

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes
February 17, 2015
[HHS campus](#)

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting: March 17, 2015, 3-5p.m. at [HHS campus](#)

Attendees:

Steering Committee - Janet Brown (AllStar Organics); Bonnie Nielsen (UCCE Marin); Deborah Schoenbaum (YLI); Julia Van Soelen Kim (UCCE Marin); Leah Smith (AIM); Rebecca Smith (HHS); Steve Schwartz (Interfaith Sustainable Collaborative)

Committee Members – Amy Ridout (Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden); Elaini Negussie (HHS); Erendira Olivas (LIFT-Levantate); Fred Smith (CA FarmLink); Gail Crane (CAM Marin); Lauren Klein (UCCE); Miguel Villarreal (Novato USD); Lori Davis (LIFT-Levantate); Terrie Green (Marin City Community Services District)

Guests – Kathy Carver (ExtraFood.org); Pam Shinault (Novato Parks & Recreation and Community Services)

Welcome & Introductions – Janet Brown

- Currently working on community food security piece via the Equitable Access Policy document. Food security is a preventative community need that evaluates access to resources so that all persons at all times can derive a culturally-appropriate healthy diet through locally and sustainably produced means.
- Update on Steering Committee roles and projects, including Marin Food Policy Council's presence in the state Food Policy Council, made possible by Steve Schwartz's participation.

CA Food Policy Council Update and CA Market Match update – Steve Schwartz

- CA Association of Food Policy Councils is a group of 20 councils representing ~30
- Diverse: Food System Alliances and Food Policy Councils. Alliances tend to be shy about taking stands on policy.
 - Relatively new: this was the first time they got together to discuss and take a stand on a piece of legislature. AB 2385 (CA Nutrition Incentives Act): trying to get \$5 million of state funds to advance a state-level version of Market Match.
 - Report in November on ~20 bills on a range of related topics, will meet three times this year as well to track bills we want to maintain prioritization. First time in the history of sustainable food and farming in CA that we are tracking legislature.
 - Regional gathering of Food Policy Councils in Del Norte County in May that MFPC would ideally have a presence at.
 - Berkeley just passed a sugar tax, SF failed to pass it. Can learn from each situation.
 - **MFPC needs to decide: participating member vs. voting member. If we commit more = we would get more resources from them. Decide in the next two months.**
 - Participatory members drive the agenda of what is being acted upon. Voting members can still try to get topics on the agenda, but it is more of a secondary role.
 - Potential to tie this process with the Marin County annual legislative process – UCCE and HHS has the opportunity to provide input to the County. County departments are asked to provide input to the County in the summer for the next calendar year. Will research the ability

of the MFPC to be engaged in the process. View the [2015 Federal & State Legislative Programs & Policy Guidelines](#) adopted December 16, 2014, for an example of past legislation.

- Desire to explore the potential repercussions of working on a state-wide level simultaneously with a County-wide level, to be sure to maintain transparency among a multitude of alliances and voting bodies with varied funding streams. We could invite Michael Dimock (Roots of Change) to present to us on the ins and outs of membership with and without advocacy.
- There are models for how to segment out organizations when voting or advocacy might compromise their political stance on issues.
- **Provisional vote on: participating member of CAFPC provided we can find an elegant solution to organizations taking a stand on certain issues. **Unanimously approved, provided we can find solutions to keeping organizations appropriate.**
- Get a copy of the latest draft of the guidance document, circulated before the next MFPC meeting, when we will discuss and vote upon approving it.
- Also by next month there should be more information on the CA Nutrition Incentives Act, before we vote on it and the supporting budget request. Other organizations are active in tracking the bill may provide more information. Can encourage Mark Levine to endorse it. Or
- Potential standing agenda item to update CA FPC activity.

