

Connecticut Food Policy Council (CFPC)
Minutes – January 11, 2018

Members in attendance: Marcia Pessolano, Bill Seedman, Steve Anderson, Don Casella, Flavia Pereira

Guests in attendance: John Bovay, Shannon Yearwood, Martha Page, Meg Hourigan, Winton Pitcoff, Eliza Cohen, Jennifer DuBois, Peggy Zamore, Marielena Lima (phone), Ellen Sloane (phone)

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Steve Anderson.

Welcome and Introductions: Steve Anderson welcomed the members and guests. Introductions were made.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Postponed until the next meeting.

Additions to the agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

Administration

- Still working on appointments. DPH and EHC are working CSDE appointment with John Frassinelli.
- Several other appointments needed through the legislature, DoAg is working on this.
- UCONN is working on the Co-op Extension appointment.
- Looking for a produce wholesaler – someone was mentioned through regional market, but HFS knows of someone from the Hartford Provision Company that we can try for appointment or a suggestion.
- Shannon inquired about the budget and Steve indicated he would report out on it next week.

Mass State Food Plan

- History: first food plan in the country (1974) in response to the existing food crisis. Different from the current food plans. Plan was pretty out of date, some smaller plans were explored but nothing systemic. The MA food policy council (FPC) came into existence about 8 years ago. Then the supermarket advisory task force came into existence and made recommendations but the MA FPC felt that they needed a food system plan to put this in context. The MA FPC is a diverse mix of stakeholders including legislative seats which enabled them to obtain MA state funds (\$200,000) for the development of the state food plan. The council put out an RFP looking for a rich engagement process that would lead to the plan's development over the course of a few years; awarded to a group of state regional planning agencies. Winton was hired as the project manager to oversee the process.
- Process: Did everything from one-one interviews to large community meetings to focus groups. Core was working groups broken out by food system sector: land, inputs (energy/water/waste), farming fishing, processing, distribution, and food access/security and health. Mix of stakeholders and state agencies input. Prior to that MA FPC and planning team established the four overarching goals of the plan: how do we grow/produce more MA produce; jobs in the food system; facilitate farmers and food system work (reducing waste); reducing hunger/connecting to public health system. Needed to have buy in so went broad. The engagement process was long and deliberate.

- Challenges: Private sector folks didn't participate as much as was hoped; farmers themselves tended not to as well. Farmers possibly felt well represented by other groups. Private sector groups not interested, they have full-time lobbyists and may not see the need. At particular times they weighed in (i.e., living wage or soda tax) but other topics had less engagement. That part after the engagement process took a lot of work. The governance of the planning process included a paid body, a collaborative group, and 35 advisory members that needed to agree to the plan. Have to find a way to "herd" everyone, find a consensus through compromise.
- Look at process as not only an organizing process but as an educational process, bringing sectors together.
- Process went on for a couple of years, there was a change in administration and party affiliation in the state which impacted the process.
- Need to engage the state agencies during the process to ensure that they know the work is supportive. State agencies represented on the MA FPC: Agriculture, Energy, Education, Public Health, Transitional Assistance (social services), Housing. During planning process it was decided that the other agencies needed to be on the council.
- The MA FPC accepted the plan, but couldn't endorse the plan directly.
- The plan is long and detailed. Tried to get specific where needed. It is meant to be a living document that will be updated over time.
- Every state has done this differently.
- Plan has an implementation section that outlines a dispersed model of implementation.

Mass Food System Collaborative: www.MAfoodsystem.org (Winton is now the director)

- The MA food system collaborative came together as a result of the food plan and is funded by private funders, not by the state.
- Works with the MA FPC but not for them.
- Trying to have a coordinated effort.
- Collaborative: promote, monitor, and facilitate the plan. Advocacy for bills related to the food plan (or that contribute to the food plans goals/objectives).
- Hosted a statewide food system forum: over 200 people showed up, highlighted creative work and discussed topics/projects, identified possible areas of collaboration.

Q&A

- Didn't designate a timeframe for the plan on purpose, but 10 years is probably a good amount of time to renew the full plan (although some changes will be ongoing). Didn't have good metrics to track progress because it is difficult – looking to track progress towards four overarching goals.
- Economics of regulation – some upcoming changes that may make farming change from food (legalization of marijuana and FSMA) – food plan didn't include marijuana in the plan because it is not food, marijuana cultivation is NOT a farming venture in Massachusetts so they don't get the same exemptions as agricultural farming. Not sure it will have a big impact on farming right now. But FSMA could have a large impact, but not sure how it will play out. Many MA farmers are below the compliance thresholds, but those that are trying to get into local grocery stores may have an issue because retailers may require all producers regardless of size to follow FSMA. Commonwealth Quality Program – industry standards.

