success and achievement.

- Green Space is another area to look into. Parks Dept. has a lot of leeway so we may want to work with them rather than try to make zoning changes. For example, greenhouses on garden spaces – only commercial greenhouses need zoning approval.
- Selling produce from community gardens is not currently permissible. Karen Gilvarg referred us to the Health Dept. on this, but it's probably an issue for both zoning and health departments.
- Mark Firla noted that zoning is a powerful tool – if zoning changes are supported they can have great impact.
- Alycia would like to get input from others, as well, such as members of the Zoning Board, Board of Alders. She would also like to get the Priorities Policy document into the community to build support for it, via CARE. Like the FAP, it is important to show how many people are involved in and behind this effort.
- Alycia noted that the vision is to **create a community where it's easy to engage in healthy behaviors.**
- PAC meets the first Tuesday of the month at 9:00am at City Hall; next meeting is December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 9:00am. Alycia will invite several alders to that meeting. She also wants to involve others, law students, etc.
- Alycia indicated that there are good signs from the Harp administration – incoming Assistant Chief of Staff Chris Campbell reported that in this role 40% of his time will be initially allocated to food related issues, including pursuing the Food Systems Director position. The Harp administration seems to be holding true to promises made at the Mayoral Food & Health Forum.

### **Get Healthy CT – Alycia, Augusta Mueller**

- Augusta thanked everyone for their attendance at the September 25<sup>th</sup> launch event. Recapped that Get Healthy CT is a collaborative organization focused around food action and physical activity. Objective is to use resources that already exist and mobilize around them, hence the NHFPC's involvement.
- Explained the Weight Loss Challenge – the community is pledging to lose 375,000 lbs., approx. 1.4 lbs. per resident; there is no specific time limit. There will be a press event around this on January 10<sup>th</sup> (tentative).
- Starting in January Get Healthy CT wants to create synergy with NHFPC and Working Group efforts. Augusta would like to be made aware of relevant events so that they can include them on their web site. Please send Augusta events and calendar items.
- Alycia noted that there appears to be an information gap – the community wants more programs around getting healthy, cooking, exercise – but they aren't utilizing the ones that already exist. Open Schools, for example – people aren't aware and aren't using – we need to overcome this. Objective is to centralize information on GHCT website, build on efforts, generate more funding, etc.
- Diana noted the need to be sensitive to those who don't need to lose weight – sometimes the problem is people don't get enough food. Maria noted we may want to use wording like “maintain healthy weight” rather than “lose weight.” Catherine stated that there are ways to combine physical activity with food via gardens, urban agriculture. Tagan noted that we need to clarify that the food issues the NHFPC represents go beyond just cooking; we will incorporate all aspects of our work and all events into Get Healthy CT. Alycia reiterated that this effort is about the full Council, not just cooking and food education; we are at the beginning of a process that is evolving.
- Augusta noted that there will be a form to on the GetHealthyCT website for events to be submitted. In the meantime people can send them to Augusta via email.
- **Action**
  - Ellen to send an email to the NHFPC list requesting that event information be sent to Augusta at [gethealthyct.newhaven@gmail.com](mailto:gethealthyct.newhaven@gmail.com).

### **Food Waste class project findings, Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies**

- Karen Seto and Shannon Murray of Yale FES introduced a student group who presented project findings for an undergraduate course, *Urbanization, Food Systems and the Environment*. The project focused on increasing access to nutritious food by reducing food waste. The students requested input and feedback from the NHFPC on their findings.
- The group identified three primary actions:
  - Reduce in-store waste in small stores – decrease food waste while increasing the affordability and accessibility of perishable and packaged foods.

- Facilitate partnerships between small stores and hunger relief organizations – increase donations while decreasing food waste.
- Facilitate partnerships between small stores and local farms – increase composting while providing fresh, affordable produce in underserved neighborhoods.
- Diana stated that these are all good ideas, but there are barriers. A small relief agency would have limited storage, transport, refrigeration; they can't take too much food. You need to match the size of the relief agency and the store – e.g., DESK is large but small stores couldn't provide enough food, resulting in waste of resources going to multiple locations.
- Diana also noted that 55-60% of the food stream at DESK is rescued food.
- Others present made a variety of comments: Students may want to use the term “food rescue” rather than “food waste” – people don't want to be fed waste. Excess farm produce does go to many relief organizations. There are Health Dept. issues about precooked food, temperatures, etc. Jacquie asked about the kind of compost, cooked vs. raw food – most composters only want raw food. Farmers may not want to sell their produce at reduced prices. A variety of produce may not be available for donation, there may be a lot of something relief orgs don't want, e.g., bok choy. There are legal prohibitions about transporting produce and compost in the same area. There is a trend toward municipal composting to put burden on the city rather than on small individual efforts.
- Diana stated that there has to be a consistency in the partnerships with food providers – DESK need food every day, others need it on other schedules.
- Alycia noted that the Food Assistance Working Group is putting together a food pantry reference that includes what each organization accepts, when they accept it, Health Dept. issues, etc.
- Alycia summarized by noting that many of these actions are and have been taking place on a piecemeal basis over a number of years. The issues are more systemic, about sustainability, etc., and we need to resolve them.
- Alycia thanked the students and indicated that she and others in the group would be glad to talk with the students further if they would like.

