

Meeting Notes

Present: Steve Bauck, Suj'n Chon, Linda Nageotte, Erin MacDougall, Kelly Horton, Pablo Monsivais, Laura Niemi, Jen Lamson, Tammy Morales

Absent: Branden Born, Mary Embleton, Fe Arreola

Guests:

Phyllis Shulman, Legislative aide to Richard Conlin

Ben Simons, Intern w/ Local Roots

Tracy English, volunteer w/ Lettuce Link,

Sarita Role, Director, Organic Volunteers

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

Update

King County still seems interested in creating a Task Force focused on food access issues, but nothing will be confirmed until the budget process is over later this year.

Phyllis noted that the Seattle City Council voted on several food-related items in their budget. Some of these include \$200,000 for 2009-2010 for food banks and home food delivery; Mayor Nickels also added funds for delivery. Some funds were added to food stamp outreach and the Fleets and Facilities departed was asked to identify specs for creating a City Hall Farmers Market. Additionally, the city is looking at land surveys and asking Dept of Neighborhoods (DON) for 2 acres for a community garden or urban farm; Dept of Transportation (SDOT) has been asked to better educate and clarify for the public the rules about planting strips. DHS has been asked to compile stats on hunger and to move City vending machines toward healthy food options. The parks levy passed, which provides \$2 million for purchase of land for community gardens; some funds have gone to DON to create the action plan identified in the Local Food Action Initiative. There does not seem to be any activity on creating this action plan despite a January 1, 2009 due date for a draft report.

Regional model – Council President Conlin is meeting w/ Bob Drewel of Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) to discuss a regional FPC. The initial conversation was positive. Once this meeting takes place, Phyllis will contact AFPC about participating in a follow up meeting.

ACTION ITEM:

- **Tammy to get a packet to Phyllis:**

Mission, key priorities, accomplishments and members - NOT what a food policy council is

- **Tammy to follow up with Rich MacDonald about DON's tasks**

Goals of AFPC

There was discussion about AFPC successes and how member organizations have participated.

Each AFPC member was asked, "how has your work been affected by participation in this group?"

- AFPC provides a regular opportunity to be reminded that food access work directly impacts the community; it gives context to work.
- Local farmers are being given a voice. Cascade Harvest is getting opportunities to get its messages out by another entity.
- Local students in public planning are getting exposure to food access work and generating important, valid research.
- It's easy to get tunnel vision within your own cause area. Being part of the AFPC provides access to other aspects of the food system, and other ways of thinking about food access issues.
- For Public Health Seattle and King County, there has been a shift in how health is assessed – now questions about food access are being incorporated into our community assessments on a regular basis. Before there was only a focus on healthy food, now there's also a consideration to local, organic, sustainable. Inequity is being looked at as an integral part of food access; this is impacting how health disparities are assessed. Also we have more focused geographic work – access disparities across the county to focus on improving health outcomes; key environmental decisions are made at other tables – but now health is at those tables and part of decision-making. KCFFI – other funders becoming interested
- For Seattle Tilth, there is more knowledge and awareness. This has spurred growth in our own organization. We are better able to network and develop relationships, and have new opportunities and mechanisms to get our messages out. *We've also cultivated relationships with council members to impact policy, which we had never done before.*
- For UW, as researchers, it's been refreshing to be connected to others grappling with issues pertaining to food. This has created new applications for their work, and allowed their organization to leverage its impact. It's given them access to different parts of the food system that otherwise wouldn't have been available. There's been more cross-fertilization.
- For the City of Seattle, the AFPC has been important part of informing the city's work in a way that's unique because of our membership. Because we are linked to one another, the city can get "one stop shopping" on issues pertaining to food access. Cross fertilization of ideas, research, expertise; work of this group has sparked lots of dialogue and activity in city and county and has played a big role in lots of policy – even statewide.

Member were also asked, "what successes have we achieved?"

