

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes
April 21, 2015
[HHS campus](#)

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting: May 19, 2015, 3-5p.m. at [HHS campus](#)

Attendees:

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

Committee Members – Amy Ridout (Indian Valley Organic Farm & Garden); Gail Crane (CAM Marin); Kerry McGrath (Marin Organic); Lauren Klein (UCCE); Liza Crosse (Marin BOS); Lori Davis (Sanzuma); Madeline Hope (West Marin Waste Education); Marv Zauderer (ExtraFood.org); Miguel Villarreal (Novato USD); Peter Healy (AIM); Sheila Kopf (SF/Marin Food Bank); Susan Martinelli (Marin Community Clinic)

Guests – Ayana Morgan, Ben Guggenheim, Elena Dennis, Hector Villeda-Godoy, and Tara Gibson (Marin County Youth Commission, Food Justice Advisory Committee); Becky Gershon (SF/Marin Food Bank); June Farmer (Marin City CX3); Stephanie Grant (Dietetic Intern, Novato USD); Sarah Schoenbaum

Welcome & Introductions – Janet Brown

- National Gardens Month

Equitable Access Report

Update regarding data collection – Becky Gershon & Steve Schwartz

- Organized part of the process
- Policy Option Worksheet
 - o Set of questions to help address issues efficiently and streamline the process, and eventually inform the report/end product
 - o Handful of people will take the worksheet and work through one problem area, come up with a few solutions to present to the group to decide which to pursue
 - o Hopefully useful in other areas of work for MFPC
 - o They have some people on the Council in mind, as well as external experts in areas that they could benefit from additional input

Discuss Marin Independent Journal Op Ed – Janet Brown

- Perhaps submit this as a letter independent of the original Op Ed piece, rather than reacting to it, more to introduce the Marin Food Policy Council and work we are doing. This might elevate the dialogue beyond a blatant response. Can be distracting to recall the original piece, perhaps more elegant to state our own case. Raising the profile of the MFPC will elevate the participating organizations. Could we still somehow suggest he follow up by visiting communities he mentioned? Delicate issue because of the politics involved between community members and organizations, as well as the possibility of newspapers mis-quoting individuals. How do we collect the voice of the MFPC rather than individual organizations and

people that are members of the Council? We don't want to be counter-productive. We can fight back with data, explain the situation county-wide and discuss the tours MFPC held in 2014.

Gardens Report – Lauren Klein

- Third Community Gardens Summit in the fall of 2014 was a success; more gatherings to come.
- Working on getting community gardens zoned as permitted use. Most Marin cities have community gardens as integral parts of their climate action plans.
- Marin Gardens map on the Marin Master Gardeners website (WEBSITE) maps out where there are gardens as well as where there is a need.
- Working to match higher and lower income schools as “sister schools” to help each other, particularly in the summertime.
- Collaborating on developing schools as a food resource as well as educational
- Drought education resources (“Should we grow food or not because of the drought?”)
- Marin City updates: 2 new garden coordinator positions, Conscious Kitchen working in 2 schools now, producing food for Bayside MLK cafeteria, permission and design for a community garden on school grounds.
- Canal updates: potential to expand into the site adjacent to the Canal Community garden.
- 3 community garden tours thus far, fourth in West Marin to come this summer.
- Working with Novato school garden coordinators on producing more food for school lunch programs.
- Four community gardens designed and ready to be built, currently looking for funding.
- Four seed libraries in the county.
- Large part of the job: connecting people.
- Most neighborhood community gardens are families growing food plot by plot. One community garden is run by folks deciding together what they are growing and where. Some school gardens are growing food specifically for food banks. Only a handful of faith-based gardens that we know of in Marin right now.
- Marin City is gearing up for their summer garden programs and in need of support again – seeds, seedlings, soil, tools, etc.

