

Buffalo and Erie County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes

April 11, 2018

Present:

Cheryl Thayer
Kelly Fletcher
Antonia Simeti
Allison Dehonney
Beth Machnica
Patricia Watson
Elias Reden
Kathy Peterson
Della Miller
Birch Kinsey
Ingabire Adam
Matt Kauffman
Julie Barry
Dan Szewc
Alexander Wright

Action Items

Kelly F. – send Ciminelli
Food Policy Action
Doodle Poll May 9/16
Send description of officers
Treasurer V. MOU

Cheryl – Disseminate Plans to Box
Scope of work/sample of consultant plan put to action

Everyone – UW Working Group 4/20
Birch, Julie, Pat, Dan, Beth, Kelly, Elias

Rebekah – Good Food Purchasing

The minutes were presented, reviewed and were accepted as written.

Cheryl Thayer mentioned that instead of stating member updates at the beginning of the meeting they would be addressed at the end of the meeting. She asked if anyone had any agenda considerations that needed to be added. Kelly Fletcher said that Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation reached out to her regarding upcoming opportunities for collaboration. As well as Food Policy Action connected with her this morning about a Farm Advocacy Day in Washington coming up in May. Della Miller added the letter sent out regarding youth. This was an e-mail

facilitated through Kelly by way of Rebekah engaging youth in a more meaningful way to the strategic planning process. Cheryl wanted to review the working groups. She went on to say that working groups are supposed to be relevant and important to members on the FPC. These groups were created eighteen months ago; they could still all be relevant or we could think about changing them or adding some. We have also lost people that were on the groups, so that membership needs to be looked at. Kelly Fletcher said that officer terms are a year and a half which we are up on. Mike Raleigh was VP and resigned today from that position as well as the FPC saying that his work load has changed and he cannot make the commitment any longer. We have also lost two secretaries. Kelly Fletcher said that with the United Way we might want to consider a treasurer position. We now have an open seat and officer position.

Cheryl said that the primary issue today was the United Way grant update. We were awarded a grant. An e-mail was not sent out to the FPC members as the grant award has been modified. Cheryl and Kelly Fletcher spoke with Joe Roccisano from the United Way last week. We had originally asked for \$98,000 and were awarded \$42,600. There are buckets that we will be focusing upon per the award that we were given. The bulk of the money was always to go toward the Consultant to take us through the strategic planning process. This is still a primary issue that they want to fund; they awarded us \$35,000 for this. We originally put in for \$50,000 however we did not have a consultant RFP out yet, and we did not have a proposal so we really did not know what it would cost. We knew from prior consulting experience that it has possibly gone up to \$50,000. They also have a consultant that they want us to work with. The person is based out of Minneapolis. The United Way of Minneapolis was the first recipient of a grant; they were the purveyors of injecting a large sum of money into a targeted community to see if they could affect some positive food system change for a long term. They are looking to see if this model has been effective. We are now the second place where this is being done. Minneapolis has been very influential in the process, they reviewed all of the grants that were submitted. They prioritized them and have a lot of weight in who was funded and for what reason. Cheryl said that she and Kelly Fletcher were a little uncertain of what it meant to be told that we had to use a specific consultant. They were excited at the idea of designing and guiding that process themselves. However the person that they have recommended to work with is Maggie or Margaret (on LinkedIn) Adamek, she is with Terra Soma Consulting. She has been really influential in strategic planning and working in the Minneapolis food system; and with the Minneapolis FPC through their United Way Grant. Joe Roccisano said that when our grant went through the review panel there were a lot of folks saying that they did not need to fund policy. Whereas Ms. Adamek said that policy was very important and was a champion in getting our grant funded. She is putting together a scope of work, Cheryl said that she was hoping to have it today, but the grant awards will be announced tomorrow. What we are hoping is going to happen is a two way dialogue so we will review that and will be able to provide some input if there is something that we want to do that is not included. We originally had a guiding document for the language regarding what we were going to put into the Consultant RFP. The timeline we were originally looking at was for a two year grant, however it will be completed in one year. Ms. Adamek is confident that we will be able to get this done sooner as opposed to two years. The two year ask included a lot more things that were not funded.

