

Marin Food Policy Council
Meeting Notes
March 15, 2016
[HHS campus](#)

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

Attendees:

Steering Committee – Alexandra Danino (SF/Marin Food Bank); Bonnie Nielsen (UCCE Marin); Julia Van Soelen Kim (UCCE Marin); Lauren Klein (UCCE Marin); Lori Davis (Sanzuma); Reba Meigs (HHS)

Committee Members – Cio Hernandez (HHS); Janet Brown (AllStar Organics); June Farmer (Marin City CX3); Miguel Villarreal (Novato USD); Peter Healey (AIM); Terrie Green (Marin City Community Services District); Victor Westman, (AIM)

Guests – AnaPaula Kitos Vasconcelos (Marin School of Environmental Leadership – MSEL); Barbara Clifton Zarate (Marin Community Foundation); Dani Cohen (MSEL); David Escobar (Aide to Supervisor Kinsey); Jon Pearlstone (EET Fitness, Inc.); Marnie Jackson (ExtraFood.org); Merone Eckert (MSEL); Paloma Siegel (MSEL); Sierra Smith (Marin Head Start); Veda Flores (Latino Marin)

Welcome & Council Representative Announcements – Alexandra Danino and Lori Davis

- Lori: Sanzuma just got funded to grow food for San Rafael schools; Zumba in the park at McInnis Park on April 2 including Mi Pueblo lunch FREE
- Jon: fitness education especially for folks who can't afford it, here to learn
- Marin School of Environmental Leadership, interns at IVC O&G, worked with Camp Cauliflower, here to learn about food and our community, looking to pursue sustainability in college
- Miguel: new cooking lab expanding to 3 schools this fall, providing nutrition education
- Reba: partnering with MCOE on Harvest of the Month; working on Equitable Access to Water project; SAVE THE DATE of May 14 for Fruit and Veggie Fest
- Cio: Guatemalan Mobile Consulate this Saturday and Sunday 3/19 and 3/20 at Canal Alliance for any and all documentation needs
- Thursday 3/17 is FARM DAY at the civic ctr
- Marin City CX3 collaborating with Park Description to have Healthy Fair Day on April 2 starting at 9am

Council Business - Julia Van Soelen Kim

- CA FPC meeting yesterday and today, Steve Schwartz is attending
- 22 members, 13 organizations represented; this membership list is approved and people ok the potential of their organizations being listed on a future MFPC factsheet or sign-on letter
- Will work on governance next; until then, all decision-making will remain consensus-based.
- Most folks have completed the Application – THANK YOU. If you haven't yet done so, please complete the Member Applications at ucanr.edu/MFPCApplication.

CA Food Policy Council Update – Reba Meigs

- Opportunity to represent MFPC at the CA FPC is always open to anyone interested
- Endorsement and Letter of Support for AB 2782 the Sugar Sweetened Beverage Health Impact Fee to Create the CA Health Fund; will invest tax revenue to nutrition and wellness education. New USDA dietary guidelines say there should be less than 10% added sugar in your diet, so this tax would fund the necessary education (similar to tobacco tax). This is the first time that a state-wide tax has been introduced. Good opportunity early on to either support or provide constructive feedback since the bill is early on in its process.
 - **DISCUSSION.** Slippery slope: if you tax soda, why not tax bakeries? Nutrition and wellness is all about education, and this is another way of supporting that education. Added sugar is in everything, and it adds up quickly. Bodies process liquids differently than foods, our bodies don't tell us we are full as quickly when consuming liquids as with foods. Dr. Lustig at UCSF sugar processing in the body is the same as alcohol processing in the body. It's an issue of equity and disparity when you look at the populations consuming more added sugar. Tax is 2 cents per ounce, which may be passed on to the consumer. Berkeley (only city in the nation with a tax) it a distribution tax and is not passed onto the consumer. Research shows that there is some decrease in consumption even when a Sugar tax campaign is not successful, which suggests helpful repercussions of simply education and awareness. It's early on in process, we can wait until we learn more or vote to support now.
 - **CONSENSUS REACHED in support of AB 2782.**
- Letter of Support and [Signature of Petition](#) for \$5 million for matching grant program for AB 1321 the CA Nutrition Incentives Act (Market Match). The bill language already passed last year, but the money didn't make it along with it; this is an effort to do so. It's federal monies, and a statewide approval was needed before bringing in the federal monies. Local farmers markets still need to come up with local match of money, and the federal government would match this.
 - **CONSENSUS REACHED in support of \$5 million matching grant program for AB 1321.**

Equitable Access Report – Lauren Klein

- The theme of "Equitable Access" has been a project of the MFPC for a number of years. Looking to improve equitable access to healthy food across the county, particularly West Marin, Marin City, and the Canal. This report is still a work-in-progress, hence today's discussion. Input is welcome by this FRIDAY MARCH 18, as the report is being passed along to County directors, the BOS, and being mentioned at the BOS budget meeting on Monday requesting an increase in funding for equitable access to healthy food. Even after this time, the document will remain a *living document*. There is still work to be done around language and messaging, and there are a couple organizations still to be contacted this week.
- **DISCUSSION.** What about Novato? Some neighborhoods have well over a mile of walking distance to grocery stores. Report does a good job of reflecting the many tours, discussions, and research that went into the process. When we began, we agreed that we wanted to make tangible results in the lives of Marin residents who live in the most vulnerable communities first. The report reflects this work. Marin City meeting with Federal Reserve Bank in San Francisco for grocery store funding. We may have emerging time-

sensitive opportunities to move quickly with this, and so request MFPC support ahead of our next meeting just in case. Approval to move forward with this document in the ways that we have described?

