



New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC)

Meeting Minutes April 16th, 2014

Items Voted on:

1. **THE REV. ALEX DYER, OF SAINT PAUL & SAINT JAMES CHURCH AND LOAVES & FISHES, NOMINATED AS COUNCIL MEMBER, APPROVED BY NHFPC.**

Attendees:

Council members: Tagan Engel, Kim Hart, Frank Mitchell, Caty Poole, Alycia Santilli, Anika Thrower, Maria Tupper

Affiliate and community members: Billy Bromage, Anne Somsel, Laura Luttrell, Caitlin Aylward, Brandon Honoré, Alex Dyer, Justine Appel, Hannah Croasmun, Amanda Proscino, Mary Chervenak, Ellen Pendergast

New Member Selection

- The Rev'd Alex Dyer has expressed interest in joining the Council. He is Executive Director of Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry, as well as Priest in Charge at Saint James and Saint Paul Episcopal Church. He has been working with Billy on the Food Assistance Working Group for the past year.
- Alex stated that he is passionate about connecting people to food. His objective at Loaves & Fishes is to provide the biggest quality bag possible – healthy food that includes frozen meat and fresh produce. He believes that church should be about feeding people and addresses food access from a faith perspective, with a sense of abundance, hospitality and generosity. He is interested in strategic planning around food banks and pantries – e.g., coordination of locations, days and times, to make it easier for people to be able to access food when and where they need it.
- **CALLED FOR VOTE ON REVEREND ALEX DYER BECOMING COUNCIL MEMBER, APPROVED BY NHFPC.**

Brandon Honoré, Legislative Fellow with the Office of Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro

- Brandon has a one year fellowship with Rep. Rosa DeLauro and is focused on SNAP and WIC issues, as well as others. He is travelling the state to listen and get perspective on what's happening in various locations around Connecticut.
- Questions arose about SNAP cuts and how to frame the conversation in order to get positive legislation passed. Brandon agreed that there is unprecedented divisiveness in the House now, which presents a major challenge. He advised that the assertion that SNAP helps to stimulate the economy is a persuasive stance with those on the right. We need to present a convincing narrative, a framework for understanding who the people are who really need and use SNAP. The issue ties into minimum wage and affordable housing issues. The populist narrative has been lost, and we need to redefine it.
- Tagan noted that the NHFPC has been finding people to tell their compelling stories through the Food Advocate training. We have to dispel the myths and find data to support the facts. Also disseminate the negative aspects of food subsidies, how they affect people's health, and the increased health care costs that result. Billy stated that Rosa's position on these issues has been clear, but if she needs stories to support them, we have them, let us know.
- Mary Chervenak, director of the New Haven WIC program, noted that New Haven has the largest WIC program in the state; enrollment is down, however, which they are working to correct. The New Haven WIC program has four permanent and four satellite offices. Flat funding and the state's funding schedule make it difficult for them to plan and expand. Mary noted that WIC is a proven success – every dollar spent saves \$3-4 in health care costs. They have a major focus on breast feeding. Anika added that WIC has been providing healthier food packages and health education since 2009.

Food Systems Director opportunity – review of job description

- Alycia explained that the job description will be used to secure matching funds for the Food Systems Director position; we have targeted \$300,000 for two years. We have a commitment for a portion of it from the Kendall

Foundation, though it is not clear exactly how much. We plan to use the mayor's office to leverage local funding sources.

- A draft of the job description was circulated to Council members and affiliates earlier this week and we are seeking comments on it. Alycia developed the job description by merging language about the position from the *Food Action Plan* with the recent New Haven Land Trust Executive Director job description.
- Caty questioned the inclusion of short term projects in the job description. Alycia explained that they are included at the City's request in order to be able to readily demonstrate success. Caty suggested that they be included as a separate document but not be included as part of the public record of the job description. Maria and others concurred.
- Comments to the job description included: To add fundraising to the summary; add grass roots up and top down coalition-building; add develop relationships with congressional offices; add strengthen and utilize working groups.
- A question was asked about the timeline for the position; Alycia advised that the job has been earmarked for July 1st pending funding. Caty asked is we have a target date for submitting the job description. We first need to meet with Economic Development for approval to submit to mayor's office. We also need to have a conversation with mayor's office to clarify the position.
- A question was posed about the reporting of the position. The mayor's office has recommended that there is more security for the position if it reports into a department vs. to the mayor's office, and has suggested the Community Services Administration as the appropriate department. However, we are trying to get the position into the Economic Development Department instead. Tagan noted that there are precedents for this in other cities.
- Anika questioned why there are no educational requirements in the job description. Alycia explained that these will be provided by the City's Human Resources Dept., as well as necessary computer skills, etc.
- A conversation ensued about administrative support for this role, which will be needed for the success of the position. Maria suggested that it be built in to the position from the beginning. Caty noted that we could obtain administrative job descriptions and present the two as a package; also, administrative support may be able to be shared with another department.
- Frank suggested that we get messaging about this new position into the community so that people are thinking and talking about it. We need publicity for it. We also need to talk to the City about involving us in their communications and outreach, and using us as part of their network.

