

Connecticut Food Policy Council
Draft Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 9th, 2014

***A quorum was not present so no action was taken during this meeting**

Attendees

Members: Lucy Nolan, (EHC!/Vice Chair); Linda Piotrowicz, (CT DoAG); Linda Hubeny, (DAS); Stan Sorkin, (CFA); Gloria McAdam, (Foodshare); Bill Seedman (DSS)

Guests: Pauline Zaldonis, (HFS); Mary Parizo (EHC!); Alexandra Steel (HFS); Renee Hamel, (HHC); Ellen Sloan, (DCP); Jessica Mahon, (EHC!); Helana Hover-Litty, (CAND); Peggy Zamore, (DFMCC); Rebecca Eddy (CT DoAG)

The meeting was called to order at 1:10pm

The minutes from the September 11th, 2014 meeting could not be approved due to lack of a quorum.

Additions to the agenda:

SNAC: Mary Parizo wanted to remind the council of the SNAC plan and to begin to think about next steps. One step is to get the multi-program brochure printed and distributed amongst providers and agencies. Creating a PDF version of the brochure was another option discussed which would make it easier to include in electronic mailings of newsletters and other outreach materials. Mary will send out a copy of the multi-program brochure and SNAC plan to the council members.

USDA's Food Insecurity Incentive Grant RFP: Peggy Zamore wanted some insight in regards to the grant opportunity. Bill Seedman made reference to a similar program that was piloted in MA, and that there are different models in which the incentive can be applied. Although he is currently unaware of how involved DSS would be in the administering of the program he will report back to the council if he hears any updates.

Report on local food policy councils:

Jessica gave a brief reporting from her visits to local food policy councils and the meetings of local councils from Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford. Meeting notes from her visits are attached.

Jessica also presented some ideas to the council that will help increase communication and involvement opportunities among the local food policy councils who are curious about what other councils/towns are doing in specific areas of interest like Healthy Corner Stores or farmers markets. Information about what has been done and the resources that were used to achieve a favorable outcome would be useful for them. So from the council's discussion, a motion was made by Stan Sorkin to develop a process to allow local food policy councils to share projects and ideas through webinars and conference calls, and it was seconded by Gloria McAdam.

Food Day:

Jessica presented an idea to the council for Food Day to get local food policy councils to do a collective activity as a united group. She stated that hosting a twitter chat is an option that can engage conversation around the day's activities within each local food policy council. It was expressed that using Twitter may not be the most convenient social media tool for everyone so it was decided to use Facebook instead. A Facebook page will be created to have the local food policy councils post updates and pictures of the Food Day activities.

Agency/Guest Updates:**DSS: Bill Seedman reported**

- DSS received \$75,000 to improve the SNAP Employment and Training program and is looking to partner with all of the community colleges in CT.
- The federal income limits, and the minimum and maximum benefit amounts for SNAP have changed and has been updated on DSS website.
- A new promotional farmers market video has been added to DSS website and can be seen at all DSS offices.
- The number of SNAP recipients has increased to 235,000 within 89,000 households with over 56 million SNAP dollars spent since this month.
- CT's payment accuracy is at 94%, lower than that of the U.S. average. Over half of the errors are said to be client caused due to not reporting income changes. Individuals will be able to report interim changes and submit renewals through their MyConneCT account online in the near future.
- Since the vendor for processing SNAP benefits at grocery stores has changed, small stores must buy new equipment to continue accept SNAP. Bill reported that DSS is not anticipating any stores dropping out due to this change.

DoAg:

- Linda Piotrowicz reported that there was an addition to DoAg's marketing team, Rebecca Eddy.

DAS:

- Linda Hubney reported that in collaboration with the CT Department of Ed. they applied to USDA have the Fresh Produce Pilot program conducted at CT's schools. They are still waiting to hear back from USDA

CFA:

- Stan Sorkin reported that in New York the change of vendors for SNAP benefits from JP Morgan to Xerox went smoothly and that they do not anticipate any issues going into the Thanksgiving season.

EHC!

- Lucy Nolan reported that the School Breakfast Summit is coming up on November 4th.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, November 13th, 2014

Location: Connecticut Food Association, 433 South Main Street, West Hartford, room 309, east side of building. Conference calling will be available, call 866-560-5231 and enter code # 8606778097

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35pm

Local Food Policy Council Meeting Notes

Bridgeport Food Policy Council / July 16th, 2014

- BFPC has been conducting a Healthy Corner Store Initiative where they have selected 3 stores that will undergo remodeling to the inside and outside of the store including the provision of new refrigeration and cash register. They are mandated to sell fresh fruits and vegetables. They still need funding to improve store façade (ex. Awning, door, windows.)
- To increase access to farmers markets it was suggested to provide transportation from senior living sites to farmers markets, especially for those who get senior vouchers.
- BFPC is invested in the reduction and recapturing of food waste. Bridgeport wants to invest in a food digester and BFPC would like to see legislation that requires institutions to efficiently discard food that can be turned into reusable energy.
- BFPC will use the CDC change tool to determine what can be done legislatively and would hope that it can promote policy changes.

