

Marin Food Policy Council

Meeting Notes

January 19, 2016

[HHS campus](#)

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting: February 16 2016, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. [HHS campus](#)

Attendees:

Steering Committee – Janet Brown (AllStar Organics); Alexandra Danino (SF/Marin Food Bank); Julia Van Soelen Kim (UCCE Marin); Reba Meigs (HHS); Steve Schwartz (Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative)

Committee Members – Angela Struckman (HHS); Becky Gershon (SF/Marin Food Bank); Lauren Klein (UCCE); Lori Davis (Sanzuma); Miguel Villarreal (Novato USD); Shiela Kopf(SF/Marin Food Bank); Victor Westman, (AIM)

Guests – Chris Paige (AIM); Leelee Thomas; Michelle (Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative); Poco Giacamini (San Geronimo Community Center)

Welcome & Council Representative Announcements – Janet Brown

- Save the Date: HHS Fruit and Veggie Fest – May 14th
- Helping Mi Rancho apply for WIC
- San Rafael Unified School District covering cost of Harvest of the Month produce for Lori's education program. Interested in Farm to School Program.
- Save the Date: 2016 Breastfeeding Summit with Marin Breastfeeding Coalition - Tuesday February 9th from 1 – 5 p.m. at the HHS campus - 3240 Kerner Blvd. An afternoon bringing together health care professionals, lactation consultants and breastfeeding advocates.

Council Business - Julia Van Soelen Kim

Membership

- **Action Item:** Complete Member Applications at ucanr.edu/MFPCapplication.

Changes to Steering Committee & Call for Nominations

- After a 3+ year term, Janet is resigning as Chair of the Marin Food Policy Council, which leaves the Chair role and her seat on the Steering Committee open.
- Thank you's and appreciation of Janet's great skill, time, and contributions to the Council. There is no one more "rooted" in this than Janet.
- After 1 year term, YLI (Deborah and Kiley) are rotating off of the Steering Committee, leaving one additional new seat open on the Steering Committee.
- The Steering Committee would like to nominate Alexandra Danino (SF Marin Food Bank) as a candidate for Chair/Co-Chair and seek additional nominations/volunteers for a second Co-Chair to join Alexandra.

- The Steering Committee would like to nominate Becky Gershon (SF Marin Food Bank) to join the Steering Committee as Equitable Access Workgroup Lead.
- **Action Item:** Call for nominations/volunteers for additional perspective candidates for Co-Chair, full Chair, and/or Steering Committee Member. **See Chair Criteria Form (attached)**. Nominations are due before the next MFPC meeting. Contact Julia Van Soelen Kim (jvansoelen@ucanr.edu) with any questions or ideas. The full slate of candidates will be voted onto the Steering Committee at the next Council Meeting.

Governance

- Tabled until spring.

Equitable Access Report

- Reviewed timeline, report status, and graphics.
- Comments regarding graphics:
 - Add children who are qualified for free and reduced price lunch who are not currently using it.
 - Look at County-wide plan for geographic boundaries for West Marin
 - Update gas calculation with 2016 rate and consider calculating distance from downtown Point Reyes Station to Petaluma, not from lighthouse to Novato. Consider using an average or a range.
- AB1402 will help streamline enrollment process for CalFresh
- Identify a specific dollar amount for a CDA "Grant" to offset costs for healthy retail incentive.
- **Equity Action Team:**
 - Supervisor Kinsey asked MFPC to connect with the County's internal "Equity Action Team" which includes Cio, David Escobar, HR, CDA, and the County Administrator.
 - Equity Action Team currently has 5 pilot projects on health, education, community welfare.
 - Equity Action Team could help us to explore next steps (e.g. maybe a pilot project relating to CalFresh).
- **February 2nd BOS Meeting - Budget Workshop - 9:00am-3:00pm**
 - Supervisor Kinsey would like MFPC to provide a brief comment at the budget hearing regarding MFPC's interest in a budget request.
- **Strong Starts .25 cent Sales Tax**
 - MFPC should explore if there are opportunities to incorporate equitable access to healthy food within Strong Starts Sales Tax.