Ms. Adamek's expertise is in guiding organizations through strategic planning with a specific emphasis on food systems development. The process did not go entirely as we had hoped for but

going in the right direction. We have an idea on what she is going to do but have not seen the details. We also received \$5,000 for staff and member training. This is not at our discretion so we have written in collectively about \$13,000 to go to other FPC's and interview and learn from them. We had written in money for conference fees, and systems training. The \$5,000 is left up to our discretion on how we decide how to develop our FPC. Kelly Fletcher said that we could come up with ideas as a FPC on how this could help us with capacity building for the future. This is meant to include the entire council on training not just individuals on the FPC. We want to determine how to best equitably share this money amongst the FPC. Cheryl thought that conferences would be good in either bringing people to Buffalo if there is something that they could help us with; this remains to be seen as it is funding that we did not have before.

We were funded for a consultant, training and conferences, and strategic planning. These go under the guise of consultant and training. We had written in money for community conversations, mainly to provide refreshments, Cheryl said that she would like to be able to do this through the grant process. Having conversations with the community that we are trying to engage with and support in a meaningful way. This could be important to our scope of work and what we want to accomplish. We wrote in originally for marketing, to tell people who we are and what we do and how people can access us in a more indirect level, i.e. through a website, marketing materials, brochures etc. Printing, media did not get funded. We also had money in for community celebrations that also did not get funded. We should look at this as the FPC being awarded a grant, and there will be more grants we could apply for in the future. Capacity building grants, once we flush these ideas out a little more perhaps a working group becomes a development committee working group. We can start thinking about where we need money and strategically trying to plug into existing funding sources.

Kelly Fletcher said that the Wellness Institute is acting as our financial intermediary for the grant. We needed a non-profit that was not a stakeholder, Phil Haberstro from the Wellness Institute has worked with the Health Dept. to administer grants in this capacity previously. As we move forward we may need to discuss establishing a treasurer for one of our officer positions. Kelly Asher suggested modifying the MOU we have with the Dept. of Health to have Kelly Fletcher keep track of the funds and be the signatory. We could present this as an option at the beginning of May.

There was a question regarding the \$35,000 for Ms. Adamek to create a strategic plan. Cheryl said that there needed to be a conversation on what the outcome of her scope will be. This may include trainings, then bringing trainings to us. We do not really know as we have not seen the scope of work. This arrangement is we assume, between Joe Roccisano and the consultant. This might include ½ day and daylong retreats with the FPC. We do not know if this is included in the \$35,000.

Cheryl Thayer feels that the United Way is going through this process very strategically. Very thought provoking. General Mills also came to the training today where they thanked the recipients for applying for the grant. They talked about what we need from them to be more successful in how we execute and administer these programs. Such as capacity building and what resources would be helpful and how to set aside some money to give the resources required. She thought that it has been a really interesting and exciting partnership. Cheryl

Thayer said that she is optimistic that this is going to be a conversation and not a dictation. Kelly Fletcher said that there is a great group of grantees that came together in collaboration and promoted the FPC. They see opportunities even after the grant is over to keep the connections that were made. There was discussion around having community conversations among the group during the last part of the training that occurred today. Whether we accomplish that with the consultant or the larger group at the United Way this will all be a good part of it.

Normally coalitions are somewhat intentional, thirteen projects were funded and there was a handful of representatives from each organization so that we had about thirty people in the room today. Cheryl got the sense that they would be seeing each other frequently over the next year. She thought that perhaps we are building an informal coalition. As they are all working in very targeted area in Buffalo. It all seemed to run in a collaborative effort.

Cheryl Thayer said that there was a working group that originally worked on the grant. It is a two part conversation. She thought there was value in keeping the working group. There is a Food Policy liserv that is administered by the John Hopkins Center for a sustainable fundable future for a livable future. It involves FPC's nationally. Basically you put an ask out and it goes out to folks all over the country. She found them to be very responsive. John Hopkins administers the liserv and approves the messages before they go out. Cheryl put an ask out asking for any FPC formal or informal around the country that have been successful developing a food charter. We do not want to create a plan that sits on a shelf. We want to create one that is actionable. What we may have at the end of this could be a food plan or food charter. They identify what they need and what the gaps are and then you make recommendations that are short term, medium or long term on how to execute them. You can even identify entities such as an agency that should be doing something specific, timelines for when it can be done. Ideally this is something that we could take to the city council or the county to see if it could be adopted. We could say that this is the food system we think we want to see, we have done a lot of research to inform why we think this food system is needed, and we need your buy into elevating it. She mentioned the Erie County Farmland Protection Plan that she is impressed with as things are actually happening. It is reviewed and followed up. Julie Barry and Elias Reden said that they are working on the implementation of it. It has been in the making for five years and they have done an update this past year to reprioritize and what to check off the list.

