

Connecticut Food Policy Council (CFPC)
Minutes – November 9, 2017

Members in attendance: Marcia Pessolano, Bill Seedman, Steve Anderson, Don Casella, Michael Keilty, Shannon Yearwood

Guests in attendance: Meg Hourigan, Helana Hoover-Litty, Mirando Muro, Peggy Zamore, Ellen Sloan, Mike Pugliesi, Brianna Seeves, Martha Page, John Bovay, Ellen Rabin, Marielena Lima

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

-DoAg is working to ensure appointments are filled, including legislative appointments. It is a good time to be working on appointments before session begins. DOT, CSDE, and Produce Wholesaler positions do not yet have identified folks but DoAg is working on it.

-If you have any ideas for policy agenda items or future speakers for CT FPC meetings, please let Marcia, Shannon, or Steve know.

Local Food Policy Council Engagement – Looking to engage local food policy councils/hunger action groups.

- Looking for ways to bring information back to the CT FPC – previously had a staff person to do this with the council and has not been consistent since.
- Proposal to have people on the council each keep in contact with a local council so we can stay on top of local issues
- CT Food System Alliance – coalition mainly representative of any organization in the food system is currently doing this.
 - Meg Hourigan is already connected to – New Haven, New London, Bridgeport, and Hartford and can be the liaison.
 - Windham County may be starting something through their existing alliance.
 - SHIP is interested in areas without food policy councils – can we somehow support development in those areas.
 - Need to determine how to connect to this council – how can we engage the councils. Ideas – provide information to the councils, support statewide policy that links to their work.
 - Northwest – Danbury Farmers' Market Collaborative. Not connected to other parts of Northwestern CT.

- How can we engage other types of groups – ie., FoodShare’s Hunger Action Teams – food collaboratives, etc.
- Actions –
 - Meg and others will have time on the agenda to report out on local FPCs/food collaboratives, HATs, etc.
 - Possibly have another member of the CT FPC join the quarterly local FPC meetings.
 - Based on the reports, identify areas of need in the state. Meg will also find out from the local FPCs if anything stands out to them or is on their minds.
 - Next meeting – discussion about the state food plan, ask for a speaker from another New England state. Meg/Martha to help identify a potential speaker, either in person or via Skype.

Agency/Member/Guest Updates

- DoAg – Rick Macsuga passed away recently, was previously a member of this council. George Crifta took a job with USDA and Jason Bowsa is the new Chief of Staff at DoAg. State budget has been passed. DoAg is doing a lot with the new legislation related to solar on farms, looking at effects on agriculture. If it’s a larger solar project (>2 megawatts), needs more in-depth review and Cmr. has to certify that it won’t destroy the land or may need to go to a hearing. We don’t want to lose prime farmland to solar panels.
- DSS – all 12 of DSS field offices have converted to the new eligibility system (IMPACT), but here are still 13,000 households in the old system (EMS) that are being moved over. Connecticut chose a phased-in approach based on lessons learned from other states. The new system is working out well. SNAP in CT is ranked 9th in US for payment accuracy, and 9th in procedural accuracy. Program access is one of the best measures of success – in 2016 CT achieved a Program Access Index rate of 95.58% and received a performance bonus of approximately \$1.6 million. DSS, working with OEC, was also recently awarded a \$900K data grant from USDA. The grant will help four state agencies share data and improve SNAP E&T. SNAP E&T currently partners with 13 organizations (skills based job training program). Transitional Benefit Allotment (TBA) are now available in ImpaCT. TBA helps people transitioning from welfare to work , by locking in the their SNAP benefit amount for five months when people who work their way off of Transitional Family Assistance (TFA) The 2018 – Farm Bill: current administration is talking about cutting SNAP. Most advocates agree that SNAP is an important support for people with food security issues and hunger. Currently DSS may waive three month time limits for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) in 123 towns with higher than average unemployment. There are rumors that these types of waivers might be eliminated in the next Farm Bill
- New Haven and Bridgeport FPCs –
 - New Haven has identified policy agenda – identify ending childhood hunger (for Mayor’s office)
 - Bridgeport – food justice framework, local food/local places technical assistance workshop (identifying more local foods into retail outlets in the city)
- FoodShare – collaborating with CT Foodbank and EHC! – there are working groups forming, reach out to Miranda or Shannon

- Workgroups: Inequities in the food system, healthy food access in pantry setting, statewide policy agenda
- EHC! Child nutrition reauthorization didn't happen yet but will likely come up federally. Keep in mind that we may see a large number of people from PR that have been displaced by the hurricane; need to make sure we recognize the impact this might have on food assistance/food access.
- HFS –
 - Network Team for Regional Food Alliance – 50X60: what needs to happen over the next period of time to meet the goal of 50% of NE food being grown in NE by 2060. The Network Team is focused on understanding the current “lay of land” and state food plans help with that; pulling that together on a regional basis not yet done but is being started. Martha is part of the team working on the data piece. Others are working on a narrative of what a regional food system looks like and that it applies to everyone in the region.
- UCONN Extension/Ag Economics – research on food and ag policy, Food Safety Modernization Act, GMO/non-GMO food, food waste, regulations that affect ag/farming, plans for experiments how producers can conserve water and LI Sound and would consumers be willing to pay more for these products.
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- Shoreline Soup Kitchens and Pantries – has 5 food pantries and 11 meal sites. Have 4 or 5 major gardens that feed the food pantries (Common Good Gardens, their own 501c3 non-profit organization). Has a really amazing model using church properties or other locations, all the veggies are going to the pantries.
- UCONN EFNEP – Mike Pugliesi new EFNEP Coordinator, learning about the community nutrition setting in CT, identifying how to collaborate nutrition education. Came from WIC, working on local agency coordination and research.
- Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy – presented 2017 policy recommendations – prioritize healthy food retail, increasing F/V consumption using federal nutrition programs, supporting efforts to diverting food waste, sustainability of gardens at HPS w/ reliable supports including teachers and parents and ensure curriculum involvement, promoting more nutritious food grown on city owned land instead of license agreements to lease agreements for urban agriculture.

- DAS – procurement services for state agencies, have a \$30 mil food contract w/ Sysco, have dairy contracts, etc.
- DCP – changes in food regulations – both at retail and wholesale. Adopted the FDA model food code for retail. Able to standardize inspections at the federal level.

Next meeting will be on December 14 at 1 pm, at EHC! on Hungerford Street in Hartford.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm Motion made to adjourn by Marcia Pessolano, Bill Seedman seconded.