

Acting Food Policy Council Meeting Notes

June 20, 2008

Good Shepherd Center, 4649 Sunnyside Ave N, Rm 223 Seattle, WA

Present: Jen Lamson, Branden Born, Steve Bauck, Mary Embleton, Tammy Morales, Kelly Horton, Fe Arreola, Laura Niemi, Erin MacDougall

Absent: Pablo Monsavais, Linda Nageotte, Laura Raymond

Guests:

Noah Hare - new program Mgr. Pike Place Market, founding member of Lane County Food Policy Council in Oregon

Phyllis Shulman, Council President Conlin's office

Tricia Sexton, WSU King County Extension

Larry Nussbaum, Stewardship Partners

Expansion of Executive Committee:

Laura Niemi, Kelly Horton, Linda Nageotte added, will start in July.

County Food Policy Council Ordinance Update:

Ordinance language is being reviewed by policy staff. The draft seems to be moving along so AFPC members should be ready to contact County Council members soon to express support.

Phyllis indicated that once the county ordinance is introduced, the City will need to use the same language. They are working with Julia's office to ensure any changes proposed also meet the City's needs and intent with the Local Food Action Initiative.

The tentative plan is to file the County ordinance on July 10. The legislation would then go through the committee process the 14th (the next Monday), and be introduced to the full council either July 21 or 28. This would be the time for public comment.

It seems clear that Larry Phillips and Kathy Lambert are supportive. We should learn how other council members are feeling.

Several AFPC members have had conversations with Claire Dyckman from the Agriculture Commission. Claire indicates the Ag Commission appears to be on board, but commissioners want to know how the FPC can help farmers make money. In these conversations, Claire indicated that the County ordinance will be presented to the Commission at their next meeting on July 10.

Claire would like AFPC members to be at the Commissioners' program meeting from 1:30-3:30 on July 10th to clarify that we want to support their work.

Julia Patterson and Richard Conlin are having a phone conference with Suburban Cities Association to discuss the ordinance.

Discussion that AFPC should highlight accomplishments and successes and be prepared to answer questions about who is and is not on the AFPC and why, and

make clear that the major goal of the AFPC to date has been to get official status. This has been happening while also making significant contributions.

ACTION:

- **Mary and Laura will attend July 10 meeting.**
- **Jen will help with a one-pager to clarify how FPC works with Ag Commission goals.**
- **Mary and Tammy should be involved in development of one pager, Erin suggests working with Claire so it addresses real concerns.**
- **Tammy will ask Andrew Stout, Erick Haakensen and Siri Erickson-Brown to attend Ag Commission Program Meeting in Issaquah.**

Letters and emails from well-recognized people in food systems work may help in County hearing process.

Larry Nussbaum of Stewardship Partners

A nonprofit conservation organization whose mission is to work with private landowners to restore and preserve the natural landscapes of WA State. Stewardship Partners provides voluntary, incentive-based approaches as well as collaborative conservation, and sustainable land management assistance.

Snoqualmie Valley Stewardship Program

This program links landowners to farmers to provide habitat restoration, water quality and salmon habitat improvements, incentive-based tools (like Salmon Safe), and community education to foster urban-rural linkages.

In the 1980s, the Snoqualmie River produced as much coho salmon as the entire coast of Oregon. By 2001, it was listed as one of most endangered rivers by American Rivers.

Stewardship Partners has a full-time restoration crew and money to do work on the ground, including things like fish passage weirs and wetland restoration. Most of the work they do is riparian restoration (removing invasives and planting native plants).

Riparian zones support at least 300 species of WA wildlife. Riparian stewardship is one of the most important things that farmers can do to support the environment. The habitat and ecology of forested river areas can feed into the entire farm system (Jubilee example)

Larry discussed their Oxbow Farm project in which they salvaged alders from the Reading Ridge development (Novelty Hill) and planted them along the farm's riverbank. (Note: Stewardship Partners have great flood pictures)

Salmon-Safe Program

This program rewards farmers in the marketplace for their stewardship work. It began in Oregon and was started by the Pacific Rivers Council. The program began in WA in 2004 in the Snoqualmie Valley.

The program's focus is on water quality, fish and wildlife habitat and biodiversity in crops and native vegetation. About 30% of farms in program are certified organic.

Even some organic farms don't qualify for salmon-safe because their water quality and runoff practices don't measure up. Some things that damage streams and habitat: sediment, nutrients and chemical introduction into river, plant removal, animal and manure management practices, and stream alteration. SP has a list of "Do Not Use" chemicals.

PCC is main retail partner for the Salmon-Safe program. Wilcox is one of the largest farms so far.

The program was recently listed in Vanity Fair and Real Simple magazine as one of the most reliable eco-labels. Producers report a 15% increase in sales during a targeted marketing campaign.

The program brings urban consumers out to farms for work parties (CSA members, usually) and is now expanding into parks and corporate campuses, and working on guidelines for housing developments and golf courses.

Other Stewardship Partners Programs:

Environmental Discovery Program – brings kids out to farms to learn about environment and now integrating farm curriculum as well.

Field Tours – educate public and decision makers about value of local farms, not just for food but to restore salmon habitat and the environment.