- There's been a clear shift for local policymakers in recognizing that food policy work requires local decisions. It's not just about the Farm Bill.
- We have raised awareness for policy makers around food access, linking nutrition and food growing with social equity issues.
- Policy makers now realize that ignoring local and regional food policy issues will be detrimental – environmentally, economically, for public health, for social justice, etc.
- The way we inform one another is critical to council – our relationships with each other help the city understand where to go for information.
- Our series of white papers, *At the Table with the Acting Food Policy Council*, has been well received and informed other research.

- We have influenced policy at every level - the LFAI, the County Resolution, Local Farms, Healthy Kids. All have been more robust because of this group.
- Because of this group, national funders have started investing in the Puget Sound Region. The Kellogg Foundation and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have awarded grants to bolster work around healthy eating and active living.

“What is our role as a group?”, “what can we uniquely do that other groups cannot?”

- We can serve as an incubator for new ideas or efforts.
- We can advise on food policy – whether or not we have a formal mandate.
- We are a “think tank” resource for officials who need information, opinions or policy recommendations.
- We can advocate on issues being considered by policy makers.
- We can plan, develop and implement projects or research.
- We can identify issues and prioritize them.
- We can provide linkages between stakeholders in the food system in order to better position them to accomplish their work.
- We can promote messages, events, or ways of thinking to the public, to organizations and to decision-makers.
- We should stay focused on policy-related work, not projects, e.g. Eat Local campaign is policy-focused vs. purchasing land to start a community garden.
- We need to set the bar and define the food agenda in a public way.

There was discussion about how to balance pushing for official recognition and continuing to carry on our policy work.

There was agreement that in order to continue our work we need:

- Enough funding to provide minimal staffing – at least \$25,000 for part time, \$100,000 would be ideal for 1.5 staff positions
 - WSU can still help with this as long as we’re an **Acting** FPC
 - A “fellow” could be provided by the King County Exec’s office – if the Task Force is developed

While Richard Conlin is discussing the possibility of the PSRC housing us, that may be a couple months off and it may or may not materialize. The County Task Force may also not materialize. Do we need to think about shifting our goal from formal creation to just functioning as a fpc?

There’s no one model that should be preferable - we just want to be included in decision-making and acknowledged as useful advisors. However there is the reality of needing to coordinate, carry out strategic plan, etc. With no staff how does the work get done? Who coordinates without paid staff?

Phyllis indicated that in order for the City of Seattle to adopt a resolution creating an advisory body, there has to be a more formal group created. We’re too ad hoc. Perhaps a food policy commission could serve the function?

Phyllis was asked “What could we be doing to make it easier for city to acknowledge us?” Continue working on your issues. Phyllis stated that the city will continue looking to us for

recommendations, so we can't go away. She suggested working NOW to identify the key policy areas we should be focusing on? The Local Food Action Initiative set out goals, but what is key work *right now* given food crisis, economic crisis, energy crisis? Stop talking about what a food policy council can do... tell us what policies should be implemented.

What is our goal for next period?

Members agreed that it is more appealing to commit to advisory work and setting policy agendas than to creation of a formal body. The executive committee was designated to work with Seattle City Council President, Richard Conlin to find the right model. The rest of the members will continue the regular FPC work around communication, messaging, and outreach.

ACTION ITEM:

- **Review strategic plan from 2006**
- **Identify key policy work needed given current crises**
- **Executive Committee to work with Phyllis on model**

Membership Changes

This discussion was tabled in favor of continuing goals discussion.

There was agreement to schedule another retreat to follow up on our strategic plan and set new goals for advocacy.

At the retreat, Phyllis is invited to explain city expectations of this body.

The executive committee and Suj'n will work as the planning committee for the retreat. Other topics to include would be how do we monitor budget and policy decisions? Do we need someone in a government relations function for future city/county processes?

Tentative Retreat Date: January 16th – 9-3

ACTION ITEMS

- **Executive Committee to plan for retreat**

December meeting:

- Vote on extension and replacing members
- Planning for retreat
- PSRC to talk to us? Suburban Cities? Ag Commission? Invite to share their food issues and agendas.