



New Haven Food Policy Council

Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2012

Welcome - Meeting facilitator Monique Centrone-Stefani & Tagan Engel

Welcome – Potential new council member: Sandra Pittman, Chef/Owner, Sandra's Next Generation Soul Food Restaurant (not in attendance)

Absent: Law clinic, Frank, Diana, James, Sung In send regrets.

Present: Tagan Engel, Caty Poole, Fred Cofrancesco, Monique, Rob Freeman, Skye Cornell, Nicole Berube, Cara Donovan, Laura Mattaliano(Health), Catherine Bradshaw, Sonya Ahuja, Billy Bromage, Sharon Taylor (CAHS), Jennifer Daddio (Elm City Market), Anika Johnson, Maria Tupper, Joel Tolman, Luray Shepard, Kate Ballantine, Alycia Santilli,

Note taker: Joel Tolman

Updates: 7 minutes

- **Farm Bill session in Hartford – Billy**

At LOB, several organizations hosted forum with Rosa DeLauro and Joe Courtney about the Farm Bill – with a particular focus on SNAP and TANF. Republicans are threatening major cuts, with the eye to passing these responsibilities on to nonprofits and the faith community. Just under 20% of emergency food comes from nonprofits and faith; the other 80% of publicly funded.

FRAC has some resources, emphasized the need for advocacy. Sharon Chassie from CAHS is coordinating some Connecticut-based advocacy.

Stan Sorkin – CT Food Association – may be an interesting group to engage in the Food Policy Council.

Billy circulated email list.

ECM market representative expressed an interest in connecting New Haven-based food vendors to the council. Tagan offered to follow up.

Joe Courtney described advocacy activity focused on living on SNAP for a week. Mario Batali is doing this right now.

- **Weight of the Nation – Laura**

Collaboration between HBO documentary and a number of other partners. National campaign, launching with 4-part documentary, focusing on obesity epidemic. Parts focus on (1) choices, (2) consequences, (3) children, and (4) policy options.

For the NH Health Department, a test for the start of a larger campaign.

DVDs are available for other screenings. Copies can also be ordered through Weight of the Nation website. It is available streaming on the web site.

Tagan recommended using videos as part of neighborhood outreach.

- Double value coupons at farmers markets – Nicole

Nicole introduced Double Value coupon program. CitySeed has already seen increase in reimbursement rates. The way it works: Come to central terminal at CitySeed table. They swipe EBT card, and then add up to \$10 in matching funds, for fruits and vegetables only. They are a different color to distinguish use. Vendors are a little confused, but customers seem fine with it. ECM is also part of this partnership, so soon people who visit market will be able to get coupons to use on local foods at the market

Currently work only with SNAP customers; these are currently low redeemers, so decided to focus there.

Examining and Planning Our Work (see reverse for details)

- Overview and new paid position at CitySeed to assist in Food System work - *10 minutes*

Nicole introduced relationship between CitySeed and New Haven Food Policy Council. CitySeed helped to found, has always acted as fiduciary. Jennifer McTiernan, ED of CitySeed, was chair of NHFPC at the start. In addition, CitySeed provided staffing to the council ... administrative support, etc. When Jennifer left, Roberta Friedman became chair, but CitySeed continued to staff. When funding got tight for CitySeed, they were no longer able to provide that role. The goal was always to re-engage to help strengthen NHFPC; now the resources are there to do that, thanks in part to CEIO.

CEIO is now working with us to create sustainability for the NHFPC, but also working with CitySeed to improve outreach and inclusiveness. The community outreach piece is a priority that NHFPC and CitySeed share.

Tagan: Other cities have city office to support NHFPC; some are supported by nonprofits. Tagan has been talking with a variety of these entities, to get a sense of what options we have and what works best. Looking in particular at Hartford Food Systems/Hartford Food Policy Council as a model of how this might work – where there's a similar non-profit/food policy council relationship.

The CEIO grant could fund a paid staff person to support work of food policy council. We struggled about where this position would be housed. Given CitySeed's focus on improving food systems community-wide, and their role as the administrator and fiduciary of the council, this feels like a natural home for the position and natural next step for CitySeed. The coordinator would potentially (1) help staff the council, including communications, organizing committees, etc., and (2) work on building partnerships with other organizations working on food systems issues. The NHFPC will get a chance to edit a job description; but this is what has bubbled up so far.