Equitable access policy update – Janet Brown

- Outcomes from subcommittee meeting on 2.10.15:
 - Produce several versions: for the County as well as cities, with community representatives involved
 - Great deal of data already exists for us to make use of
 - Plan to reach out to allies in govt. so we can co-create policy document by World Food Day in October
 - Focus of the document: equity as the guiding framework
 - Resolution needs to have actionable goals and accountability measures
 - Janet, Julia, and Steve spent an afternoon with Ag Innovations, re-emphasized that we are on the right path and do not need to embark upon a multi-year report development report/Food System Assessment
 - We will circle back around for feedback and do focused work with the MFPC if needed as well as communities for full agreement. Please bring up any input or concern to the subcommittee or Steering Committee (email banielsen@ucanr.edu).
 - Any major shift in direction would always come to the MFPC first

Novato food landscape: Parks & Rec (Pam Shinault), and schools (Miguel Villarreal)

How is Novato addressing inequity in the food system?

Wellness policy in Novato schools – Miguel **review handouts

- Kids aren't eating. Only 30-40% of high school kids approved for free lunches are eating free lunches, ~50% middle school kids, and ~80% of elementary school kids. Why? Cultural issue: kids don't want to eat it: they want to eat with their friends (no lunch line), don't like the food, poor facilities, open campuses (all high school levels), not enough time to eat (10 minutes for breakfast recess break), teacher schedule (recess before lunch), etc., or can't afford it: \$44,000/yr income to qualify for free & reduced school lunch (families that make more than that still can't afford the meals).
- Participation in reduced meal programs is 10-15% lower than free meals.
- Funding issue: \$1.25/meal available per kid.

- Collaboration is key, working with local food providers, potential funders, etc. Working on making school lunch cool!
- When you serve breakfast: attendance increases (to the point that it offsets costs of breakfasts!), tardiness decreases, vandalism decreases, teacher disrespect decreases, disciplinary actions decrease, and grades increase!
- Marin Oaks: no plans at the moment to develop facilities, it's driven by numbers. It's difficult at best to provide services for such a small school. YLI would like to partner up with Novato USD on this; Marin County Youth Commission is working on connecting health with school gardens at San Jose Middle School and Marin Oaks.

Parks & Recreation – Pam Shinault

Local government perspective

- Parks & Rec has always been involved in health, active recreation facilities and health programs. Since 1997 Novato has spent millions of dollars in updating facilities, including senior facilities. 110,000 people served in Novato per year through their facilities. When HEAL Cities Campaign came around, they jumped on board to create a culture of health at the local government level. Three aspects: employee wellness, built environment, and healthy food access.
- Last spring they had a team to further the HEAL initiative in Novato, put on 2 workshops with major stakeholders in public and private health and fitness sectors. Led to the HEAL resource collaborative with four priorities to focus on to develop an action plan to achieve results. Four priorities: closed streets program with activities and education, community gardens (need \$200,000 to fund!), healthy restaurant, retail food incentives to provide healthier options, (particularly on kid menus),
- Updating the General Plan with a health lens, which is a huge opportunity. When communities update their General Plans, it is a golden opportunity to get health efforts prioritized, connecting transportation options to healthy food and fitness opportunities. How can we increase the health lens on every project that is happening? Can this lens of health include the community it is affecting/serving (know your audience).
- Joint venture with Hamilton School to build a gymnasium/kitchen/auditorium space that the city can use after school hours.
- What is a powerful venue to highlight what Novato is doing to nudge other communities along? Conversations!

Council representative updates (All)

- Rebecca: **February 25** – Food Resource Update to learn how to navigate and connect with Marin Food Resources. **April 7** – Healthy Food & Beverage Policy training at Marin City CSD highlighting their policy in conjunction with CA Center for Public Health Advocacy, will hear from Santa Clara Co. on the tools and resources out there, and BANPAC has potential funding aid. **May 16** – Annual Fruit and Veggie Fest in the Canal co-sponsored with LIFT-Levantate for healthy engaging family fun activities.
- Julia: **February 24** – tour for produce farmers interested in selling wholesale next Tuesday
- Terrie: **February 26** – Marin City's Body and Soul workshop. March 3 – youth interactive workshop with 25 young people from 6:45-7:30 p.m.
- Steve: **February 22** – Congregations Cultivating Local Food Access.

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 5:07 p.m.

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