



New Haven Food Policy Council (NHFPC)

Meeting Minutes May 21st, 2014

Attendees:

Council members: Rev. Alex Dyer, Tagan Engel, Kim Hart, Caty Poole, Diana Richter, Alycia Santilli, Anika Thrower

Affiliate and community members: Tracy Helin, Jill Meyerhoff, Catherine Bradshaw, Billy Bromage, Pat Hagen, Abby Shelton, Caitlin Aylward, Steve Updegrave, Mark Firla, Justin Elicker, Cheryl Liburd, Ellen Pendergast

Working Groups – Brief report from chair /council member representative

Policy Advancement Committee – Alycia Santilli

- Alycia explained that recently PAC's primary work has been directed toward the Food Systems Director position, which is a separate item on the agenda and will be covered later in the meeting.
- PAC is also working with City Plan Department on zoning changes; PAC has engaged a law student intern for the summer. Currently in process of setting up meeting with Karen Gilvarg and Tom Talbot of City Plan. If anyone is interested in being involved with this meeting, let Alycia know.

Food Assistance – Billy Bromage

- Alex Dyer and Kim Hart are taking over co-chairmanship of FAWG from Billy, who has led the group for a year and a half.

Summer Meals Blitz

- Plans are in place for June 14th at Goffe Street Park. They have started gathering volunteers. Billy passed around a form for NHFPC attendees to sign up to talk to their various constituencies in order to identify and gather more volunteers. Abby created a Survey Monkey for volunteers to sign up;
 - **Action**
 - Ellen to share the link with the NHFPC email list.
- Volunteers will meet at 9am, End Hunger CT! will give a brief talk. Walking maps and transportation will be provided to targeted neighborhoods. Sign-up is important so organizers know how many people to expect and can thereby determine the best way to deploy them. Volunteers will canvass door-to-door in pairs from 10am-12 noon. Neighborhoods will be prioritized so focus is on areas where there is least awareness of the program. When canvassing is done there will be a celebration at Goffe Street Park with a band, food, tee-shirt giveaway, funding permitting. Wrap up will be around 2pm.
- Main push now is for volunteers. If people don't want to go door to door, they can do other things. Tagan asked if they are focusing on alder and high school student involvement? Tagan and Caitlin will let the youth organizations with which they are involved know – New Haven Promise, Common Ground, New Haven Academy, Youth Unleashed, Citywide Youth Coalition. Billy noted that he is working with several alders already, including Dolores Colón.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

- They should get word this week if CT has been included in appropriations. CT has been working with other states, MD and RI, to push this through.

Food Guides

- FAWG is making progress on neighborhood food guides, similar to Street Sheet. Lily Torres is working on a Spanish translation. Sherry Grant of CT Food Bank is gathering updated information on food sites. Target completion is for this summer.

City Farm & Garden – Tagan Engel, Justin Elicker

- Melissa Spear and Jacqueline Maisonpierre are co-chairing the group; Laura Luttrell is providing assistance. Focus is on Resource Center work. They are talking with Project Storefronts to develop a "trial" resource center

for outreach and to gather information as to what resources people want. They are working with NHLT, which has applied for a grant from the New Alliance Foundation.

- Justin advised that the city is willing to work with them on one Project Storefronts location, an ATM space. Typically the city provides a trial space with the intention of subsequently renting it; that is an issue since we don't know if we want to rent this space long-term. Justin is setting up a meeting with Project Storefronts.
- New Haven Farms and NHLT are collaborating on farm space on Ferry Street in Fair Haven.

Cooking & Food Education – Tagan

- Over 40 cooks participated in Master Cooks Corps training over two weekends in April/May. The second half of training will be scheduled in June. CitySeed has offered to help raise funds; Elm City Market has offered to provide food. There are some funds for cooking kits, and plan is to spread kits around the city at Library locations so they can be 'checked out' by those trained to use them for use in the community.
- Diana offered DESK as a training site. If anyone has other location ideas, please contact Tagan.

Economic Development

- No report as group has not been meeting regularly pending a co-chair and NHFPC member representative.

School Food Working Group

Abby Shelton, who has been chairing the group, requested that the Council discuss the structure and function of this Working Group and provided some background.

- The WG restarted in January after a six-month hiatus. Initially there was a high level of interest among parents and community members, and about 30 people attended the group at the Annual Meeting in February. Since then, community attendance has dwindled. Given the diverse nature of attendees – students, parents, food service workers, etc. – it is difficult to plan meeting times and locations that everyone can make. Abby has been thinking that it may not be practical to hold planned monthly meetings but to recruit parents to attend meetings at individual school locations instead.