Objective for today's conversation: What are priorities?

Monique: We are trying to do the work of the NHFPC, while also re-developing the structure of the council to make it more effective?

OUR WORK

Organizational strengthening

- Council roles and responsibilities (CEIO can support this work – e.g., by helping us use technology to facilitate our work)
- Working groups

Community engagement

(This was a large part of the original purpose of the council – through members and affiliate members. An important next stage of the work more grassroots engagement, with many more people working to improve food access in their communities)

Rob: Are there other cities we can learn from?

Tagan: Mark Winnie, formerly at Hartford Food Systems and now national consultant on these issues ... Detroit may be an example of a place where community engagement is a role of the council. Other cities have non-profit that does programmatic work; smaller advisory council working on policy. There is a general sense that food policy councils are new, and being a trailblazer is good.

Monique: We're trying to evaluate as we build a new structure, building a reflexive process.

Catherine: The work that we're proposing is pretty advanced, in terms of its reflective nature. Many, as Tagan said, are more programmatic in nature.

Groundbreaking work ... There's a disconnect in many cities between people doing emergency food work on the ground and policy conversations.

- **All work on the table – 5 minutes**

Food Action Plan: We have been working on this for the past year, with support from CARE.

A potential plan for moving forward: Each food policy council member acts as a liaison to a working group ... for example, urban ag, elderly food access, WIC and SNAP, etc.

Out of a meeting last Friday, CEIO design team developed a list of potential work group areas. What are the criteria for deciding work groups for right now?

- Urgency?
- How developed?
- Potential impact?
- Organization/group ready to steer the work?

Working groups are inclusive, flexible in size, include one member or affiliate member as a liaison (they need not be the chair/leader of that group; they are instead the connective tissue).

Tagan provided overview of potential working group areas.

WIC and SNAP outreach

CT Food Bank is growing this area.

Billy: CARE is focused on SNAP, not so much on WIC.

Anika: 4 WIC offices are already doing WIC outreach. What outcome are we seeking? Can we make this measurable?

Nicole/Tagan: Two potential outcomes: How many are enrolled, and how much are people using it?

Alycia: We've gone back and forth about connecting numerical targets to specific parts of the food policy action plan.

Catherine: We can look at two different levels: At the population level, and at the program level. We want to have population indicators and program measures.

Tagan: One of the jobs of each working group will be to identify objectives, outcomes, etc.

Nicole: It would be really wise to give the groups some tools for doing that work.

Urban Agriculture

Tagan: There's a lot going on here ... Often very volunteer-driven, which means that coordination is sometimes difficult.

Monique: Sustainable Food Project should be part of this group.

Rebecca: What is the goal of this conversation? To identify potential working groups, or something else?

Some of these working groups will be intentionally big tents; others will be targeted and ebb and flow more.

Consensus: The urban ag working group is ready to roll.

Food Access for Seniors

ECM is doing outreach to local seniors, so would be an important part of this group.

Department of Elderly Services has done survey, has come together with CARE and others do identify strategies. Urgent and good momentum.

Eliminate WIC from this statement

Common Ground students doing senior project on senior access.

Economic Development and Food Business

Already up and running ... there are numerous projects happening with EDC and Town Green, but a coordinated effort by NHFPC members or participants to effectively support the strategies in the Food Action Plan is needed.

Having Sandra involved, as a restaurant owner, might be helpful.

Cooking and Food Education

There is lots of interest from CWYC, WIC offices, etc.

ECM is offering 1/week classes, free classes.

Cooking Matters is offering lots of training for low-income groups on cooking with whole foods.

Common Ground's new teaching kitchen is 1 more community resource.

Health Dept. has submitted grant with Cooking Matters and Bright Bodies to bring program into high schools

Can we bring together this diverse group doing cooking demos, and potentially use Cooking Matters as a model?

Rebecca: There's a danger that many of our organizations are working on multiple issue areas. It seems like there's just one organization for whom this is a central focus.

Tagan: There may be opportunities to use this as part of a community engagement strategy, as a communication hub, rather than as a working group ...

Emergency Food Donations

There are some pockets of activity here, but not as much momentum.

