

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes
May 20, 2014
[HHS campus](#)

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting: June 17, 2014, 3-5p.m. @ [HHS campus](#)

Attendees:

Steering Committee - Janet Brown (AllStar Organics); Bonnie Nielsen (UCCE Marin); Rebecca Smith (HHS Nutrition Wellness Program); Julia Van Soelen Kim (UCCE Marin); Peter Healy (Agricultural Institute of Marin)

Committee Members – Alexandra Danino (SF/Marin Food Bank); Gueidi Beltran (Women, Infants and Children Program); Denise Schoenbaum (YLI); Gail Crane (CAM); Jeffrey Westman (Marin Organic); Jennie Pardi (CCNB & IVOF&G); Kate Donnolly (HHS); Liza Crosse (Aide to Supervisor Kinsey); Madeline Hope (West Marin Waste Education); Sheila Kopf (SF/Marin Food Banks); Socorro Romo (Point Reyes Food Bank); Steve Schwartz (Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative); Susan Martinelli (Marin Community Clinic)

Guests – Brigitte Moran (AIM); Elaini Negussie (HHS, Nutrition Wellness Program); Erendira Olivas (LIFT-Levantate); Lauren Klein (UC Cooperative Extension); Laura Colgate, (Senior Nutrition Services with the Council on Aging)

Handouts:

- West Marin Community Specific Needs

Welcome and opening remarks (Janet Brown, Chair)

Measure B: June ballot measure for a permanent farmers' market canopy (Brigitte Moran, AIM)

- Sunday Civic Center Market as it is today, plans for pavilion
 - permanent, covered, market hall to showcase Marin products, 18 day tables, 5 acres
- Ballot measure B vote coming up - June 3rd
- Questions:
 - Deborah Schoenbaum: educational venue for youth to discuss social justice and equity issues?
 - Elaini N: recap funding? All private donors, none from taxpayers (\$10 mil is capital campaign, \$10 mil is debt service)
 - Steve Schwartz: looking for endorsements from groups? Yes. Perhaps MFPC could.
 - Rebecca Smith: market location not as accessible for underserved communities.

Planning on doing outreach to those communities? SMART train timeline? Future policy issue could be increasing public transport options to the site. Mobile market housed there.

Review of letters of support from the Marin Food Policy Council (Janet Brown and Julia Van Soelen Kim)

- Two important letters of support to send quickly; however it is not going to be a habit of the Council to request endorse with quick turn-arounds.

1. CA FPC requested us to forward letter from all Councils regarding access to Market Match dollars in the Farm Bill. Roots of Change report: every Market dollar generates 6 dollars!
2. USDA AFRI Grant proposal Julia worked on to pilot an alternative CSA model or “food boxes”. Food boxes would be more flexible and less cost-prohibitive for low income families to participate. Steve Schwartz: different models of CSAs – to what degree might this hurt small farmer CSAs? Might it dilute core intention of original CSAs? Julia: this would be very locally visioned with a lot of local control to imagine the best model for our region, intending to maintain the integrity of the CSA model – one farmer, not combined farms or mega-farms. If funds are awarded, there would be 3 pilot sites in the North Bay.

- Let us know how your organizations respond to time sensitive requests to aid the Council’s developing protocol. Alexandra Danino: important for Council members voices to be heard. Rebecca Smith: do we need full Council voice on everything, even local, loose, ongoing programs.

CalFresh Awareness Month & CalFresh updates (1 year anniversary)

- Kate Donnolly: May is CalFresh Awareness Month – increased outreach (elementary school meeting with parents debunking myths around applying for the program, as well as Whistlestop); lots of new workers; every Wednesday in May there’s a table with workers and grocery bags, see about 74 visitors/day, gave out 14 applications; Community Picnic at Pickleweed Park last weekend successful. Outreach to continue beyond May, work and partnerships (such as with CAM) continue to grow, more to come. Challenges: workers in eligibility have extremely large caseloads (up to 600 per worker); and need for fresh blood, new energy. Steve Schwartz: Different programs have different impacts. share a copy of the letter saying you won’t get deported if you apply for CalFresh? 69% eligible people in Marin don’t apply – is this right? Kate: thousands of people in Marin are eligible, must be more who have not yet applied.

