

Connecticut Food Policy Council (CFPC)
Minutes – June 14, 2018

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

Guests in attendance: John Bovay, Michael Puglisi, Sheila Hurst, Peggy Zamore, Ashley Jones

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

-No new updates on appointments or budget per Steve. Shannon is planning to talk with Jason Bowza @ DoAg regarding these issues.

Local Food Policy Council Updates –

-Danbury – Greater Danbury might be thinking about starting a local FPC but this is very preliminary. United Way recently hired a food policy staff so they may be considering it. The Farmers' Market Community Collaborative is bringing a farm stand to the Danbury Senior Center starting June 20.

-No other updates at this time.

Agency/Member/Guest Updates

- DoAg –
 - Conducting on-farm readiness reviews around produce safety; approximately 150 farmers have participated in training.
 - Census of Ag is ongoing. Paper submission due 6/15, online submission due end of July.
 - Someone requested use of a recipe that was previously on the CT FPC website. Members and guests agreed that it was fine for reprinting/use by the public.
- DSS –
 - Bill discussed SNAP and shared the current participation data. In May 2018, DSS served 217,053 SNAP households, comprised of 376,140 Individuals, with total benefits for the month at \$50,452,733. He stated that these federal SNAP dollars not only fight hunger, but also stimulate the local economy; each SNAP dollar generates approximately 1.73 dollars in economic activity. The number of households and amount of benefits appear quite high; SNAP participation has decreased as the economy has improved. SNAP is designed to expand during economic downturns and contract when the economy improves.

- Bill mentioned that DSS is closely watching the Farm Bill negotiations and reported that the Senate version of the bill, which recently cleared the agriculture committee, is bipartisan in nature. There is hope that it might become law without many of the draconian cuts that were included in the recent House version.
- DSS supports the use of SNAP at farmers' markets. Bill shared that there are two farmers' markets videos on the DSS webpage, a list of markets that accept SNAP, and a link to the Department of Agriculture list of farmers' markets, and information about becoming FNS authorized to accept SNAP. When SNAP recipients use their benefits at farmers' markets, they are not only making a healthy food choice, but are also supporting Connecticut farmers.
- The commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) serves low income seniors, age 60+, with incomes below 130% of the federal poverty level; Eligible seniors may receive a monthly food package valued at approximately \$50.00. CT currently has 2481 CSFP slots, so close to \$125,000.00 worth of food is provided each month. Although a relatively small program, CSFP really helps seniors who are struggling with food insecurity.
- The SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program was recently rebranded. The program is growing and DSS now partners with 15 organizations. DSS has relationships with 11 out of 12 community colleges and the remaining college is poised to partner. Soon E&T services will be offered at all 12 community colleges. Each E&T partner provides skills based work programs, supported by DOL labor Market Information (LMI). In addition to the colleges DSS also works with community based organizations to provide services. Link to partners E&T: <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/SNAP/Employment-and-Training>
- Once again DSS is supporting the Summer Meals program by providing information in its 12 DSS field offices. Additionally, DSS will once again run a Summer EBT pilot in select communities.
- EHC! – Shannon wasn't available to attend but asked that people attend the blitz's around the state to promote summer meals!
- DOT – The agency is interested in having the transit people in CT meet with the CT FPC to ensure coordination of transportation. The members and guests agreed this is a good idea and will invite these folks to a fall meeting.
- CSDE – the Summer Meals Program is beginning and it's quite busy. CSDE participates in the Farm to School Collaborative for New England. There will be a state agency level gathering in the NE region with USDA regional office to facilitate communication. The "Put Local on your Tray" website was relaunched with recipes, etc. Information is being gathered from participating districts.
- UCONN Extension/Ag Economics – Mike said that Jiff Martin is leading the project "Support Local on your Tray" and there is a new logo to promote CT Grown food products. John reported that his work is ongoing in food safety economics and food waste.
- DAS – Nothing new to report
- DPH – Marcia has been working on a healthy corner store initiative. DPH's involvement will in the project will end on 6/29 as the CDC funding ends. Eight stores are participating; six were existing stores and two are stores that haven't yet opened but are being supported by the community and the Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust.

Next meeting will be on July 12, 2018 at EHC.

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30 pm