New Haven Food Policy Council / July 16th, 2014

- A guest from the Yale School of Medicine came to discuss his project of developing a course seminar session on food insecurity. Medical students are unaware of food or hunger issues in the New Haven area, and to expose students to what food insecurity looks like he would like to develop a tour of New Haven that would best highlight food and hunger issues and seeks NHFPC assistance.
- Discussed upcoming Witnesses to Hunger event with Rosa DeLauro
- City Farm & Garden working group received a grant to hire an independent contractor to support urban farmers. This person will translate the concept of the Urban Farm Resource Center into a working format. Contractor will also engage with the community and gather concerns and see what the community may want to see from the resource center.
- They're interested in finding more detailed policies in other cities focused on urban agriculture.
- Maybe it would be beneficial creating a report of what urban Ag looks like in other cities in CT.
- Discussed Food Systems Director position, primary responsibility would be to coordinate work / meetings with city departments and local community organizations.

New Haven Food Policy Council / August 6th, 2014

- NHFPC has the opportunity to submit language for the city's Comprehensive Plan, which guides the city in structuring zoning ordinances, in regards to Urban Ag and Food/Health. Especially defining things like "home gardens," "community gardens," and "urban farms," so that individuals will know what's allowable and be explicit about it.
- NHFPC would like to get their Food Action Plan adopted in the city's Comprehensive Plan.
- They are currently looking for grants, maybe a bank of grants that centers around urban ag, food systems, coalitions, grassroots change, policy change, and hunger can be created.

Hartford Food Policy Council / September 10th, 2014

- They will conduct their yearly Food Security Awards at the end of March
- Hartford is participating in the Community Eligibility with 34 schools
- 6 schools applied for the Fresh Food Program. It is funded by the state and HFS would like to see CT enhance the program
- They are interested to know the work that has been done by other towns in regards to grocery stores (bodegas)
- Swift Factory in Hartford may become a mixed use center. A project developed by Community Solutions where the building may become a food center, educational kitchen, rooftop agriculture production, use for food entrepreneurs, food processing, and a culinary jobs training center.
- Suggestions for CFPC involvement in council work:
 - Approval on recommendations that the local council approves on
 - Support for entrepreneurial activities that engages in food production
 - Money for state funding for pantries
 - Gathering legislative actions
 - Creating a central location where local councils can access initiatives that has been conducted by other councils within their towns

Bridgeport Food Policy Council / September 17th, 2014

- The Healthy Corner Store Initiative has been going well, the 3 stores involved have the potential to grow and the initiative can be turned into a reoccurring program.
- Each farmers market in the BPT area should work together to fundraise
- City council and the Mayor will be doing the SNAP challenge on week of Food Day. The Eat Well on \$4 cookbook was mentioned as a great resource when eating on SNAP. The parameters of how they should fulfill the SNAP challenge were discussed, like whether they can only shop in food deserts, etc.
- Bridgeport has contracted a company, Anaergia, to turn organic waste into renewable energy. The plant will be built in Bridgeport, which will generate jobs and provide cost savings. Construction will begin this fall. It was discussed maybe enacting an ordinance to require restaurants to donate their organic waste to Anaergia.
- EHC! SNAP postcards were well received and more is needed especially at pantries.

- SNAP use at farmers markets should be supported more, especially through education so that more individuals and families are aware of this benefit.

New Haven Food Policy Council / September 17th, 2014

- A survey will be going out into the community to see what they might want from the urban ag resource center
- Ikea donated kitchen appliances to City Seed and it will become a commercial kitchen that can be used by the community
- Graduates from the Master Cooks program visits the mobile markets and provide cooking demos with ingredients right from the market. This helps increase sales of produce
- There is a city wide parent team that will be meeting to discuss the availability of sugary cereals in schools.
- A match grant was received from the Kendall Foundation for the Food Systems Director. The Mayor's office has committed to funding the benefits package for the position. About \$115,000 for two years.
- Americorp Vistas will be looking at New Haven food systems through food justice and food advocacy. They will be working through City Seed from October through May.
- For National Food Day, NHFPC might be putting together a press release showing the work that has been done over the past year. They will be talking with the national coordinator.
- Reusable info-cards made for each local food policy council is a project the state council can possibly take on.