

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes
February 16, 2016
[HHS campus](#)

Next Marin Food Policy Council meeting: March 15 2016, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. [HHS campus](#)

Attendees:

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

Committee Members – Becky Gershon (SF/Marin Food Bank); Cio Hernandez (HHS); Lauren Klein (UCCE); Liza Crosse (Marin County BOS); Madeline Hope (West Marin Waste Education Coordinator); Victor Westman, (AIM)

Guests – Brigitte Moran (AIM); Marnie Jackson (ExtraFood.org)

Welcome & Council Representative Announcements – Janet Brown

- February 24 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.: Aging Action Initiative Workshop: Information Assistance & Referral Resources for the Front Line! - An all-day, all-county in-service staff training workshop. Corte Madera Town Center Community Room
- February 24 from 10 – 11:30 a.m.: Marin Communications Forum and First 5: Nutrition for Lifelong Health, Sheraton, San Rafael.
- February 24 from 3 – 7:30 p.m.: Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative 4th annual conference in Petaluma
- April 25 from 10 a.m. – 12 noon: MCOE Healthy Fair Guide launch for use in other events. Opportunity for MFPC to be visible in a larger equity arena.

Council Business - Julia Van Soelen Kim

Membership Applications Due

- Most folks have completed the Application – THANK YOU. If you haven't yet done so, please complete the Member Applications at ucanr.edu/MFPCapplication.

Aging Action Initiative Update – Becky Gershon

- Advocacy around SSI and SSP benefits for the elderly or disabled and low income. Currently the maximum benefit amount is below the federal poverty level. 1 hour meeting this Friday morning to come together as Marin advocates for an increase in SSI benefits at the state level. Looking for folks who are working with clients currently receiving SSI.

Changes to Steering Committee & Call for Nominations

- Chair seat(s) open to fill Janet Brown's absence. Alexandra and Lori have been nominated and are interested in being co-chairs.
- Two additional Steering Committee seats are open: Becky and Lauren have volunteered.

- Full slate of new and continuing Steering Committee Members unanimously voted in:

CURRENT

Chair – Janet Brown

Seat 1 – Alexandra Danino

Seat 2 – Kiely Hosmon

Seat 3 – Reba Meigs

Seat 4 – Bonnie Nielsen

Seat 5 – Steve Schwartz

Seat 6 – Julia Van Soelen Kim

BEGINNING FEBRUARY 2016

Co-Chairs – Alexandra Danino & Lori Davis

Seat 1 – Becky Gershon

Seat 2 – Lauren Klein

Seat 3 – Reba Meigs

Seat 4 – Bonnie Nielsen

Seat 5 – Steve Schwartz

Seat 6 – Julia Van Soelen Kim

Governance

- Governance element is tabled until membership figured out. Until then, all decision-making will remain consensus-based.

Equitable Access Report

- EA work group has been working on the report.
- REPORT OUTLINE
 - Introduction/background/methods
 - Food access: market based solutions/retail
 - Lack of access in 3 target areas of Marin City, West Marin, and the Canal
 - Continuation of HHS helping with healthy retail outreach in the Canal
 - Exploring more learning opportunities with local residents around access in West Marin, helping re-launch Marin Organic’s gleaning to food pantry program
 - CDA, HHS, UCCE working together; CDA supporting Marin City with letter of support and possible financial incentives for potential retailer, which could come in the form of a grant to offset the costs of this to the county.
 - Food assistance
 - CalFresh: increase participation in the program and ease application process. 3 areas:
 - Improve telephonic access for application, renewal, questions, status inquiry, etc.,
 - Increase connectivity between programs (such as free and reduced lunch and CalFresh), and
 - Improve client experience in CalFresh application
 - Food production: community-based
 - Promote small-scale community food production: school and community gardens, backyard farms, edible gardens, etc.
 - Mapping for potential sites for community gardens: community gardens map on UCCE website and beta-tested phone app coming.