Most restaurants are getting better

ECM is interested in following up with the CT Food Bank ... Kate is the person who works with growers and distributors.

Health Department: Are there food safety barriers that we need to address?

Kate: There are opportunities for both prepared food and fresh product.

Compost

Commercial compost pickup ... Office of sustainability is interested

Compost as a resource for local gardens ...

It's a little loose at the moment.

It's something that may require someone to start a commercial composting outfit.

John's refuse has a food waste business that goes into composting. It's a for profit company.

School Food

May be an actual official, ongoing group. Needs more conversation.

Monique noted that there are topical groups that need to coordinate a number of people and efforts. There are also groups that are about the maintenance of the organization. There are also single issue groups here ... e.g., the fast food policy group. What are the levels of groups, what are the priorities?

Luray: There may need to be an opportunity for aggregating contact information, etc., on the web site on some of the topics that don't justify a working group.

Nicole: We want to be sure that we're thinking about our community engagement strategies within the working groups. E.g., there's a lot of community demand around cooking and food education ... wouldn't that be a powerful potential working group from a community engagement point of view?

Community Engagement

Working Groups are one tool for community engagement ...

- Providing an opportunity for voice
- Creating opportunities to take action

... But working groups are not the only important vehicle for community engagement.

Events

- Open Space Forum
- Community Conversations around Food Action Plan
- Food Day?
- Participating in other people's gatherings on an ongoing basis
 - o Neighborhood events, like Quinnipiac Neighborhood Stroll
 - o YMCA Healthy Kids Summit
 - o Massaro Farms
 - o Neighborhood meetings
- Films, speakers, cooking events, skills shares, walking tours, etc., with an opportunity for discussion.
- Project Store Fronts, bus shelters, etc., offering public access to the food policy action plan.
- Neighborhood-based organizing by CARE and others.
- Working through partner organizations to show up at their events.

Alycia: 2 distinct concepts: outreach to share information and build awareness, and engaging community members to engage other people in the work!

Examining and Planning Our Work – From Meeting Agenda

- **Overview**
 - CitySeed and NHFPC history and relationship
 - New Community Food Systems Coordinator position at CitySeed (Tagan)
 - Food Action Plan review strategies
 - **All work on the table**
 - Organizational strengthening work (working groups and council operational roles) – CEIO grant *(there is also organizational work that CitySeed is doing w/CEIO)*
 - Community Outreach and engagement – CEIO grant
 - Food Action Plan – complete and outreach
 - Food Summit – plan and organize
 - Annual reports – ongoing
 - Website update – ongoing
 - Aetna Grant – ongoing
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 - **Planning for next steps**
 1. Planning working groups
 2. Discussion on council priorities
 3. Begin to plan community outreach
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NHFPC Organizational Strengthening Work

- Strengthen organizational structure of council by establishing
 - **working groups** and
 - **operational roles for council:** (ex: chair/co-chair, note taker, finances, web master etc.)
- Create communication structure and info sharing for working groups and council members
- Revisit mission and goals
- Clarify affiliate membership
- Clarify role of Community Food Systems Coordinator
- Amend NHFPC ordinance to include council's role in approving members

Community Engagement Work (drawn from conversations with NHFPC and our partners)

- Community feedback for Food Action Plan to strengthen actions and assist with setting priorities
- Community conversations/open space forum on food issues to inform council and engage people
- Potential focus on engaging youth in creating change on Food issues in NH.
- Use creative, relevant methods to engage community members on food issues such as:
 - Cooking classes (cooking matters, etc..)
 - Pot lucks
 - Film screenings (weigh of the nation, food inc... etc)
 - Youth reflection or documentaries (common ground and ESUMS students)
 - Garden building/food growing events
- Potential to link people into volunteer programs such as let's move, chef's move to schools, cooking matters etc... Volunteers needed to lead programs and participate in them.
- Important: think about who we can partner with so that we do not have to do all the organizing. Examples of groups planning outreach who we could partner with:
 - Health dept – outreach with weigh of the nation
 - WIC/SNAP outreach
 - Elderly Services – rent rebate program
 - Color of Words – youth film interviews on food issues
 - CitySeed markets
- Web community that links everyone doing food system work and events in New Haven (long term project)