Production Theme: Health, Food, and Shelter for Agricultural Workers

- Leelee Thomas, Marin Community Development Agency
 - See PowerPoint (attached)
 - Unfortunately, we don't have good data on farm workers. It is estimated that there are 1,000 ag workers in the County, but don't know and don't have a good survey of housing units or their conditions. Most are year-round permanent residents, not seasonal residents/migrant workers.

- We know that access to healthy, affordable homes, and food access are big issues. A big issue is the intensive regulatory environment, with Coastal Zone and Park even more restrictive, for building new housing or upgrading existing housing units.
- Opportunity for Coast Guard Station as affordable housing site. Only 36 units with huge demand. Need for housing for ag community is just one piece of the picture in West Marin. There are fewer and fewer units available in West Marin because of vacation homes and short term rentals.
- Opportunity – Advantage with issue is that there is strong public support for ag worker housing, especially compared to affordable housing, in general.
- Poko Giacomini, San Geronimo Valley Community Center
 - The workers do not have access to the very products that they produce. To have access to this food would significant help their food security. Irony of farmers accessing food pantry to get access to milk, eggs, produce.
 - Ranch residents drive together to pantry to receive food and referrals for other services.
 - Issue of very expensive area that these workers live in.
- Chris Paige – California Human Development
 - California Human Development is a “rural general store model,” providing affordable housing, workforce development, economic development to rural communities in California.
 - In California, agricultural workers must work 10 hour day/60 hour week *before* overtime hits.
 - Fewer farm workers are migrant workers because of meccanization on farms which is reducing peak labor demand, people are less free to move around because of immigration policy between Mexico and CA, thus stabilizing the farm workforce in California.
 - In Sonoma County study, the majority of farmworkers were permanent residents of Sonoma County. There are some lessons and observations that are useful, even though study in Sonoma County includes viticulture. See full [Sonoma County Farmworker Health Survey \(FHS\) 2013-14](#).
 - Farm workers are spending up to 60% of their income on rent. Result is over-crowding.
 - Report was able to broaden the foundation of what “health” means to include housing.
 - Report found low rate of CalFresh enrollment.
 - Prevention agenda not being addressed because of lack of access to medical care (diabetes)
 - Doesn’t make sense to talk about safe, secure food supply while excluding farmworkers from healthcare to keep them healthy.
 - Believe we need a “US Fair Food Policy” similar to Fair Trade. As consumers, let purchasers like Safeway and Whole Foods know that as a group, we are interested in the welfare of farmworkers producing the food we eat.

Discussion:

- Issue of piece-rate work.
- When housing is condition of employment, it is hard to get subsidies into that model, so trying to find land in West Marin where they could do an open-employment model = more opportunity to get subsidy into project.
- In Sonoma County CDC Community Transformation Grant had a small subset of funding for farmworker study.

- Question: What could the Board of Supervisors do? Put money towards ag worker housing; take the risk of developing ag worker housing that is not on a ranch; It would be hard but to be willing to support that financially and publicly. Example that project in Sonoma County has \$6 million subsidy from the county.
- Need Ag workforce housing build right in the area with open employment model to open up real subsidies. Eg USDA subsidy means that they only pay 30% of their income.
- Marin has the highest human development index in Portrait of California. Help people connect the dots with why Marin is such a beautiful place to live. Agriculture is not sustainable without a workforce to support it.
- Question: What is the agency that monitors ag worker housing and is there opportunity for us to advocate to that agency? Also, could we develop a standard for what farmworker housing should entail? Yes, there are standards. CDA is responsible for inspecting the units but it is complaint driven. CDA doesn't want to displace people if units are subpar. A lot of ranchers would fix up the housing if they could afford it, but they are also having a tough time financially and may also live in poor housing. For CDA to come in and enforce regulation without a viable option, would displace people.
- At dairies, workers need to be on site because of 24 hour a day nature of operation, so need a mix of opportunities both on and off farm.

CA Food Policy Council Update (Steve Swartz)

- **Save the Date:** CA Food Policy Council Meeting, Sacramento, March 14th and 15th
- Focus for CA Food Policy Council this coming year may be sugar sweetened beverages.
- Climate Ag Bill (which MFPC supported) is still moving forward in legislature.
- Child Nutrition Act advocacy will be needed for doubling of funding for Farm to School.