Reflect on YLI Training, YLI Symposium, and youth policy needs (Deborah Schoenbaum)

- Janet: youth is equipped and ready! Have the energy and searching for a way in.
 - Deborah: share youth observations/debrief. Revisit doing training again so more Council members can participate, perhaps at the beginning of the school year. A good first step, youth felt positive about it overall. Terrie Green: appreciated the experience, has been looking for youth to engage with since then. Rebecca Smith: sorry she couldn’t participate, happy that YLI is interested in doing it again, perhaps take things a step further. Deborah: forming committees for next school year, and food access is one of the top four issues the youth want to address.

Exploring community specific needs: Marin City, Canal & West Marin (Janet Brown, Terrie Green, Erendira Olivas, Madeline Hope, and Soccoro Romo)

Recap presentations from March MFPC meeting with a summary of the main issue(s), concern(s), and opportunities for food security in the community.

- Of these, what is the community most energized about or organized around?
- If the community could change one thing to improve food security for its residents, what would it be?

- What are the policy, systems, and/or environment needs to realize this change?
- Are there champions or other people who should be involved who the MFPC can help connect?

- Marin City

- **Recap:** Marin City is a food desert; zip code determines health; 33% 5th, 7th, and 9th graders are obese; median income is \$37,000; chronic disease is mostly preventable.

- **Community energized about:** food access – full-scale healthy grocery store.

Training people before the store comes so that folks are employable and qualified and can do the work themselves.

- **One thing the community would change:** Establish a healthy affordable grocery store.

- **Policy needed:** MLK Coalition agrees before anyone goes after funding, they should come to the community (local gov't. first to develop a program together. Need BOS to agree: end food deserts across Marin. Moratorium on fast food coming into low income neighborhoods. Assistance with Marin City Shopping Center structural issues regarding access. Begin a dialogue on social issues relating to health. Capacity-building training. Nutrition education and physical activity classes. Need a grant writer!!!

- **Who else should be involved:** anyone involved with larger grocery stores, investors to support establishment of the grocery store, legal assistance, health professionals to highlight connection between diet and disease, advertisement assistance, youth champions, investment professionals, philanthropists, anyone to donate seeds, seedlings etc. to program starting in June, businesses that can help train community members so that they are qualified to work in the grocery store.

- The Canal (Erendira Olivas, LIFT-Levantate)

- **Recap:** main concerns: safety (lack of bike lanes); walkability (trash, cars blocking sidewalks, smoking near campus and in apartments, sexual harassment to women); healthy retail (offerings at checkouts, quality of produce and meats in stores, visibility and promotion of healthy options); CalFresh and other food programs (utilization in the community).

- **Community energized about:** it takes time for the community to understand that they do have a voice and people will listen, and they vote with their pocketbook.

- **One thing the community would change:** need immediate and tangible changes, quick wins with retail and marketing. Also to build a positive relationship with retailers, and tying CalFresh promotion to retail strategies.

- **Policy needed:** support the Canal by learning what these folks go through. What is it like to shop for groceries here, and with small children and teenagers? Come to a meeting and see what convenience stores offer and promote, see for yourself. HEAL mini-grant to enable small changes with larger impacts. Market Match incentives linked to CalFresh or WIC so their dollars go further. Supporting a healthy retail certification program for those stores doing a good job, more on a policy level. Working with CX3 team and retailers to update produce distributor lists of cost-effective distribution for smaller retailers that have to pay more because they don't buy a large volume; perhaps create a shared market for smaller retailers.

- **Who else should be involved:** agriculture people (distribution), city officials (healthy retail certification), alcohol and tobacco organizations, energy efficient grants.