### **NHFPC Administration – 15 minutes**

#### Fiduciary update – Diana

- There is no formal budget report from Nicole as yet. The budget has likely not changed significantly within the last several months as the primary expenditure is salary support for administrative staff.
- The Council has not yet received its annual financial allocation from the City. Tagan asked Sean Matteson about it, who will check with the Comptroller. He will let Tagan know, and Tagan will update Diana.

#### Ad hoc committee for new member selection update – Alycia/Tagan

- Rob has formally stepped down, as she has moved away from New Haven, so there are now two open seats. Caty's membership is pending.
- Areas of focus for new members: early childhood, people of color, faith-based, school food, food business.
- **Action**
  - Alycia and Tagan are working to identify new members; suggestions welcome!

#### Annual Report

- We need to get this in before end of current administration.
- Caty offered to take it on as a project.
- **Action**
  - Working Group chairs to brainstorm year's successes and email to Ellen, who will file them/forward to Caty.

#### New/alternate meeting time for monthly NHFPC meetings

- For discussion – issue is that it's difficult for some working people and youth to make a morning meeting.
- We could alternate mornings/evenings but would likely lose consistency. Also difficult to get a quorum.
- We could hold bi-annual evening meetings and invite the community, a la the Food Summit. Student groups might be able to assist with logistics. The group liked this idea.
- Tagan reminded us that, per the by-laws, we are scheduled to have an annual meeting in February.
- **Action**
  - Ellen to add planning for the February annual meeting to the December agenda.
  - Council members to review the by-laws prior to the December meeting.
  - Review by-laws about attendance issues for Council members; consider enforcement.

## **Working Groups – brief update from chair**

### Food Assistance - Billy

#### Results of Food Advocate Training

- Training took place on October 26<sup>th</sup>, a collaboration between NHFPC, End Hunger CT and CARE. Twelve people were trained from 50 who applied. Internship projects focused on food issues are in process.
- Four of the advocate trainees will attend the Empty Plates Food Symposium in Middletown on December 5<sup>th</sup>.
- In light of November 1<sup>st</sup> SNAP cuts, several of the advocates have told their stories at press events with Rosa DeLauro. Multiple publications, including Yale News, have covered these. Yale School of Public Health will shoot video at Stop and Shop featuring the advocates telling their stories about SNAP, which Rosa DeLauro's office has indicated she will be interested in using in her efforts. .
- Alycia questioned if there has been increased use at local food pantries and banks as a result of SNAP cuts. Tracy noted that CT Food Bank is stepping up their advocacy efforts

#### Commodity Supplemental Food Program Advocacy

- This is a program for seniors, who are less likely than other to use or be able to access soup kitchens and food pantries or to apply for SNAP, and who need to obtain their food from trusted sites.
- FAWG is gathering signatures, in partnership with End Hunger CT, for letters about the CSFP to all seven members of CT congressional delegation.
- A draft of the letter was circulated and the Council gave its initial endorsement. The Council will vote on signing the letter when a final draft is available.
- Suggestion made that we may want to send the final draft to the Mayor's office for their endorsement, maybe others, as well.

### Urban Agriculture – Jamilah/Catherine

- There was a community meeting with New Haven Farm about the idea of community farm on English Mall on Peck Street on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Lots of good reasons on both sides of the discussion. This was a starting conversation and the project will only move forward if there is community support.
- Construction is in process at the Ivy Street garden greenhouse. It is a collaboration; Neighborhood Housing Services spearheaded it.
- At the next Urban Ag Working Group meeting on December 12<sup>th</sup> the group will start to plan the Urban Ag resource center. Anyone interested, please attend.

### Cooking & Food Education – Cara

- (Meeting had to adjourn due to time limitations before chair could update.)

## **COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS**

- CEIO Pilot Partners gathering on Thursday, November 21st, from 10:00am-3:00pm at Lyric Hall, 827 Whalley Avenue, New Haven. RSVP to Sonja Ahuja at [sonjagai@optonline.net](mailto:sonjagai@optonline.net).
- CEIO-sponsored workshop *Let's Talk About Race*, Saturday, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 9:45am - 4:00pm, Wilson Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library, 303 Washington Avenue, New Haven. Open to NHFPC members, affiliate members, Working Group chairs/active members and CitySeed staff and board members. Lunch and child care will be provided. RSVP ASAP to Ellen at [staff@nhfoodpolicy.org](mailto:staff@nhfoodpolicy.org).
- Catherine announced the New Haven Land Trust is seeking a part-time Executive Director. A detailed job description is available at [www.newhavenlandtrust.org/employment](http://www.newhavenlandtrust.org/employment).

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**Next Food Policy Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, December 18th – 8:00-9:45am**  
**City Hall Meeting Room #1**  
**Contact: [Staff@NHFoodPolicyCouncil.org](mailto:Staff@NHFoodPolicyCouncil.org)**

### Upcoming Meeting Dates for Working Groups:

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Cooking & Food Education	Monday, December 16 <sup>th</sup>	6:00pm-7:30pm	City Hall
Economic Development/Food Business	Meet w/ Urban Ag Working Group		
Food Assistance	Friday, December 6 <sup>th</sup>	9:00am-10:30am	United Way, 370 James Street
School Food	TBA	6:00pm-7:30pm	Neighborhood Housing Services
Urban Agriculture	Thursday, December 12 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am-10:00am	City Hall