

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes
October 21, 2014
[HHS campus](#)

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting: November 18, 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); Deborah Schoenbaum (YLI); Elaini Negussie (HHS); Kate Donnelly (HHS); Madeline Hope (West Marin Community Services District); Miguel Villareal (Novato USD); Socorro Romo (West Marin Community Services District); Steve Schwartz (Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative); Terrie Green (Marin City Community Services District)

Welcome – Janet Brown

Canal Tour Report-Out and Reflection – Gueidi Beltran and Erendira Olivas (Tabled until next meeting).

Marin City Market Feasibility Study – Terrie Green

- Demographic look at Southern Marin, determine whether a grocery store would be financially feasible in Marin City
 - Marin City could sustain more than one grocery store
 - Since the study, have been receiving many calls from people wanting to collaborate
 - Overwhelming consensus is that Marin City needs a grocery store, not just food by the box or brought in on a truck
 - One of the stores they're looking at is WinCo. It's also about jobs, economy, changing the community (in addition about healthy food). What is it going to take for people to feel comfortable to shop and change public perception about Marin City.
 - Lots of involvement from the County and other communities, feels good, like people are embracing the effort. YLI has formed their advisory committees for the year, and one is going to be access to healthy food. A youth from Marin City is on the Commission and excited to work on the issue.
 - It takes a team of people.

Discussion of draft Food Security/Equitable Access Policy document –

Janet Brown

DRAFT first attempt at identifying policy recommendations for food security and equitable access in the County, stemming from learnings from our investigations of community-specific needs including guest presentations, CX3 findings, and the

three community tours. On each tour we also met community members and representatives. Document discussion points:

- In addition to community specific needs, there was an overall pattern of common issues and areas for policy work.
- Bring up the idea that there are food deserts in Marin County and vulnerable constituencies that aren't geographically located (youth and seniors).
- 6 policy themes (attempt to hone in on major issues from the tours):
 - Healthy Food Access
 - Community Food Production
 - Safe Transportation Routes to Food
 - Supplemental Food Programs
 - Education and Emergency Programs
 - Monitoring and advancement
- Is this the right framework to start from for the Equitable Access piece, as a segment of something that all fits together (In addition to community gardens, school nutrition, CalFresh, and other policies)? Does this cover what came up on the tours?
- How are we going to implement these recommendations such Supplemental Food Program Support (i.e. every store accepting things like EBT and WIC? Is that the Council's job)? The first step is to work on the policy level and have a city adopt a policy that says they will support all stores doing this. Then we figure out what the leverage/incentives and/or consequences would be to make it happen. Combo of the city itself and grassroots pressure.
- We should be mindful of looking at unintended consequences of actions. Do our homework beforehand of potential objections. Example: no opposition to passing plastic bag ban in Novato because they had spoken with stores already about how they could implement such a policy so all obstacles had already been discussed and dealt with before it was put to a vote. We could have a sign-on where stores are invited to join a part of something good for the community.
- This is just one area of one of the six categories, there are many areas under each category, each with their own programmatic and policy potential. Can we return the conversation back to the bigger question of does this document reflect what we want it to (and move to the details of each later)? Do these category headings work?
- How about the distinct cultural elements in each of the communities? Is this integrated anywhere in the categories? What makes these communities distinct and special, and how is this cultural uniqueness represented in this document? Will people who want to maintain their traditions be able to within this policy documents? Do we lose some community distinction by lumping all 3 communities under each? Or do we look at each category for each community individually? How do we build common themes while maintaining community uniqueness? Culturally-appropriate food is highlighted in the document, but is it enough? We don't want to lose sight of this.