- **West Marin** (Madeline Hope and Socorro Romo)

- **Potential tour dates (doodle poll <http://doodle.com/phfbvrz93kbxf4qn>):** June 6, 10, 13, 8:30am start; meet in Nicasio, go to Tomales, Pt. Reyes, lunch with organizations, then Inverness, Bolinas, San Geronimo Valley. Meet the sooner the better to include school staff.

- **Recap:** 14 villages with 4 school districts, main challenges: price point for local and healthful food. Opportunities: strengthen relationships between farms and schools, increase affordability, still want to do a needs assessment, transportation and access issues because so disperse, need to connect residents with services, need to increase coordination among services providers about services that exist and how to promote access; need to educate W. Marin business owners of benefits of accepting WIC and EBT. Residents can't afford to buy food, can't get to it, and feel there is a stigma around using certain services.

- **Community energized about:** get together with WIC, CalFresh, Mobile Market and tour food stores in West Marin to understand how to better coordinate the programs with the stores (inconsistency among businesses)

- **One thing the community would change:** one healthy retail food outlet in each village that accepts WIC and CalFresh, with educated staff at each location (inc. Mobile Market)

- **Policy needed:** incentive program to participate in WIC and Cal Fresh; increased coordination regarding services and access; increased cultural competency by retail food outlet employees;

- **Who else should be involved:** West Marin Chamber of Commerce, family advocates and wellness groups from different school districts, food service providers, school and community gardens, health care providers, Farm Bureau, West Marin Community Services, Marin Organic, AIM.

- **Council discussion and questions**

- Julia Van Soelen Kim: what do people think is the next step? Policy relating to all three communities? Tours? Small group work?

- Madeline Hope: patterns in three communities we could cluster in a smaller group process similar to World Café style so that patterns and next steps could emerge.

- Susan Martinelli: likes the idea that the County adopts the stance that there will not be a food desert in the County. Perhaps the Council could work on language around that.

- Erendira Olivas: access and healthy retail seems to be the thread between all 3 communities.

- Rebecca Smith: Council gets stuck in the policy verses implementation area. If there isn't enforcement without resources, is there a point? Go into depth with the thread that unites the three communities instead (takes time)...

- Liza Crosse: successful policy... Statement/resolution for no food deserts is a feel-good statement. Local government can't control local business. But government can step in with a broader community benefit, such as with non-profits (ie: County support for farmers markets). What are the opportunities where government can be helpful? Need to be realistic. Resolution that is framed as a statement of intention, promote the point that some communities lack access. Encourage local business to accept and promote support

programs. Example approach: resolution and information packet for businesses about businesses selling rodenticides, alerted city officials of what County did.

- Elani Negussie: would it be useful to juxtapose it with the County cost of obesity and other chronic disease? Yes.
- Erendira Olivas: also revenue that WIC and CalFresh bring to the local community.
- Rebecca Smith: remember the webinars. Begin by drafting policy agenda language rather than nuts and bolts? Start by fine-tuning a unified voice for the Council and policy steps may come from that?

Council representative updates (All)

- Jennie Pardi: Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden CSA program has 10 boxes still available; delivery in Novato, San Rafael (CCNB offices in the Canal), and pickup at the farm in Novato. Contact her if interested.
- Elani : Berkeley ballot sugared sweetened beverage tax. Find out more at: BerkeleyvsBigSoda.com.

Closing remarks (Janet Brown)

"It's not easy to cross boundaries to adopt a whole-systems approach to health. It means leaving the areas we know well and venturing into fields where we have to depend on the expertise of others. It means learning unfamiliar concepts and mastering new tools to engage complexity. It means asking people to take health into account in making decisions that usually depend on other considerations. It may provoke controversy. It may make people we approach uneasy and even angry. It requires patience, imagination, courage, integrity, and a sense of humor."

- Dr. Richard Levins, John Rock Professor of Population Science, Harvard School of Medicine

Meeting adjured at 5:00 p.m.

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