

Draft Minutes – Connecticut Food Policy Council Thursday, October 8, 2015

In attendance:

Members: Stephen Anderson (DOAg); Marcia Maillard, (DPH); Lucy Nolan, (EHC!/Vice Chair); Monica Pacheco (CSDE); Stan Sorkin (CFA)

Guests: Jim Haslam (CT Legal Services); Helena Hoover-Litty, (CAND); Jennifer Melsch (Uconn); Martha Page (Hartford Food System); Wayne Pesz (CFA); Adam Rabinowitz (UConn); Ron Roberts (DSS); Sarah Santora (Foodshare); Ellen Sloan (DCP);

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 by Vice Chair Nolan.

Welcome and Introductions: Lucy Nolan acting as Chair

Approval of the September 2015 Meeting Minutes

One change requested by Stephen Anderson to remove the second “Agency or Guest Update” section which was repeated in the minutes. Stan Sorkin moved to approve; Marcia Maillard seconded the acceptance of minutes with this change; minutes approved unanimously.

Additions to the agenda

There were no additions to the agenda.

Community Food Security Report Update

Adam Rabinowitz reported update on ranking 169 towns is in process as well as additional segmentation for some sections of the report. The report will consist of three main sections:

- 1- Community at risk and utilization of existing food programs.
- 2- Retail food availability with additional market channels as compared to the 2012 report.
- 3- Food Affordability, represented by a “market basket” of staple items – this section of the report will rank regions of CT rather than 169 towns. It is still undecided how the regions will be determined as it is dependant on data availability.

Questions were raised regarding section 3:

- Will one distinguish between urban and suburban areas of the state?
- What pricing will be used to determine the market basket?
- How will one determine what items to include in the basket?

Adam noted that the lowest price paid would be used for each item in the basket and that previous research and available data will determine the items in the basket.

The subcommittee will meet again on or before November 12, 2015.

There has been a delay in the time-line to produce this report due to a delay in funding for research. Intend to provide a draft to the subcommittee by November 12th 2015. The final report is expected to be available mid January to mid February.

At the June meeting, the council agreed to increase funding to UConn, but a deficiency bill put the payment on hold. The council discussed increasing the funding to UConn from \$5,000 to \$15,000 and a motion was made and then amended by Marcia Maillard and seconded by Ron Roberts to increase the existing \$5,000 contract to \$15,000, to fund the Community Food Security Report. Unanimously approved by the council members.

Administration

EHC! had been funding an administrative assistant (Jessica Mahon), but funds are no longer available. Existing CT Food Policy Council funds can be used to fund this position. The council agreed that past administrative support was instrumental to the success of the Food Policy Council including updating the

social media, developing and distributing a newsletter, coordinating statewide conferences and webinars, taking minutes, etc. A sub committee consisting of Lucy Nolan, Martha Page, Stephen Anderson, and Marcia Maillard will meet and create a job description to be presented at the next council meeting.

Membership

The council currently has 5 empty membership positions. Some positions are transitioning newly appointed members in for existing members. Marcia Maillard discussed the need to review membership positions and find replacements for those who have missed 3 consecutive months. Stephen Anderson suggested that the Department of Agriculture can send letters to all Departments to reaffirm appointments. A membership/governance subcommittee was formed to make recommendations and fill open positions. The committee consists of Stephen Anderson, Marcia Maillard, Martha Page and Lucy Nolan.

Looking forward

Marcia Maillard stated that we need a vision for the Food Policy Council and this is a good time to look forward. We will soon have access to the results of the CT Food Security Report and the result of the member survey assessment. These documents can help determine the future focus of the council. Stan Sorkin agreed that data available to the council in the next few months will assist in setting priorities.

Local FPC Updates

- Danbury Farmers Market Community Collaborative is working with New Milford Farmers Market to expand the group.
- USDA Grant Awards: CT recently received 3 grants: (Hartford) Billings Forge received funds to expand the fruits and vegetable vouchers for SNAP; (New London) Ledgelight Health District received funds to increase farmer participation; (Waterbury) Brass City Harvest has received funds for a Food Hub Planning and Design project and from Harvard Pilgrim to offer cooking classes to 100WIC recipients.
- New Haven Farms will be expanding incubator programs, and subsidizing CSA shares.
- Hartford: A breakfast event for city leaders to talk about council recommendation will be held October 26th.

Agency/Member Updates

- Department of Agriculture (DoAg): 10 USDA specialty crop block grants were awarded; Information is available on CT DOA website.
- CT State Department of Education (CSDE): The Community Eligibility Program, which offers free school meals to all children in towns that qualify, has expanded from 134 schools in 2014 to 210 in 2015. 105,000 students are currently benefiting from this program. This week is CT Grown for CT Kids week, partnering with agriculture in the class room program. October is Farm to School Month. Food Day is October 24th, and CT is celebrating with multiple "Apple Crunch" events.
- Department of Social Services (DSS): October found 234,727 households in CT receiving SNAP benefits totaling \$5,935,000. CT DSS is now 1st in the country for most improved payment rate, and 2nd in the country for most improved error rate. CT DSS is now off probation for timeliness with a possibility of bonus funds eligibility. DSS has received an extension to Dec 31st 2015 for ABOD waiver that is expected to impact 50,000 to 60,000 individuals. They expect that some towns (82) will retain the exempt status due to local unemployment numbers, but this has not been approved. Stan Sorkin voiced the concern of the grocery industry with regard to a sudden loss of sales and the need to reduced inventory and staffing, and called for advanced notification.
- Stan Sorkin reported that the annual Convoy for Caring (a food drive and publicity event) was a big success. Also, supermarkets often have Registered Dietitians on staff to help consumers with nutrition education; this is a potential area for community collaboration.
- End Hunger CT! (EHC!): Lucy Nolan reported that the supper program in Norwich after school programs served 400 students in the first four days of the program.
- Department of Public Health (DPH): Marcia Maillard reiterated Food Day and encouraged members and guests to host Food Day events.

Next meeting will be on November 12th at the Legislative Office Building at 1:00 pm

Meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm Motion made to adjourn by Marcia Maillard and seconded by Stan Sorkin