

Connecticut Food Policy Council
Draft Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 17th, 2015

Attendees

Members: Marcia Maillard, (DPH); Lucy Nolan, (EHC!/Vice Chair); Don Casella (DAS); Stephen Anderson (DoAg); Bill Seedman (DSS); Stan Sorkin (CFA); Michael Keilty (by phone)

Guests: Fran Freer, (CHCACT); Jessica Mahon, (EHC!); Ellen Sloan (CT DCP); Peggy Zamore (DFMCC); Helana Hoover-Litty (CAND); Jim Haslam (CT Legal Services); Martha Page (HFS); Ellen Sloan (DCP); Mary Grace Peak (Judy Blei Gov. Relations); James Arena DeRosa (Foodshare); Kristin Dubay-Horton (Bpt Health Dept./ by phone); Frances Freer (CHCACT/ by phone)

The meeting was called to order at 1:08 pm

Approval of the June meeting minutes was moved by Stan Sorkin and Bill Seedman seconded the motion – it was unanimously approved.

Lucy Nolan introduced the new president of Foodshare, James Arena-DeRosa. He introduced himself and briefly mentioned the new avenues Foodshare will explore in regards to advocacy and education and that he is looking forward to new partnerships.

Additions to the agenda:

- Lucy Nolan shared that this was the 3rd year of the Summer EBT Program which is a pilot program led and partnered by CT Department of Social Services, CT Department of Education, and End Hunger CT! This program helps to reduce food insecurity during the summer months while children are out of school. With the uncertainty of its return next year, Bill Seedman added that the program is on a year to year basis. Lucy also thanked DSS for its efforts in promoting the Summer Meals Program by streaming a promotional Summer Meals video in all DSS offices and on their website.

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future Food Policy Council Directory:

Jessica Mahon shared information about a national Food Policy Council Directory housed within the Johns Hopkins Center for Livable Future. Food policy councils across the U.S. were asked to submit/update their information in regards contact, council's top priorities, and notable achievements. Jessica reported that the CFPC information has been updated and it can be found at the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future [website](#).

Food Council Self-Assessment Study:

Jessica reported that there is an opportunity for the council to participate in a Self-Assessment Study the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. The purpose of the study is to gain feedback on best practices for food policy councils across the U.S, Tribal Nations, and Canada. A feedback report also is given to the council if at least 8 members complete the study survey. The council agreed that a feedback report would be valuable in determining next steps for the council. Jessica will be forwarding the survey to all members of the council for them to complete.

Local Food Policy Council Updates:

Jessica gave a report on updates from local food policy councils. Martha Page, Jim Haslam, Kristin Dubay-Horton, Peggy Zamore were present to provide updates from the Hartford, New London, Bridgeport Food Policy Council and the Danbury Farmers Market Community Collaborative respectively. **(Updates are recorded at the end of this document)**

Agency Updates:

DSS: Bill Seedman reported that over 237,000 households and 423,000 individuals in CT have received SNAP benefits. A SNAP improvement strategy was implemented several years ago to improve payment accuracy, procedural errors, and timeliness and CT has vastly improved over the years. He reported on the Commodity Supplemental Food Program for seniors. CT was the first "new" state to order and distribute food, there has been 7000 distributions so far. The program must reach 91% capacity in the next 3 months to request more slots.

Bill reported Hartford has been given two promise zone designations by the USDA and DSS was contacted to help identify resources available in those areas. These resources may include school meals, summer meals, farmers markets, WIC, and any other resource. Bill will be working along with Lucy Nolan to gather any necessary information. DSS was also approached by Wholesome Wave to launch an incentive pilot program to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables by providing \$5 coupons when SNAP recipients spend at least \$10 on fruits and vegetables at retail stores. It will be a 2 month pilot and will be implemented in mid-size grocery stores like C-Town.

Bill mentioned the Department of Social Services' goal of increasing SNAP participation at farmers markets. DSS has provided market specific information (posters/handouts) to DSS offices in major cities like Bridgeport, Waterbury, and Danbury. An outreach plan is needed to increase use of SNAP, only \$140,000 in SNAP benefits were redeemed at farmers markets out \$714 million total SNAP benefits redeemed last year. Bill also highlighted the promotion of farmers markets within the Ag Report published by the CT Department of Agriculture. Governor Malloy as well as the Lt. Governor visited one of the markets and was praised for their interaction with each vendor.

Lastly Bill reported on a few dates in regards to changes affecting SNAP and those who assist SNAP recipients should be prepared for any inquiries regarding these changes.

October 1st – The Standard Utility Allowance will decrease from \$728 to \$706; the Shelter Hardship will increase slightly from \$490 to \$504

March 30th – The waiver that CT has had USDA to remove time limits for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents receiving SNAP will no longer be available. CT has submitted a waiver request for an extension for 82 towns; those towns do include the 4 largest cities in CT.

DoAg: Stephen Anderson reported that on **October 1st** a new law will come into effect requiring farmers selling produce at farmers markets to clearly label their produce with place of origin. This is to combat the counterfeit use of the "CT Grown" label.

DPH: Marcia Maillard reported that the new MIS system for WIC is still in the process of updating. She also reported that DPH is working alongside SNAP ED on healthy corner stores and there will soon be a healthy corner store site in Waterbury.