- **CONSENSUS REACHED to approve the Equitable Access Report.**
- **Next steps:** incorporate comments and feedback, add infographics, request the BOS fund equitable access in their next funding cycle, and present to the Marin County Equity Team.

Production Theme: Ag worker health and housing – Barbara Clifton Zarate, Program Director on Poverty with Marin Community Foundation, and David Escobar, Aide to Supervisor Steve Kinsey

David Escobar, with BOS for 14 years and exposed to farmworker housing in the county for 20 years

- Supervisor Kinsey’s office has been working on the delicate issue of farmworker housing for 14 years. Past 5-6 years finally getting a program off the ground.
- There is an interesting relationship between farmworkers and their families and the ranchers. Some ranchers are trying to provide the best they can, and others are not so generous – these are the concern. Its especially tricky when farms and ranches are only breaking even, barely making a living for their own families.
- They began by talking with ranchers about the living conditions of their employees – which is different in this county from other counties and other states. Most farmworker families are stationary, they are living on the farm and generally don’t migrate. Most farmworkers are indigenous people from Mexico and Central America, who may even be learning Spanish here first, and then maybe English, in Marin most are from Galos, Jalisco, Mexico.
- David’s introduction to the 4th district involved a controversial non-welcome in Tomales. This is a similar context for some of the families out in West Marin, still an underlying tone. Racism and implicit bias is embedded in the county, similar to tension across the nation.
- First attempt at farmworker housing was 6-7 years ago. Nature of ranches here did not necessarily fit the state’s criteria for support of migrant housing. Next they collaborated with human development agency in Santa Rosa to work with the USDA rather than the state. 2013 the Board gave quarter of a million dollars to this effort. David’s role was to research the conditions, get the depth and breadth of the farm families themselves. At this time the Marin Community Foundation brought forth 1 million dollars towards farmworker housing. A small triumph: 7 new housing units and 3 renovations.

Barbara Clifton Zarate, Program Director on Poverty with Marin Community Foundation

- Barbara has been working on affordable housing with MCF for 2 months, but has been working with the challenges and issues for 20 years. Affordable housing is the biggest and hottest issue in this county.
- MCF supports the continuum of housing from homeless shelters and legal services to emergency shelters to Homeward Bound to innovative efforts with affordable housing efforts.
- A survey was administered in West Marin in June 2011 to understand the issues with ranchers and workers alike. It revealed that the majority of workers are permanent residents, the loss of housing and employment generates a lot of fear among workers (you could lose both in a matter of 3 days), many ranches have substandard units, and more. It led to a pilot program of building 5 or 6 affordable housing units, with

investments from the county as well as MCF. Lots of obstacles: from USDA, ranchers (ensuing debt), land and permit issues such as septic, etc.

- Huge disparities in Marin; some ranchers are doing the right thing and others have really dropped the ball... plus there are even some elements of human trafficking! Housing issue is intrinsically linked to workers' ability to work. Additionally, most farmworkers don't even have access to the actual product of their work, making food access an important topic.
- MCF is currently working on affordable housing issue, but it is daunting; any efforts put forward are grossly opposed. Everyone is grappling with the issue in the county, it is a true issue of inequity and there are no easy solutions. It is an effort that will take more than just Marin County and MCF to address it.

DISCUSSION. What can MFPC do to support this issue?

David: Ask other elected officials to come and speak about the issues, including Community Development folks, supervisors, reps with the assembly and congress. Have the conversation and put it on the radar in a way that is transparent, and then ask the question of how can we help to push the agenda forward. We could also ask advocates from West Marin, or farmworker families themselves, people who are really in the trenches: what is life like, and how can we make life better for you? Connect with folks who already have the connections and trust in the communities. Who is telling the stories of the farmworkers themselves? It's important to think of them and the work they are doing.

Barbara: MFPC is a policy organizing arm and has the power of a collective voice. We can take a look at the survey results from 2011 and look at what has changed, what hasn't, and why. In terms of increasing access to healthy food, many have to drive far to a grocery store and might only do it once a month; can we increase WIC, CalFresh, and mobile farmers market options? Intricacies of the housing issue and its interconnections with food: just because someone may have a place to sleep, that might not mean they have access to a kitchen. How much housing is needed? The census is always off; you can also use schools to track but a lot of families live on the Marin-Sonoma border to confuse those numbers. 2011 estimate was 600 farmworkers – then those have their families. CLAM is a good example of multi-unit farmworker housing. ****JVS**** MFPC to invite CLAM to a future meeting. Potential collaboration with mobile farmers markets, CalFresh enrollment, mobile book trucks, and even WIC acceptance is in the works. Straus will be offering discounted product – hopefully at least that product can wind up in the hands of those who produce it. One of the things we are here to do is improve the sustainability of the food system; this issue is central to the sustainability of our food system. It's not going to work for ANYONE in the long-term until it works for EVERYONE. We need to make this an issue that people cannot comfortably forget about. We're struggling with having to change the narrative in this country – we need creative thinking about the connection between a sustainable food system and affordable housing.

Closing remarks – Alexandra Danino and Lori Davis

Words for CHANGE: collaboration, free, outcomes, progress, evolution, access, growth, equitable, wellness, comprehensive, innovation, mindset, education, season, accountable, hopeful, possible, re-thinking, awareness – it's not easy work, but we can't give up.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 19, 2016, from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the HHS campus