

Meeting Notes

Present: Steve Bauck, Laura Niemi, Branden Born, Tammy Morales

Absent: Kelly Horton, Linda Nageotte, Pablo Monsavais, Erin MacDougall, Jen Lamson, Fe Arreola, Laura Raymond, Mary Embleton

Guests:

Phyllis Shulman, Council President Conlin's office

Kelsey Beck, Food Lifeline

Meg McFadden, Washington State Housing Finance Commission, Beginning Farmer/Rancher Loan Program

Max Morange

Tim Bernthal, CTED, Farm to Food Bank program

Aja Peters-Mason, NOAA

Suj'n Chon, Dept. Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Matching Fund and P-Patch program

City Update

Phyllis Shulman stated Richard Conlin's continued support for a FPC, but expressed concern about a Seattle focus. City council members were excited about a regional approach, but without the county on board the FPC loses that cross-jurisdictional emphasis. There was discussion about changing the model toward a nonprofit or other institution-based model.

The \$24,000 set aside by the City for 2008 FPC work could be spent in any department or for any project if not used for a FPC. It can be rolled over into 2009, but this requires an action on the part of the city council.

There was discussion about clarifying the County's interest and activities to ensure we aren't heading in different directions. Even without county authority, and regardless of the model, a Seattle FPC could/would focus on regional issues. Any decision should involve those players at the county level that have previously expressed interest .

Staffing

There was discussion about whether staff is necessary for a FPC. There currently isn't enough City funding for the model we have, and the budget crisis makes it uncertain whether the city will have the ability to open its coffers in the next year or two. The idea of a staffed FPC is a product of the FPC model chosen. Not all FPC's have paid staff. There was agreement that establishing a council that isn't funded can send the wrong message about the need for coordination and follow-through, work that should be paid. There is also a risk that continuing to do this work for free could preclude the FPC from coming to the city or county for funding later.

The \$24,000 could fund a part-time coordinator or a graduate student—this kind of structure is not unfamiliar to a state based institution like UW.

The city suggests the AFPC should make a recommendation for the best option for moving forward. If a Seattle-based FPC is the choice, the AFPC needs to provide details around which the city and county can work.

Model for a Food Policy Council

There was discussion about the work that the AFPC has already done. Decisions have already been made about the model believed to be most beneficial. What is really needed is a direct connection/audience with the city and county governmental structures and funding if it's available. Where the FPC is housed, what its official status is – whether nonprofit, advisory body, etc is not as important as official recognition. The city can pass a resolution recognizing the FPC as an advisory body without having funding attached. If funding is included, then an ordinance would have to be passed to authorize the expenditure. It is unknown whether the county could also pass a resolution recognizing the FPC as an advisory body without committing to funding.

For now, the AFPC is in a holding pattern while the County IDT work is done to make the case for a regional FPC. During this time, relationships could be formed with the county (eg suburban cities) as they had been formed with the city. These relationships were not formed previously at the behest of County council member Patterson.

Phyllis indicated that timing is key. The AFPC needs to determine whether or not it will continue after December. If the AFPC dissolves, the city will not be able to lead the effort. What this means is that the AFPC needs to determine its action plan and conduct working sessions with City and County folks to see exactly how things could work.

Now that the county ordinance is public, it is important for AFPC to start building relationships, identifying valuable projects, and take some ownership of the education piece.

The AFPC is entering an educational phase. It needs to work on educating the public and elected officials through exposure to the idea and value of a FPC. The fact that the County is considering reconvening its IDT to conduct a gap analysis is an important outcome for the AFPC. The AFPC can help with county's efforts to determine exactly what they do and do not do. For example, a graduate student at UW did a paper on all of the impacts on the food system that county agencies have. This should be shared.

If the County was not facing such a large deficit a FPC would be a sure-win. This could be an opportunity for the FPC to show its good corporate citizenship by working on issues even without funding (or very little)—to show that it can get along with other agencies even in tough budget times.

Funding

There was discussion about whether foundation funding is available that could support a FPC for a year or two. The Seattle Foundation is looking for a project that needs a bit of funding for a big impact and has funded this kind of work before. The Kellogg Foundation may be an option.

There was discussion about finding county funds without tapping into general funds. Can department heads agree independently to set aside some funds for this work to cobble together funding for a coordinator?

The City budget process is beginning in 2 weeks. If the AFPC wants to request funding for activities, Phyllis will need a request quickly.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Set up working sessions with appropriate City staff
- Set up working sessions with appropriate County staff
- Send Phyllis request for 2008 funds for part-time coordinator
- Send Phyllis ideas for 2009 Local Food Action Initiative projects

AFPC Extension

There was discussion about what role the AFPC should be playing. It seems critical that members extend themselves for another 6 months to influence the status of the county ordinance and the city decision process.

Declining attendance at the AFPC might be telling of the energy the groups has. There was discussion about adding new members to the AFPC to get new energy and to build support in areas that we are currently lacking. These new members could help with the educational outreach efforts in the county.

Suj'n Chon, program manager for the P-Patch program, attended the meeting in place of Laura Raymond.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Approve Suj'n as Laura Raymond's replacement
- Tammy to contact AFPC members individually to discuss extension.
- Identify and recruit new participants to AFPC, as official members or as advisory, to broaden influence.

Next Steps:

There was discussion that the AFPC should focus on educating City and County staff, other cities, other stakeholders etc about the work that the AFPC has already done. At the same time, tap into whatever "life support" funding such as the city's \$24,000.

There was discussion about broadening the focus of student research to tap into county issues. New batch of students is looking for projects, and there are already models for good student work such as Megan Horst's thesis on community garden land inventory.

Eat Local for Thanksgiving

The coordinator position unexpectedly became vacant leaving coordinating responsibilities to the Cascade Harvest Coalition. No funding exists for a new coordinator position. Increased interest in the event leads to new ideas but also difficulty in process.

Laura N. will share policy text that appears on a page of the ELT website that the AFPC created in 2007 via email and request updates.

Branden suggests that the food mileage calculator online would be much better if we asked people what they used when they had to substitute items. This info could be used to show state and county organizations and farmers what kind of analysis a FPC can do.

Other Announcements

Tammy Morales, on behalf of Kelly Horton said the WA Nutrition Council is interested in having an update and would like to keep the idea of nutrition on the table for food policy.

Harvest Celebration needs lots more volunteers. Please call Kara Martin if you have an interest.

Tim Bernthal is the staff person for the Farm to Food Bank program housed at CTED. Four projects were chosen for two-year support. One is in the King county area, one in Bellingham, and two on the east side (Columbia Gorge and Spokane).

A new American Planning Association Report is out (not online) as a follow-up to other food guideline documents. A major shift has occurred with planners' opinions about the importance of food. The biggest barrier (according to planners themselves) is education for the planners.