Recent DOE grant to create other farm benefits like carbon offset credits and water quality credits so farms can get paid for this work.

Questions for Larry:

Do you find you have to make the case to farmers?

A little bit, but not much. Farmers like that it's not regulatory, not government, fully voluntary. Farms get a good deal – the work is funded and done for them, and they get marketing tools. Marketing program gets them credibility and recognition without government regulators.

The issues for farmers we hear are flooding, cost of land, and encroaching development. Do you find push-back about how your work is going to help them with these problems? Mary – A main problem is that they feel over-regulated and it affects their day-to-day business.

SP is protecting farms and providing amenities and getting them recognition for it. Mary - The farmers here have been doing good practices and now get the recognition.

What about larger farmers not selling locally?

We have worked with all kinds of farms. Not so much for marketing, but recognition. For some it's just an independent audit to see how they're doing. With wine it does make a difference beyond this region.

How can we partner with you? Everybody likes this program and we'd like more incentive-based programs for farmers, so they get something out of activities that are regulated (so they get something out of it)?

Building support and endorsement for the program. Coordinating the message to support other marketing messages like Puget Sound Fresh, Heart of Washington, etc. Always need funding for marketing and programs.

You've mostly been working with individual farms. What is the advantage of working geographical regions of growers like Skagit Growers, Sno-Valley Tilth, etc. Is there a happy marriage of efforts with policy? So you can say, if it's grown here, it's good for the environment.

We're not doing policy right now. I'm not sure how you can help us with the policy. There is precedent among groups of wineries.

Branden: We could have a strong partnership working with you to identify important issues, then we can translate your on-the-ground issues with policy changes. How can we help?

Support us as we go out for grants. Inform the public. Links on website or write-up in newsletter.

Motion: That we support SP. To add a link on our web site and start to explore the partnerships we can have between our groups.

Erin Second.

Vote: Unanimous.

Announcements: The Cascade Harvest Coalition received funding from Carolyn Foundation for the third phase of Puget Sound Regional Food Project for a poultry processing feasibility study, post-harvest handling and cold packing. CHC is sorting through 1800 licensed processing facilities in the participating counties to determine who might be appropriate to work with.

Work Plan Discussion

The goals from the 2006 workplan were reviewed. The AFPC is close to meeting the main objective, which was to receive recognition as an official advisory body to local government. It looks like official recognition could happen by the end of July. We need to prepare for that transition. Create a workplan. Form a transition team?

We need to commit that there will be seats on the council for suburban cities, need to also be thinking beyond Seattle. We'll want to start building relationships with other municipalities and prepare some background information for the new FPC. Phyllis recommends getting on as many council and leadership agendas as possible to brief them. We should identify the individuals and organizations to connect with.

Do a letter and set of papers to send out to these groups to introduce ourselves?

Do we want letters of support from cities in the hearing process? (Branden has contacts in some cities.)

Discussion: It was recommended to wait until language is introduced, then get letters if time permits. Danger in short timeline is that they will want to make changes or demands for committed members, etc.

May be worth risks of over-involvement and demands to have people involved?
Could kill the passing of the ordinance.
[No resolution to this discussion.]

Tammy would like at least two people to help with transition planning. No one has time right now to work on this. (Clarification about transition – pull together background so they have what they need, and do outreach and education to start to get people up to speed.)

Decision: County definitely still needs more information. Part of what's missing is why this is important and what it means for the County and the Ag Commission. Let's focus on these first. If it passes at the end of July, then we discuss outreach and preparation for new council.

New Intern, Max, starts July 2nd. Will be in Renton 2 days a week and in Seattle 2 days a week with Phyllis. He can help with logistics as we get ready for hearing, and also start him on his projects for summer –

- land use work: compare issues in Sound Food Report with accessible land in urban and county areas for community gardens (related to Branden's student study of urban space with garden potential.
- Continue next steps on LFAI and possible forums

Branden – UW Student projects this year

1. Assess publicly owned Seattle lands for applicability for community gardens – identified 45 sites for P-Patch, and some potential school garden spots and public rights of way. Great methodology, good GIS data, very useful, probably best assessment in country right now. (used Portland and Vancouver's assessments as inspiration) The student looked at the Sound Food Report to match up which neighborhoods lack access. The City's matching grant process means P-Patch distribution is often skewed to wealthier neighborhoods. Could overlay demographic data and health data to see impacts.
2. Study of DPD LEED ND certification for neighborhoods (South Lake Union is attempting to qualify)

LEED ND requires food system credits – farmers market, CSA link, gardening space per person in new development. The student looked at economic viability of agricultural food production vs. parking lots

Other Updates:

Tricia reported that F2S paper is moving along now.

Tricia also spoke about the F2S Program Manager job description WSDA has put out, and outlined concerns about its effects on the program's potential to help small farms and provide the educational component intended in the bill. We are not sending a letter or acting now, as WSFFN, WEC and WSU KCE are hoping to get a positive meeting with WSDA to encourage them to consider goals and accept advisory input. Tricia will update as to future needs.

Community Alliance for Global Justice - Tammy and Kelly will table there.

Next month we should include a space on Agenda for KCFFI update.