Hartford Food Policy Council

- A representative from the American Heart Association presented on a new partnership with 15 cities across the country with Hartford being one of them. It is a CDC initiative to promote access to healthy food and beverages to Hartford residents. Supporting /promoting existing initiatives like obesity prevention campaign with Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Voices for Healthy Kids. The partnership will work with the commission to
 - Help support media efforts
 - Promote attendance at farmers markets
 - Offer training and technical support
 - Coordinate surveys/focus groups/key informant focus groups, etc.
 - Support efforts for school gardens and farming
- The council completed their evaluation report and they believe that it may be a valuable resource to other councils and commissions. Mark Winne suggested presenting their evaluation report at NESAWG. Martha Page stated that in light of Food Day, on Monday Oct. 26th the council will be gathering city leaders and will host a breakfast to highlight their 2015 recommendations as well as get feedback from the community.
- The council discussed hosting a library series centered on their recommendations. Activities would include showing documentaries and having discussions.
- A representative from an aquaponics fresh farm located in Glastonbury discussed their plan to move into Hartford. They grow fish, plants, and other greens, herbs, and seasonal fruits. Their plan to move into Hartford will involve planning and systems building integrations, education, community events, the involvement of residential and institutional clients, producing and selling locally, as well as job training (how to operate systems and develop CSAs)
- The council will be having a Food Day event on Monday 26th, which will invite out city officials and discuss the council's 2015 recommendations regarding food policy.

New London Food Policy Council / July 19th

- The council discussed proposed steering committee members that come from different sectors, food, civic organizations, transportation, business, hospitals, distributors, etc. The emphasis is on representing the whole county and not just the town of Norwich or New London.
- The council discussed creating an outreach packet for new members that would include things like the bi-laws and the overview and mission of NLFPC.
- The council discussed the Food Hub Feasibility Study. The research, interviews, and infrastructure analysis is completed. The report which would include the findings will be released within a month in a report and start having conversations about models, who should be involved, what is the demand of buyers, etc.

New Haven Food Policy Council / September 16th

- The FAWG first discussed how the implementation process of the CFSP is going. They reported that most sites are having difficulty with managing the paperwork. Most sites find the paperwork arduous and not work the time. Currently there are 700 seniors who are signed on with the program. The CT Food Bank must reach 1600 participants

throughout six counties to expand. They are collaborating with Foodshare to reach that number. Each site must provide 24 boxes.

- FAWG also reported on the Youth Map project, the name will now be changed to Community Map to reduce confusion of what resources the map will be providing.
- The summer meals program has proven to be very successful this year. The whole city of New Haven was able to be covered under Community Eligibility, this allowed for a supper site to provide almost 2000 suppers, which reached to almost 100 suppers every night.
- Supper busses that went throughout the city had a tremendous turn out. One realization reported from the drivers of the buses is that many residents are living out of their cars. An issue that was never apparent in the past years so a process who need to be put in place to offer up resources to the residents in need who are experiencing homelessness.
- The council discussed the current status of the Food System Director position. The approval of the position description still have to go through a long process which involves H.R., labor relations, civil service board, and then developing a civil service exam. The position might not be posted until early spring next year.
- The council discussed plans for Food Day in October. Coordinated by local health center, NH public schools, and Common Ground they will be hosting a Food Weekend which would include a family fun night on Friday, showing of a documentary, "Food for thought food for life" on Saturday, and a food summit on Sunday.

Bridgeport Food Policy Council / September 16th

- There is a new FoodCorp member that will be working with 2 elementary schools in Bridgeport to continue the work in increasing fresh fruits and vegetable consumption
- Farmer's market participation has taken a steep decline, some up to 70% and 85%. This is because they unfortunately had to remove the doubling of all incentives except SNAP but SNAP recipients will not use their benefits at farmer's market because of the misconception that fruits and vegetables are not "real food." There is also the danger of farmers deciding to leave because of the lack of business, especially in neighborhoods that are food deserts. \$40,000 has been raised to double SNAP but since the market season started \$10,000 hasn't been reached yet. The council is considering using the money to hire a consultant to do a market analysis. So the council will be exploring ideas and strategies to improve participation once an analysis can be made.
- The council will explore the idea of creating a competitive process for placing the next Healthy Corner Store due to its popularity among city council members who want a health corner store in their neighborhood. The council will form a group to develop an RFP for applying to receive a healthy corner store, as well as discuss best practices and strategies when implementing the initiative in current and future corner stores.
- The council will be involved in a Food Day event sponsored by the Bridgeport Health Department, the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, and Get Healthy CT on October 22nd. The event will include a summit and a chef competition.

Agency or Guest Updates:

DPH: Marcia Maillard reported that WIC is continuing in establishing its MIS system, which will be similar to EBT, and it is scheduled to be up for 2016. She also reported that Waterbury is

creating a city coalition to work on healthy corner stores. They will begin by hosting community conversations and they also intend on creating their own local food policy council.

DoAg: Stephen Anderson reported that CT hosted a visit from Commissioners of agriculture from across the US. They toured various sites around CT surrounding agriculture. He also reported that the national conference for Commissioners of Agriculture will be hosted in CT next year.

Next Meeting: October 8th, 1:00 – 2:30pm, Location: LOB, Hearing Room 1B

Marcia Maillard moved to adjourn and it was seconded by Bill Seedman. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00pm