

Marin Food Policy Council  
Meeting Notes  
September 16, 2014  
[HHS campus](#)

**Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting:** October 21, 2014, 3-5p.m. @ [HHS campus](#)

**Attendees:**

*Steering Committee* - Janet Brown (AllStar Organics); Bonnie Nielsen (UCCE Marin); Julia Van Soelen Kim (UCCE Marin); Leah Smith (AIM); Rebecca Smith (HHS)

*Committee Members* – Alexandra Danino (SF/Marin Food Bank); Elaini Negussie (HHS); Gueidi Beltran (WIC); Liza Crosse, (BOS); Peter Healey (AIM); Terrie Green (Marin City Community Services District)

**Welcome and introductions** (Janet Brown)

**Re-visit the Council's priority topics for 2014 and revise plan and timeline**  
(Janet Brown)

- Community Gardens policy piece completed early this year
- Two neighborhood assessment tours for community input in policy needs and development have happened (West Marin and Marin City), and the third (Canal) is coming up on October 15.
- The Council is leading to the development of policies on equitable access to nutritious food for all of Marin County. The Steering Committee will send out an advocacy packet (including a draft set of policies and letter) to the Council to reflect our learnings from these tours. During the October meeting we will discuss the language of, and hopefully agree upon, policy language to move forward with.

**Reflect on last month's presentations on school nutrition** (Leah Smith)

Leah: I was quite inspired by Center for Ecoliteracy, Conscious Kitchen, Novato Unified School District and Good Earth's efforts in expanding school nutrition programs, and wanted to hear what folks took away from the topics and if there are any policy suggestions.

Janet: We are often daunted by the 19 districts in Marin County. I appreciated that Karen gave the example of 11 districts working together successfully. Should we approach MCOE?

Rebecca: There is renewed interest at the MCOE level in having centralized support around school wellness, but it is preliminary – they are still in the looking for funding stage. Perhaps we should tour some Bay Area best practices around an economy of scale joint purchasing platform for school districts. People want to know about successful models, especially if they are local.

Liza: Used to be the biggest barrier was the state (the ketchup as a vegetable phenomenon). Are we past that?

Janet: They are trying to move schools towards nutrient-based meal planning.

Elaini: Alameda County is huge, if they can do it, we should be able to. A great opportunity that they are here as an example, a visit is a great idea.

Julia: In planning the first series of school nutrition presentations, there was interest expressed on the MCOE end in collaborating.

Leah: Does anyone know how MCOE works with the 19 districts? Is it a similar process to the BOS regarding resolutions and policies?

Rebecca: They have superintendent meetings where they disseminate information, but they are clear that they don't have any governing function over the districts, but rather supportive functions. Mary Jane has interest in trying to have a paid position to advocate for school nutrition.

Janet: Need policy attractive enough for folks to want to get on board.

Terrie: Need one champion superintendent to pave the way.

Peter: Need Karen to come give the CFE presentation.

Janet: We have communities in need of access, equitable production and community gardens, youth and seniors. We may be headed towards schools naturally. Schools are a closed system, designed to throw off outside forces. We need to make this cogent, crisp, doable, and highly appealing with value. We need the data of the financial savings. Learn from districts on how they began and why.

Rebecca: Talking about distribution and purchasing, Miguel should be guiding us. Would love to learn from local models.

Janet: We will reach out and try to understand how independent school districts have made this work for them.

Liza: Can we learn from any schools in Marin?

Rebecca: Novato is leading the way in Marin so we should keep Miguel at the heart of the discussion.

Julia: We don't have a local model of purchasing collectively between districts to lower the price point.

Gueidi: Miguel could help us develop talking point to approach schools.

Leah: Would be interesting to have a presentation at a School Board meeting. An inventory of working school kitchens in Marin would be helpful so that we know what we're working with – perhaps a Dominican student intern??

Rebecca: It takes a lot to engage the schools, and is challenging to engage on a macro level across the districts, especially since MCOE hasn't had the capacity in the past.

Julia: Let's look at the order of steps – could someone act on the information we gather? It sounds like there isn't the capacity to do so within MCOE. As a Food Policy Council, is there the opportunity for us to support a position at the county level? Once funding has been secured, and an intern may do this work, I volunteer to supervise this intern.