Elias Reden said that the Farmland Protection Plan lays out a plan of action on how to protect farmland and open space throughout the County. The action plan is the most important part of it. For certain aspects of it, additional programming is laid out in the plan that was ratified, this can be used for a basis of obtaining additional grants that are more targeted for this group. This was included in their strategic plan, as this makes it easier to implement it. Cheryl Thayer said legislation and policy in the charter can be vetted out to the community and identified as a need. She thought that perhaps we should consider this through the FPC. We want this to be a roadmap for the food system that we think we need and want. There was a really good community response from all over the country, regarding being adopted by a legislative body and the successes that were had. A working group to review all the responses would be beneficial to the FPC. We are being prescribed a consultant, however it may benefit us to come armed with what our expectations are. Kelly Fletcher created a template or scoring sheet for the working group. The strategic plan or the food charter needs to be done at the council level

including everyone's voice in it. Some of the smaller issues such as reviewing plans, and reporting back to the FPC will be identified when we get the scope of work that could be accomplished through a working group. The planning process needs to be done at the council level. The working group members should be determined by the end of next week. Cheryl said she could be on it, and that it is open to everyone. Just let Kelly Fletcher know if you are interested in being on it. Kelly Fletcher said that the information will be put on Box. She suggested keeping comments to one page upon evaluation.

Looking at how much food access has changed, increases also to the underserved community

One of parts of this plan is how we are measuring success and what are the individual metrics for success for Buffalo. There are examples out there but part of what we can do is to decide this. Are we looking at an increase in food access or are we looking at targeted neighborhoods and looking at where we developed it there. This needs to be accomplished in how we develop our metrics and what is important to us as a council. There is an opportunity to create the food system that we want as long as we can come up with a really good plan, put it before our elected officials and our county representatives and ask if they would get on board with it.

Does the strategic planning process include looking at how to make the work of the FPC sustainable. Could there be a portion addressing how it will be staffed for the long term? This should be included in the scope of work. Part of this is development, funding from city or county agencies that needs to be thought through. A lot of this had been included in the original scope of work that the FPC wrote intending that we would send this out. We can go back to this and modify it. We can come up with what our wish list is as a council once we see what the consultant presents to us.

There was a question regarding increasing meeting frequency of the FPC. Cheryl thought that the next year would bring the FPC into a more relevant role. Kelly Fletcher thought that the council needed to talk about the financial aspects of the grant. Should we consider modifying the MOU to allow her to keep track of the funds rather than a treasurer; and all spending requests would go to Kelly for her signature and the chair person. There also needs to be discussion with Phil Haberstro at the Wellness Institute to find out what his requirements are; as they are managing the money. There will be an evaluation meeting on April 27 on what data the FPC needs to collect. As a council we can either increase how often we are meeting, presently we are meeting six times a year. We could maintain this schedule and perhaps include a conference call if this could be an effective way to communicate. Elias Reden said that a special session could also be held during the day, or shorter meetings so that everyone can get together for discussions. Kelly Fletcher also brought up the timeframe of 5:30 to 7:30 if this works for everyone. Cheryl Thayer thought that the FPC should table these discussions until the scope of work is determined. It was hoped that we would have the information within the next week. There is a meeting presently scheduled for May 30. It was decided to move the date up to possibly May 9 or May 16 to be determined by a Doodle poll.

Food Systems work is relatively new to the United Way of Buffalo and Erie County. General Mills Foundation is the funder of the Minneapolis grant who maintains plants in both cities. This has become a funding priority for the Foundation. They are interested in seeing what an infusion

of money does in a targeted community to advance food systems' sustainability over the long term. As Cheryl Thayer understands the programs that have been funded are very targeted. Such as the east and west sides of Buffalo, areas that were identified by the funder as target areas to work within. A good diversity of projects that are looking at food access is at the heart of all of this. Funding priorities and bucket items are food access, food justice and food sovereignty. Informational staff trainings regarding governance, sensitivity training, networking, collaboration, and marketing could all come out of this also.

Member Updates

Kelly Fletcher had no updates rather than the United Way grant that had already been touched upon.