Youth Commissioners Food Justice Report – Youth Commissioners Ayana Morgan, Ben Guggenheim, Elena Dennis, Hector Villeda-Godoy, and Tara Gibson from the Food Justice Committee of the Marin County Youth Commission

- Work to promote youth-led ideas and projects such as healthy eating and living.
- Food justice, educational equity, and alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Create programs that address issues the youth care about, and advise the BOS as the voice of Marin
- Supported by YLI
- Food Justice Committee's main goal: install school gardens, use the produce and education
 - o Working with Marin Oaks and San Jose Middle School
 - o The bigger issue: policy. Part of the project is research, how groups work to maintain their gardens (such as the dirt club of students, verses a few teachers).
 - o Equity issue: Marin Oaks isn't receiving the same support for their food programs.
 - o Setting the bar: creating a standard for all schools to meet regarding the quality, sourcing, and amount of food used in schools.

- Health education issue: developing a healthy eating curriculum for 5th graders.
- Accessibility of the free and reduced lunch program: overcoming language barriers, miscommunication issues, and stigma associated with the program. County-wide, about a third of youth are eligible, and only about a third of those eligible receive it. Some don't know they qualify, some know they qualify but don't register, some are registered but don't actually eat the meals.
- A huge issue is education and mindset and taste preference – health and nutrition education and demos about healthy foods.
- Both go into schools and help out, as well as work to support school groups on the ground. Communicate with school principals, affiliated Boys and Girls Clubs. Trying to make it easy on the staff – they are doing the work and just need approval from school staff.
- Applied for and were awarded a grant from a youth-led group at Marin Academy.
- Subcommittees have been voted to be extended into next year.
- Barriers to success: funding (had less originally), garden care during the summer, working with/around state standards when implementing curriculum.
- Would like to work with MCYC on the Equitable Access POW.
- Kitchens at schools: is it an issue to protect them? If you have a kitchen, why not use it?
- How can MFPC be helpful to MCYC's efforts? As much support as possible; creating policy is not easy. Presenting youth's ideas to MFPC, good collaboration with people with strong opinions. Also volunteers!
- Applications go out this May, about to begin recruiting – middle, high school, and college age. Looking for youth who have a voice and want a platform on which to use it.

- Short-term and long-term goals: empower youth through projects such as food demos, ensure that every school that has a garden is using it, to create policy to streamline the process, and to collaborate with MFPC on potential school garden policy.

Request for MFPC Letter of Support – Julia Van Soelen Kim

- Grant proposal looking for letters of support from either the full Council and/or individual organizations. This is the second attempt at applying for this funding. The idea is a modified CSA box. CSA: consumer pays for the whole season up front, sharing in the risk of farming and the community aspect of supporting the farmer financially. The proposed modification is that you only pre-order one box at a time, and pick up the box at convenience stores and general stores in rural areas, that may have limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. End goals: support farmers' incomes with a new income stream, increase retailers foot traffic, and increase local community access to fresh local food. Julia would be in charge of putting this project on the ground in Marin and Sonoma; a short-term research project that either succeeds or fails. It could be helpful to have retailers involved because the boxes could be purchased at stores using EBT. Potential collaboration with AIM's mobile market. Could the CSA be part of the school community to compliment school food services? For now it's only focusing on rural retailers. Could the boxes include recipes and instructions for cooking the produce, which is often a barrier to folks trying out CSAs. Deadline for the letter of support is this week, if individuals or organizations would like to provide letters as well. MFPC votes to support the project with a letter of support.

Council Representative Updates and Announcements – All

- Rebecca – **May 5:** Healthy Food and Beverage Policy Training in conjunction with Marin City CSD. There are opportunities for organizations in Marin to get free technical incentives and financial incentives to adopt healthy food and beverage policies. **May 16:** at HHS is the Fruit and Veggie Festival for the Canal Community.
- Steve – CA Nutrition Incentives Act is being voted on April 29, will have an update soon. **May 14-15** in Crescent City CA Association of Food Policy Council meeting, to which MFPC could send a representative(s). Also, the Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative will have a VISTA position opening up soon.
- Janet – CA Thursdays to be declared in Sacramento – serving CA food to CA kids every Thursday in schools (millions of meals a year!)

Goodbye Leah – we wish you well and will miss you!

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 5:05 p.m.

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