- Water rates for food production: MFPC has written to MMWD requesting a discount for community food production, using precedence from across the country.
 - Changing the attitude towards community food production/urban ag with a PSA. Often the barrier isn't the regulations, but rather public perception. Both change negative perceptions and increase positive perceptions.
 - This version of the document is not including specific budget requests with more detailed work yet
- **REPORT TIMELINE**
 - 2/24: Finish writing report
 - 2/24-3/4: Solicit feedback from West Marin Collaborative, BOS, CDA, HHS, UCCE, and MCCSD leaders.
 - 3/7: Solicit feedback from MFPC - **due by Fri 3/11.**
 - 3/14: Finalize the report and re-send to MFPC for vote the next day.
 - 3/15: MFPC meeting – vote to approving the final report.
 - 3/16: Provide memo, executive summary, and full report to BOS.
 - 3/21: BOS Budget Workshop – Present briefly (3 minutes) on the report and request for funding consideration during the public comment period. This report is mainly a dialog tool for collaborators to guide getting the work done; no media push or press release or BOS resolution this time. Public-facing components: 10-12 infographics that live inside the report but can stand alone as well. Executive Summary may also be more public-facing as well.
- County's Equity group will receive a presentation as well.
- Federal legislation now requires stores offering SNAP to provide a list of 180 healthy products. Match programs were highlighted as critical in the process.

Production Theme: Agricultural Institute of Marin programs – Brigitte Moran, Peter Healey and Viktor Westman

- **History and background:**
 - 32 years – first market at the civic center in 1983. Third largest market in the state and one of the largest markets in the country – CA is one of only three states where farmers sell directly to the consumer. Farmers come from 32 counties across the state.
 - 1953 “Get big or get out” – family farms lose support of the government and the community, turn to monocrops
 - 1977 CA direct marketing program from Jerry Brown: CDFA certifies that CA markets have farmers that are selling their products, AIM goes to the markets and the respective farms and verifies that products are actually coming from those farms
 - 15 years ago markets were 5-10% certified organic, now it is over 50%
 - No GMO produce, meat, or dairy. Some packaged food vendors may have GMO ingredients. Collaborate with Albert Straus to develop GMO alternative program to determine if it is more valuable for vendors to label their products or change their products.
 - 430 members, 240 farmers. Established as a non-profit in 2007.
 - Working on increasing diversity of products that vendors can sell.

- USA spends less than 8% of our \$ on food – one of the lowest in the world. Americans expect food to be cheap.
- Education: battery caged eggs, cage free, vs pasture raised/free range eggs. 90% of Americans eat battery caged eggs.
- Produce codes demystified = start with 4: conventionally grown, start with 8: GMO, start with 9: organic
- **Permanent home for the farmers market.** Recently negotiated a lease agreement with the county for 60 year lease (rather than the current 30 days). Need more permanence: larger aisles, ceiling coverings, restrooms, etc. Measure B gave the County the right to negotiate with AIM for a permanent home for the market but did not fund the actual building. Rare partnership between public entity and non-profit. The structure will house AIM programs in addition to the market. Currently in a Capital Campaign to raise the funds.
- **AIM Programs.**
 - CalFresh acceptance and market match (there is an average of \$600 market match coin withdrawals each Sunday)
 - Outreach literature on a variety of topics, such as explaining food stamps
 - Free tours for youth and adults at the market as well as in schools
 - Farm Field Studies from Marin Organic (school group visits to working farms, ranches, and dairies to understand the food system as a whole, which ties into school curriculum)
 - AIM Check (farm audit program).
- **Policy work:** provide comments on proposed legislative amendments (with impacts on farmers and the community in mind). Also push forward own ideas, such as imposing restrictions on the use of the term “farmers market.”
- **Mobile Market:** vehicle has been bought and custom designed, should arrive in early April, and launch in early May. Plan to bring fresh affordable food to communities in need Marin, with 4-5 stops every day. Target audiences: seniors, the Canal, Marin City, West Marin, parts of Novato. Contact Peter with ideas for stops; need ample parking space and demand (don’t want to compete with existing businesses). Will circulate this info. Food will likely be at market costs, and Straus will make their dairy products accessible at a subsidized price.
- **How can MFPC help AIM with big projects:** cheerleaders when AIM speaks to donors?
- **Brainstorm MFPC follow-up:** healthy food education, MFPC market tour on a Thursday, Mobile Market stops and how MFPC and associated organizations can collaborate.

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.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 15, 2016, from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the HHS campus