

Present: Branden Born, Tammy Morales, Linda Nageotte, Sylvia Kantor, Mary Embleton, Erin MacDougall, Laura Niemi, Jen Lamson

Absent: Kelly Horton, Fe Arreola, Laura Raymond, Pablo Monsivais, Steve Bauck

Guests: Phyllis Shulman, Tricia Sexton, Tim Bernthal, Kelsey Beck, Mark Winne, Andrew Bjorn, Jennifer Langston, Tricia Sexton, Martha Baskin, Tim Crosby

Meeting Goals:

1. Discuss Local and National implications of Food Policy with Mark Winne
2. Determine Next Steps for AFPC
3. Update and Strategize for Remaining and Potential Issue Papers

Special Guest:

Mark Winne, consultant for the Community Food Security Coalition, joined us to discuss his new book *Closing the Food Gap*. The discussion was framed around two questions:

1. What is the role of the emergency food system in today's "new" food system? and
2. How do we make the food system viable for all farm workers, citizens regardless of income?

Note: Many in attendance at this AFPC meeting participated in the Local Food Policy Council Workshop training led by Mark on May 15.

Mark: Congratulations on getting closer to being an official food policy council. Policy is laced throughout book, *Closing the Food Gap* which spans 30-plus years collective and societal interests, including food, agriculture, organic, local, food banking. These are issues that many have been engaged in for a long period of time. *Closing the Food Gap* is based, in large part, on work done in Hartford Connecticut, but it also integrates other opportunities, trainings, national non-profit organizations.

We have put in much effort over the years, some have paid off. Perhaps it is time to stop and take stock of what is happening. Questions like: should food banking go on forever? What will be the dominant force in the future - organic and local? Community gardening? Need to check our assumptions about this work and who we are serving. Our goal should be to make good food available to all.

There is a strong role for public policy. Our work will not get us where we want to be without the "broad shoulders of government" There are some good opportunities that exist in the current version of the Farm Bill. Local and state policies are important and where most innovation happens, but the federal level must be addressed.

How does Community Food Security Coalition function against the Monsantos and ConAgras of the world?

Mark: As far as I see it, our biggest challenge is the anti-hunger movement not ConAgra, etc. Our ability to become more visible and effective is a challenge to those who are center stage in the food world.

These groups aren't actively lobbying against community food security, but they aren't active supporters either. Organizations like the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) are only calling for incremental growth because they fear bigger change puts their constituency at risk of losing ground. Questions like, how do you incentivize the food stamp program to address diet and quantity? FRAC has not been really receptive. The climate is that the national advocates are the gatekeepers of the nutrition title. This stems from a belief that they know best and that what they advocate is the solution. This dynamic creates imbalance in the debate. The research and development aspect (something common within the corporate world) is lacking in our non-profit/advocacy world around issues of hunger and food insecurity. This model is not consistent with encouraging innovation.

The goal is to embrace the larger agendas in the "new food world" and to find common ground.

Discussion: It does seem that people in the emergency food world are talking about reassessing their mission. Organizations like Food Lifeline or Northwest Harvest can't keep doing what they are doing forever. The underlying issue of poverty must be addressed.

What is the link between the local and national level and who are the major players at the national level?

This is an on-going conversation with America's Second Harvest. Dr Larry Brown's, (founding director of the Center on Hunger and Poverty) take is that we [emergency food providers] have lost our way in the anti-hunger community. We have not been mustering the outrage to demand that politicians fund feeding hungry people. Granted this is not an overnight shift. We have to feed people. There will always be instances that cause need. But not engaging in the larger debate is short-sighted. The accomplishments of food bank and feeding programs are a big deal to us. We are keeping two billion pounds of food out of landfills each year.

Is there any chance of decoupling food and the commodity title in the Farm Bill?

Mark: I am not sure but, Childhood Food and Nutrition reauthorization should be used to promote good food, community based solutions, and build different partnerships. This issue needs to be brought to the public soon. It is up for reauthorization in 2009 and the conversations need to happen now.

What about the work that gets done at the local level? Can the local level be the R and D component?

Mark: Yes. Innovation at the Federal level does not occur often. That is just the way it works. Federal policy is too top down. Ideas typically percolate up from the local and state level.

What is the next, safest step on local, organic, food banks? How do we get to where costs go down and volume goes up?