Structural Work for NHFPC

Caitlin provided an update on the Structure Committee's work.

- The Committee will propose an amendment to the by-laws regarding organizational affiliation. Currently the by-laws require that affiliates be associated with an organization; in order to broaden Council representation and be more inclusive, the Committee recommends that individuals also be affiliate members. Caty concurred that the fewer restrictions we have, the better off we'll be.
- **Action**
 - Caty will develop recommended language for this amendment to the by-laws, as well as identify what the process should be to amend them.
- The Committee is developing Council and Affiliate Member job descriptions for recruitment purposes. Ellen sent out drafts earlier this week; comments are welcome.
- Kim noted that these written descriptions are very useful for her to involve people in the community who are not familiar with the Council. She will distribute them out to No More Crumbs and Mothers for Justice.
- **Action**
 - Ellen to include Working Group chairs in email list for review of draft documents.
- Tagan mentioned that the Committee also discussed identifying a timekeeper for NHFPC meetings to keep them on track, and alternating chairs at each meeting to distribute the responsibility among others.
- The Committee is looking to clarify the Council's processes, including defining the steps for electing new members and for general decision-making.
- Another objective of the Committee is to identify ways to build a grassroots network, to facilitate information coming in from and going out to our communities.

Update of NHFPC Youth Internship Program

- Caitlin noted that applications for the Youth Internship closed earlier in the week and that there were 30 applicants for five positions.
- A steering committee has been formed from various youth organizations. They decided to move the start date for the internships from July to October, to allow for summer vacations, summer jobs, settling into a new school year, etc. The selection process will take place in September.
- The steering committee will meet weekly, like the Mayor's Youth Council, and will utilize that group's best practices.

Working Groups

Policy Advancement Committee – Alycia

- As described above, PAC is focused on the Food Systems Direction position.

Food Assistance - Billy

- Working on Summer Food Program with End Hunger CT – planning “Summer Blitz.” June 14th is statewide kick-off event, goal is 200 people city-wide. Group will meet prior to starting door-knocking, location TBD, maybe Goffe Street Park? Alycia recommends starting Saturday morning door-to-door no earlier than 10 or 11am. There will be a party following the door-knocking courtesy of EHCT.

Urban Agriculture - Laura

- The WG group has decided on a new name to be more inclusive throughout the community – City Farm & Garden WG.
- A sub-group has met to work on the Resource Center. They are formulating a plan for storefronts, a pilot project for the resource center that will launch in the fall. Fall projects to include how to build raised beds, planting garlic, etc. Location in Dixwell or Newhallville neighborhoods. Staffing by master gardeners, Youth at Work. Alex suggested looking in to Hartford's BOTS pots, where people are learning to grow food by tending the pots, making fresh food available to people who need it, and creating artwork on the containers.

Cooking & Food Education - Tagan

- Fifty people have applied to Master Cooks Corps for 24 openings. Training to take place at The Grove. Need volunteer assistants for the two sessions taking place the last weekend April and the first weekend in May. Nadine is developing the curriculum.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

- Catherine Bradshaw is recuperating from major surgery. Family is coordinating assistance via Lotsa Helping Hands. Food is welcome. We can coordinate freezer food over next few weeks. Frank offered to deliver it to Guilford. Alycia will assist with coordination.
- Bioregional Group is holding a potluck/film on Thursday, April 24th at Barnard School. Activities from 4:30-8pm.
- UWGNH Hands-On Saturday Community Volunteering on May 3rd, 9am-1pm at New Haven Farms.

Next Food Policy Council Meeting
Wednesday, May 21st – 8:00-9:45am
City Hall Meeting Room #1
Contact: Staff@NHFoodPolicyCouncil.org

Upcoming Meeting Dates for Working Groups and Committees:

Cooking & Food Education	To be announced		
Economic Development/Food Business	Meet w/ Urban Ag Working Group		
School Food	Monday, April 28 th	5:00-6:30pm	Wilbur Cross High School Atrium
Food Assistance	Thursday, May 1 st	4:00-5:30pm	Stop & Shop, 150 Whalley Avenue Community Room
Urban Agriculture	Friday, May 2 nd	8:30-10:00am	City Hall, Meeting Room 3
Policy Advancement	Wednesday, May 7 th	8:45-9:45am	City Hall, Meeting Room 1