-Healthy incentives program in MA – the collaborative led a campaign to increase funding for it which was successful.

-Which legislators involved in food policy council (4) – speaker of the house and president and minority leaders all designated legislators to participate. They regularly participate (~50% attendance, or a staffer may be sent).

-Western vs. Eastern state – is it fully represented from all over the state? Very deliberate during the process, Winton lives in Western MA so many of his connections are there, and farming is primarily in Western MA. Had a matrix to ensure hitting all parts of the state although Western MA may be more heavily represented. Also talked about equity during the process as well. Had members that did outreach to underrepresented communities (or that frequently do not participate).

-Legislation to enable the food policy council to develop recommendations, etc. By contracting out for the plan, that was doing what they were charged. Funds earmarked separately. Caution: because of the way it's been run, it is seen as an extension of Ag resources, Ag has been defaulted to run it. Thus, seen as an Ag-heavy body and process.

Eliza from RI – The RI food system plan has similarities to the MA state plan, similar stakeholders; RI doesn't have the same funding and capacity that MA has but trying to put together legislation for a healthy incentives pilot.

-Differences – Fisheries was very vocal during the planning process; RI plan more metrics focused, has targets around food insecurity and farmland conservation; much less detailed, more broad; less structural engagement of policy makers; their "Winton" is in state government, in governor's office but do not have state agencies formally involved (governor is committed to food)

Steve from DoAg noted that the CT Governor's Council for Agricultural Development continues to meet and some of the goals outlined above have been addressed as part of their plan, but not quite as extensive as a full food system plan.

Local Food Policy Council Updates –

-CT Food System Alliance – meeting January 2018, launching series of calls/webinars – first one on data literacy to promote policy work (Jan 22 at 10 am). All FPC members are invited to attend.

-Hartford: Doing community food security awards on March 21 at the library, all invited. First step is nomination for the awards for work in Hartford (Adult, Youth, NPO/Agency, Business). The form is here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXx4uX89yqbDa2WkSYsg7ntO5sNAwCM44FH-fnUk6QhrL2EQ/viewform>.

-Bridgeport: completed a local foods, local places TA project through the EPA. Trying to figure out local food economy/development; workshop was held. January 22 at the Behive in Bridgeport.

Agency/Member/Guest Updates

- DoAg – farm transition grant program deadline is February 14, 2018; workshops available to help farmers with their applications.
- DSS – Renewed waiver for interview process for elderly and disabled participants; Cmr. Bremby (DSS) is working with Cmr. Wilkenson (OEC) to get money to provide child care for ENT participants because child care is a huge barrier to participation. OEC is interested; SNAP is working hard to

ensure the ~400,000 individual participants get their funds in a timely fashion; USDA may be delayed in getting USDA foods to emergency food suppliers given recent national disasters increase.

- DOT – huge budget cut 4.2 billion, stalled many of the projects. Related to FPC, fare increase to transit, of ~10-15% as early as June/July 2018. Decreased subsidies, services may be cut. Incremental changes may occur. Question from last time: about whether training programs are coordinating CROG, work with partners? Awaiting more info.
- Danbury FM community collab – trying to sustain programs, currently working on veterans programs, putting info into Farm Bill.
- UCONN Extension/Ag Economics – Economic experiments that are in development are interventions (RCTs) to encourage healthy food consumption among low-income people. Example – one idea is giving people push notifications on their phones on when foods are on sale. More to come.
- DAS – RFP for four towns, new statute out that if three towns get together and have a need, DAS has to purchase for them. Reissuing that RFP for the four towns for school cafeterias.
- DPH – Marcia is working on a healthy corner store initiative in Bridgeport and the number of stores participating is growing. More details to come as the stores get acclimated with the project.
- DCP – Application of FSMA recommendations on smaller producers (difficulties).

Helpful links to other states' food plans (some are long!):

New Hampshire: <http://www.nhfoodalliance.com/sites/default/files/NHFA%20VI%20Revised-Final%20Edit.pdf>

Vermont: <http://www.vtfarmltoplate.com/plan/>

Massachusetts: <https://www.mafoodsystem.org/static/plan/pdfs/MLFSPFull.pdf>

RI Food Assessment (2011) and 2016 update: <http://rifoodcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Rhode-Island-Food-Assessment-2.pdf> http://rifoodcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/RI-Assessment-Update_FINAL_7.2016.pdf

Maine Food

Strategy: http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/mpbn/files/201608/mainefoodstrategy_2016_framework.pdf

Next meeting will be on February 8, 2018 at EHC.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm Motion made to adjourn by Bill Seedman and seconded by Don Casella.