Discussion: The fastest growing portion of the food bank system is 100 million new lbs in fresh fruits and vegetables. The less nutritious food is going more to grocery outlets where low-income families shop. Ten years ago food bankers didn't see themselves having a role in policy. Three to five years ago, food bank directors didn't see themselves involved in food security. Things are changing.

Will food bank distributors be able to swallow that they may go away?

Discussion: FRAC and America's Second Harvest are working together now. This relationship is in the midst of change. There are common opportunities to work together between food banks, and other advocates. Local Farms- Healthy Kids is a great example of this collaboration at the state level which can start discussions on bigger projects, such as the economic factors of our low wage economy. We can't continue living in a country with such a wage disparity. Part of a good food movement, as articulated at Kellogg— is that good wages are paid to all those working in the food system.

How can we broaden the constituency base for these issues?

Mark: My gut tells me that if you want to do things like promote Farm to School in inner cities, where they are saddled with all kinds of bigger challenges, we will have to own those issues as well. Schools don't have the capacity to think about sourcing from local farms when they don't have money for computers or science equipment. I would like to see a Good School Movement that encompasses the breadth of issues. Today's teachers have to deal with over-crowding, the pressures of the No Child Left Behind—so many issues.

Broadening the constituency means starting where people care – where their issues are. Then you work on getting your issues addressed.

How do you involve individual people? How does policy affect their issues? Do individuals have a role in a FPC, or do FPC leaders need to listen to community and present those ideas forward?

Mark: The FPC needs to be people who can get changes implemented. If you use food assessments the right way, you involve all community members, engage in focus groups, surveys, and other ways of finding out what is going on in the community. And again, use that information to meet people where they are. For example, in Hartford CT, which is a poor city where we worked very hard to get F2S started. But in following up, parents said their primary concern was getting quality food into the school regardless of where it came from. An organizing process ensued from that.

Discussion: One of the challenges we have to face, recently highlighted by a couple of anthropologists/sociologists, is that farmer's markets are viewed as white institutions that are hard to get into low-income communities. Maybe communities want different things than what we advocate? We need to be careful about a disconnect between food advocates and social justice, economic, and cultural values of people we serve.

Sexton: Farm to School meetings are getting smaller and smaller with fewer parents in attendance. I recently spoke with a Food Service Director who really wants to buy local, but is unable to get a farmer to sell produce at a price he can afford. Maybe the issue is a lack of farm land? How do we make a local make a good/local food system work?

It is important to be more sensitive of what is the real need.

Discussion: Marra Farms—working with P-patches is a way to reach out to diverse communities. Be open to urban guerilla gardens. The City has been open to that. One issue with P-Patch is that it is a neighborhood development strategy, not a food production strategy. P-Patch is successful

program that can be improved. Need to do outreach to non-traditional allies like low-income housing folks and the Seattle Archdiocese.

Mark: An obvious issue underscored with gardens is quality of life needs that can be enhanced through open space. This is not just a way to reduce obesity. Transportation is another element. How do we get people out of their cars? Can we extend this thinking outward to land use planning, since roads are eating up farmland? The issue is not just one of protection. How do we make farming viable? How do all these issues link up? This is the way to frame these questions. And we need to tell stories about this to the larger public. Really compelling arguments come when we bring in the other issues.

We need to articulate systems and processes that bring this to a human level. Need to educate funders about this work and their expectations around results. Larger funders have begun funding policy more and more frequently. We need to tell human stories but bigger charitable institutions need to reframe their message to make progress. If you guys speak up with a unified voice, the message will be heard much faster. There is a role for the bigger, well-known, institutions.

With twelve counties in WA who want to start food policy councils, what is our role?

Mark: I haven't seen a state with this much interest/activity. Develop a unified message, for example, no more than two or three messages that are unified. This would be very powerful. Promote coordination, best practices.

Discussion: WSU Extension has a Small Farms Team and offices around state that can act as a resource for developing and delivering a message.

Food Policy Council Ordinance Update:

The King County ordinance is almost drafted and is expected to be introduced by late-June. Upon introduction at the County, the City will likely develop an ordinance to the FPC as its advisory body, which makes the process smoother. The ordinance includes the membership structure recommended by the AFPC and one and a half FTEs. WSU has agreed to provide benefits for these positions if City and County can contribute salaries.