Rebecca: HEAL mini-grants could be a source of some funding for this; a portion of the total of \$50,000. Could make a challenge to other local funders to match it.

Janet: There are lots of reasons to have a kitchen in every community – disaster preparedness, nutrition education, congregate meals, etc. Schools are the centers of most communities. There are multiple reasons to be in favor of a bond measure. Could be a whole year's worth of work, we are opening it up now.

Leah: I think the idea of a 'forager' is good to hold on to – someone to coordinate with producers and schools.

Janet: Marin Organic's Sow A Row program – could we expand on this?

### **Capacity-Building Opportunities** (Rebecca Smith & Julia Van Soelen Kim)

How can we bring similar resources to our HEAL initiatives

- Webinar and training on policy writing on September 17
- HEAL Cities convening on September 24
- Youth Participatory Action Research training this fall
- Policy to Action Training for Coalitions in January

Are there areas of training or capacity training that would be helpful for the Council moving forward?

Liza: You will send the invite to the Youth training far and wide, right?

Rebecca: Want to keep it focused on food and fitness, but will put it out there. After the West Marin tour we have had a bubbling up of a possible integrated healthy retail campaign in West Marin.

Leah: Have we engaged with ChangeLab Solutions to provide ongoing training to us?

Rebecca: We have training resources available to us. Network has given us access to a training resource center for the Bay Area.

### **Save the Date: Tour of the Canal** (Gueidi Beltran)

Review agenda, to be sent out to the whole Council tomorrow. The tour will be led by Erendira Olivas and Oscar Guerdado from HHS. We want to give you a sense of what the Canal has by way of food access, vendors, and providers. We look forward to continuing the discussion with various community members and partners, and hope to see everyone there!

**\*\*Please RSVP to Bonnie at [banielsen@ucanr.edu](mailto:banielsen@ucanr.edu) by Wednesday 10/8/14\*\***

### **Introduce the Marin County Aging Action Initiative** (Julia Van Soelen Kim)

Also for an upcoming agenda: Aging Action Initiative at the County level with a subgroup on nutrition; Rebecca and Julia are participating in this subgroup. We haven't forgotten about the aging community in Marin, look for more updates.

### **Council representative updates** (All)

- Terrie: October 3 revealing the market feasibility study. Marin City CX3 Healthy Food Access Coalition is open to join, encourage people to give ideas. Nextdoor Marin has been helpful in connecting people. Terrie can report to the group about how it goes at the October meeting.
- Alexnadra: Will we return to CalFresh? Would like to keep CalFresh on the radar since we aren't as much at our goals as we would like to be. Will we get to other topics around food access and production in addition to school nutrition? CalFresh has been a topic on each community tour, as an example of a thread that is woven throughout. This will be included in the policy. It would also be interested to hear from Marty Graff how things are going on his side regarding the enrollment rate and capacity for application processing. There seems to still be more learning the Council

- could do in the area of CalFresh. Perhaps have a CalFresh update on the October or November agenda?
- Rebecca: We invite Council members to bring any current relevant policy issue with potential solutions to the Council at anytime.
  - Leah: CA Market Match Consortium to share best practices and support orgs in EBT and Market Match programs and efforts. Received funding and collected data on the impact of their efforts. Waiting for the ROP to come out to put together a proposal to draw resources to the state of California, feels there is a good chance the group will get funded. Market Match provides the incentive to draw people back to the farmers market – where food stamps were used commonly until EBT went online, resulting in a 10 year gap of not being used at farmers markets.
  - Elaini: Congratulations on the grant! Reminder to keep community engagement in mind when coming into a community on the search for locations. We will go further if we approach it in the right way.
  - Leah: Mobile farmers market received a \$50,000 grant from the MCF, part of which is a match program to attract additional funding. Goal is for next June to launch the program, but need to raise ~\$50,000 more in funding, secure the vehicle, and work out locations.
  - Elaini: We are trying for Canal stores to be EBT eligible.
  - Alexandra: Effective October 1, 2014, CalFresh monthly allotments will go up to offset cost of living increases.

**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 4:50 p.m.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, October 21, 2014, from 3:00 to 5:00 pm at the [HHS campus](#)