- We are trying for a good solid working document that can then be taken and crafted more specifically by people taking it to their specific community governing bodies. It has to be shaped by each community as their own. NOT a one-size-fits-all document.
- Who is the target audience for this document? And who are the ambassadors and how can the Council support them? One approach: pull out policy principles and get endorsements from officials. What can we pull out that leaves us broad enough principles to go get endorsements before getting into the weeds/details?
- Regarding the categories...
 - Perhaps the **Healthy Food Access** category could be teased out as “Healthy Food Retail”... Access/retail is still different from marketing and messaging, access is about *literally* having access to healthy food.
 - **Community Food Production** – what people can do for themselves (such as the CA Cottage Food Act enabling people to make prepared foods in your home up to \$50,000/year with very simple oversight = beginning to having your own business).
 - **Supplemental Food Programs** – regarding CalFresh, Food Banks are trying to grow collaborations, County is determining eligibility and hiring and restructuring the eligibility process. Marin is very close to achieving #4 (equal access to EBT). This is happening, we are almost there. Then should we take this portion out since it is already happening, and emphasize others? No, we should still include it to show our support. Depends on who’s the audience and what the purpose is. We also have to think about clients who don’t qualify for EBT (i.e. elderly and disabled who receive SSP portion of SSI aren’t eligible for EBT). Energy could be devoted to this issue. Also should address streamlining the application process to coordinate programs for a unified application process. Organizations in Marin are working with the Affordable Care Act to support multiple program applications. We should look into the structure of each program, who is using it, and why people who aren’t using it, aren’t.
- Notion of only presenting cities with things they CAN do. Perhaps a guide for cities of HOW to do things, potential resources, etc.
- Recommendations for Ongoing Management and Support section:
 - #1 and 2 – How about demonstration of Best Practices? Highlight businesses or schools that are doing good work. People need guidance and direction, models and coaches through initial steps.
 - #3 – Don’t just integrate this into their plan, integrate into the actions and implementation work they are doing NOW as much as they can.
 - #4 – Sustainable Food Business Recognition (issue of healthy access verses sustainably grown food); add equitable and drop sustainable perhaps? Marin CWP developed through the 3 pillars of sustainability.

- Perhaps a second draft for detailed review could circulate before the Council endorses it. Do we need working groups to address details in the document? **Steve, Madeline, Alexandra, Rebecca, Deborah, and Julia express interest. **circulate a doodle for times between this and next meeting, including evening time slots**** Ideally each community would be represented (need to ask Terrie and Erendira).

CA Food Policy Council update – Steve Schwartz

- Steve Schwartz was asked to be on the Committee because he's been working on food policy issues for ~20 years, not as a MFPC representative at this meeting.
- Issues and priority bills come up and the CA Council goes through a process
- Tracking votes and legislators because of relationships and accountability; the more they know us, the more likely they are to support our pieces of legislation in the future.
- Report coming out on November 18. If you are interested on working on the legislative report over the next month or so, approach Janet and we can work on the report.
- Marin has a legislative agenda that's adopted every year. Our lobbyists in Sacramento and D.C. can lobby bills that are in the legislative agenda.
- Soda labeling did not get through the committee recently, one of our legislators in particular needs education.
- ~18 years ago when Marin FPC was first launched, beginning terminology being worked on and 4 other entities across the nation working on this. Now there are many – almost every county in the state has one, and these are forming a statewide council. *CA FPC is formed from the bottom up.* It's taken almost 2 decades to get it here, and it is starting to track legislative votes in the state and say we're watching you!
- Will be a webinar for FPCs to learn more, will also be tools to customize for each policy council.
- FYI - Jared Huffman is a big supporter of CalFresh and advocates for increasing benefits. Food Policy Associates ranks legislators at the national level and rated Huffman high.

Update from HEAL Cities Convening & Community Gardens – Rebecca Smith

Cities sharing technical support and what's going on in other cities (Lauren Klein and Terrie Green presented). Some areas of interest that city officials expressed interest in follow-up included: community and youth engagement, and healthy food and beverage policies. Can send out the resolution along with today's meeting notes. Will probably work w CA Center for Public Health Advocacy, who is ready to come to Marin and help w healthy food and beverage training for the Council. The attendance list alone provides us with city officials self-identified as interested in these topics.

HEAL mini-grant update - Rebecca Smith

Will send out the new mini-grant request form, accepting applications through November 30, 2014. Have up to \$19,000 that can be multiple awards. For capacity building, not ongoing program support, around priorities and linking to discussions we've had here. Let Rebecca know if you are intending to apply for a mini-grant so you can have some air time to discuss.

Council representative updates (All)

- Julia – Marin County Community Garden Summit this Saturday at MLK Bayside Elementary in Marin City. Speakers, panel presentation, tour, lunch by Conscious Kitchen.
- Deborah – working with students at Marin Oaks in Novato on their school garden, and integrating it with their school meals. Looking for support: seeds, garden equipment, technical assistance (classes, workshops), greenhouse use. Paul Wallace at the Seed Bank in Petaluma? Marin Organic? Green Gulch? Marin Master Gardeners? Indian Valley Farm and Garden? Contact Deborah directly with ideas.

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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