What about the breakdown of city and County appointees?

The nominees would be put forward as follows: 6 from the County, 2 from the City, 1 from the Agricultural Commission, 1 from the City of Bellevue, 2 from the Suburban Cities Association, and 3 from the FPC itself. Total: 15

The assumption is that the AFPC will function until December. AFPC members who are interested in continuing to serve will be considered as nominees by the City and County. There is clear interest in having some continuity between the AFPC members and the next FPC.

There was discussion about having staggered terms so that the AFPC members who continue would serve 1 year terms and the new members would serve 2 year terms.

There was discussion about some former AFPC members acting as an advocacy arm of the FPC for those interested in a more activist role.

Q: Why was WSU chosen to house the FPC? There had been discussion about housing it at Public Health.

Phyllis: Several options were considered - Public Health, City, County, the Puget Sound Regional Council, as well as other municipalities in county. The goal is to be stable, viable, and perhaps more away from the politics of an entity. The issue is ripe at Extension and it also offers more independence. Additionally, the County has an MOU with Extension so the bureaucracy is already functioning well there. County and City funds will staff the position. Bellevue, or others, may put more funds into the position. I recommend that this get written in to the ordinance to set an expectation for additional funding.

There was discussion about sustainability of the FPC. There is no guaranteed funding so may need to think about asking a foundation to underwrite a staff position or think about other structures.

Next steps AFPC:

Q: How can we assist city now that Local Food Action Initiative has passed?

There was discussion about whether or not to update the work plan created last April.

The decision was made to use the June meeting to discuss work plan materials, do an overview, and figure out our time allocation until September. We can attempt to document the transition into a cohesive package.

Phyllis: We have a summer intern from the University of Oregon and we are developing the internship jointly with WSU Extension on behalf of the AFPC.

The intern can maybe spend time on a narrative. The student project needs to have land use focus for him to receive credit. He will be in Seattle by early July. Maybe he can use the opportunity to locate useable garden space and land within the city.

There was discussion about the FPC creating the public case for a better community food system. Ideas included arranging a field trip with council members to make the issue more visible. Perhaps it would help position work of this council in a visible way, as we move towards formalization.

Action: Gather materials for work plan discussion prior to next AFPC meeting and circulate.

Issue Papers:

The Food Access paper is almost done and will shortly be sent out to the AFPC for final review before it is distributed publically. AFPC members should send edits back to Sylvia so it can be issued by the end of May.

Action: Food Access paper: Draft cover letter and send to Andrew Bjorn prior to sending to AFPC for final review, then mail final version to local elected officials.

Tricia plans to have a draft of Farm to School paper out in June. The paper is looking at policy options and actions for Farm to School that are available at the local level.

There was discussion about doing an emergency preparedness paper. Pablo and Linda had expressed interest in taking the lead. It was agreed that decisions about any additional papers should be part of the work plan conversation in June. We will need to determine transition work before taking on additional research.

Opportunities/Updates

Eat Local for Thanksgiving

Eat Local for Thanksgiving will happen regardless of AFPC involvement. It may not be a top priority for AFPC. Mary Embleton will be engaged and Laura Niemi might be. Branden will put it forward as potential thesis topic for his students.

Action: A decision was made to add discussion and decision of AFPC involvement in 2008 ELT to the next meeting agenda as part of the work plan discussion.

Kellogg Food and Society Conference

The AFPC was one of eighteen projects highlighted at the conference. It was a good opportunity to talk about our work and hear from others trying to start FPCs. Many at the conference already knew about the food system work happening in Seattle and Washington State and were intrigued to hear about the Local Food Action Initiative.

Planning for Upcoming AFPC meetings

June: Discuss transition and work plan update. July: Holly Freishtat to discuss Farm to Hospital

Other Business

Branden has been contacted by a researcher from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation who is interested in doing a FPC assessment. It was agreed that Branden should write a letter of support for the grant and share it with the AFPC.

Frank Chopp has shared his legislative framework, Working for One Washington. He is very interested in policies that bridge this state's eastern/western split.

http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/welcome_speaker.asp

Phyllis: Mark Dworkin and Melissa Young's film *Good Food* will be showing at the Egyptian/Harvard Exit on July 9th at noon thanks to Puget Sound Community Card project, 21 acres, and Solid Ground

Meeting End