An extended conversation took place to try to determine what the NHFPC role could or would be in the area of school food, which included numerous comments, some of which are highlighted below:

- Tagan indicated that she had been leading the SFWG but since being asked by the Mayor's office to participate in a steering committee on scratch cooking to help transform food in schools, it was difficult to balance leading the working group and being on the committee. Tagan added that there is a lot of interest in school food, and a lot of complaints. She agreed that, because of the various attendees, that meeting times and structure are challenges. The big question is, what role does the Council want to play in school food?
- Alycia, Mark Firla, Alex, Catherine and Billy added in various ways that there are possibly contrasting approaches here, e.g., collaborative vs. oppositional, policy change vs. community empowerment. The Council can take both approaches that Tagan, as an individual, cannot.
- Billy and Anika both commented that often times parents don't want to hear the facts about the improvements that have been made, limitations on funding, or how parents' habits at home can have a big influence on what kids decide to eat in school.
- Steve Updegrove stated that kids throw food away that they don't like, not because it's bad or not healthy. There's a lot of waste. Parents want kids to eat! The school district has made tremendous improvements, with vending machines, whole grains, etc. We need to get out the information out to parents as to what is there, what's been done, USDA standards, etc., otherwise we are starting from scratch all the time. How do we get parents involved? School wellness committees are one way; they will be in all schools starting in Sept. They are a forum for interaction, to find out about anything related to health. A venue to inform.
- Tagan stated, and the general consensus was, that we need more conversation – organizing, gathering voices, then determine our objectives and capacity, and that if the Council was going to play a continuing role in school food that we'd need some tangible wins, otherwise energy gets lost.
- Steve suggested getting more concrete about a specific task, such as creating healthier cafeteria environments, eliminating candy in machines and for fundraisers, and unhealthy foods for celebrations. It is part of the Wellness policy to create a quiet environment and model appropriate behaviors.
- Catherine suggested putting an ad hoc group together to work on this. Topic was tabled due to time constraints.

Structure Committee – Caty Poole

- The Structure Committee recommended a members-only meeting for the Council members to discuss ways to strengthen the Council, which was held at City Hall on May 12th. Nine of the eleven current members were in attendance. The current membership requirements, as defined in the By-laws, were agreed to.
- The committee is working on a proposed amendment to the By-laws that would broaden the definition of affiliate membership to include individuals in addition to organizations. A two-thirds majority is needed for a by-law change, and notice has to be sent out five days prior to a vote for review. A vote at the next Council meeting, in June, is planned.
- The committee has identified the need to expand and, in some places, establish our grassroots network to ensure the Council has representation in all geographic and demographic areas of the city and to improve our connections for organizing and outreach, as well as from different areas of the food system. The committee recommended a mapping exercise to determine where we have representation by “point people” (community leaders, management teams, alders, etc.) and where additional coverage is needed.
- A brief mapping exercise was conducted:
 - We have a fair amount of geographic representation – what about racially and socioeconomically?
 - There are holes in Amity, Quinpiac Meadows, Fair Haven Heights.
 - Catherine noted that Early Childhood Collaborative would give us locations all over the city.
 - Need to shore up our contact with Board of Alders, especially those that are food-oriented – Dolores Colon, Brian Wingate, Al Paolillo, Delphine Clyburn.
 - **Action**
 - Caitlin will organize the information into a document for review by Structure Committee, to strategize how to obtain support where needed, organize monthly communications, etc.

Food Systems Director

- Alycia reported that there was a meeting with Becky Bombero of the Mayor’s office after the last Council meeting. The Food Systems Director position has been included in the City budget as a line item with a \$1 earmark, which includes a benefits package valued at 40% of annual salary. This indicates real backing and a high level of commitment to the position.
- The Kendall Foundation has indicated a commitment to the position of \$40-100K over two years. As part of the grant application Kendall has requested that we provide an implementation plan to set the groundwork for a successful launch of the Food System Director position. Plan to include who is working on food issues in the city, connections and contacts, what support staff will be required, etc. Tagan will coordinate the gathering of information.
- The Mayor’s office has asked for work plan and logic model, which Caitlin is working on. The goal is to get the City to make asks for local matches. There is a lot of short-term background work that needs to be done.
- Diana inquired about an interview committee for the position – Tagan indicated that one will be assembled further into the process.

NHFPC Administration

Fiduciary update

- Diana reported that the Council currently has \$8,661.57. The staff position is the Council’s primary expense.
- Diana will ask Nicole Berube to invoice the City for the 2014 annual funding.
- Diana has recommended that the Council adopt a financial request/approval form. She will provide a draft for review.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS – 5 minutes

- CitySeed is holding a Community Conversation in Fair Haven on May 29th, 6-7:30pm at the Fair Haven Library. The location of this year’s Fair Haven Farmers’ Market will be discussed, among other topics.
-

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

Upcoming Meeting Dates for Working Groups and Committees:

Structure Committee	Wednesday, May 28 th	9:00-10:00am	CitySeed, 817 Grand Avenue
Policy Advancement Committee	Wednesday, June 4 th	8:45-9:45am	City Hall, Meeting Room 1
City Farm & Garden	Friday, June 6 th	8:30-10:00am	City Hall, Meeting Room 3
Food Assistance	Friday, June 6 th	9:00-10:30am	Community Action Agency 419 Whalley Avenue
Cooking & Food Education	To be announced		
Economic Development/Food Business	Meet w/ Urban Ag Working Group		
School Food	To be announced		