Elias Reden said that the implementation of the Farmland Protection Plan continues as well as consolidating the agriculture districts. Julie Barry said one of the recommendations in the Farmland Protection Plan is to provide training to local planning and zoning officials on agricultural preservation. The Dept. of Environment and Planning is setting up a training for the end of September. Bob Summers from the NYS Dept. of Ag and Markets is being asked to come in to speak with our local officials about agricultural preservation, and zoning techniques to preserve agriculture. She asked if anyone had any ideas on how to provide food for this event, as they do not have a budget for this, but do have a space to hold the event in East Aurora at the Roycroft campus. It was suggested that local food suppliers, i.e. Lexington Food Co-op be contacted.

Antonina Simeti – Groundwork Buffalo – They are working with organizations for the Grassroots Gardens Delevan Grider Community Center working with community gardens for young and old. At the Western New York Environmental Alliance they held their annual conference that is also an opportunity to bring on new board members. They are trying to establish a link between sustainability and urban agriculture. Looking to do some events around food systems and education possibly in a film series. She also spoke about water in terms of access and the work the FPC is doing.

Alexander Wright – Said that the African Heritage Food Co-op received a United Way grant and they are looking for space in Buffalo. They are having a fund raiser on April 28. They are willing to collaborate with and support anyone who needs it to create something positive.

Julie Levin - Good Food Purchasing Program – They attended a coalition meeting.

Allison Dehonney – Urban Fruits & Veggies - They had a delivery of a structure to go up at their current farm depending upon the weather they are ready to start construction. They will be part of the Buffalo Sabres Wellness Program as well as Evergreen, Multi-store and the Medical Corridor just announced their food vendor, Gigi's will be partnering with Hutch's and Seabar. They will be the local vendor for fruits and vegetables. They also received a United Way grant to start up a second farm that will be a hydroponic farm.

Beth Machnica - They officially signed a contract with Farm to Healthcare (?) a national organization that supports local procurement for institutions, hospitals, universities and the medical school. They are bringing an expert to the Buffalo area later this month. She will be assisting the institutions on campus with a strategic plan for local procurement of food.

Della Miller – She is the only one left on the education committee. She asked if anyone was interested in spearheading the committee. She felt that education is a very important component of the FPC.

Rebekah Williams – Good Food Purchasing Program had their first coalition meeting at the end of March. They are doing a formal launch event on April 24. The partnership for public good is diligently working on polishing up a school food court that they have been doing research on for good food purchasing as it applies specifically to Buffalo. The Coalition had really great representation from three of the five values in order for sustainability. The Coalition will push for policy to be passed in the fall 2018 at the district level.

Ingamire Adam – Will attend a workshop in Syracuse.

Matt Kauffman – Waiting for the weather to break for planting.

Birch Kinsey – NYS Master Teachers having an action summit on June 2. They spoke about having a training regarding advocacy and learning how to speak to authority. She will bring up the FPC and her role on it.

Dan Szewc – EC Sr. Services – With some collaboration he has put together information for two RFP's being issued within the next week for the home delivered meals program and the congregate dining program. This would increase the quality of food in the programs to make them programs that seniors want to get and not have to get. They are trying to increase the amount of fresh vegetables and fruits locally produced. They are excited about improving the program for senior citizens.

Agenda Considerations

Ciminelli – Kelly Fletcher read from a letter from them – they have many properties in many areas where they would like to promote healthy living. The properties mentioned are all located in the CBD (Central Business District). 40-50 Fountain Plaza will be the future home of Ciminelli Real Estate starting in early June. Plaza located in a wonderful area with conjunction of Buffalo Place fresh food ideas could be looked at, areas inside and outside of the building all months of the year. This could be an expansion of the Main St. Farmer's Market idea that could be made into something year round. There is also a site at 201 Ellicott where a multi-use residential, retail and green space area will be built. This is adjacent to the library. There are also small residential buildings the Sinclair and Mentholatum located in the city of Buffalo. Both have retail space for lease where a healthy living concept could be established. They would like to attend the next FPC meeting.

Kelly asked if anyone had any ideas on how we could approach them with a plan in the next two weeks. She asked everyone to e-mail her ideas, and she could compile them and have them looked at before the next meeting. There was ensuing conversation on this issue.

It was agreed that the next FPC meeting would be held exclusively for grant information, and that Ciminelli be invited to the May 30th meeting.

There is an advocacy day on May 8 and 9 in DC regarding the farm bill, reauthorization of the farm bill; there is money for food policy action in non-profit advocacy groups based on federal legislation that reached out, there is also some funding for women farmers to attend. Kelly will forward the contact information out to the members.

Rebekah Williams' Letter regarding Youth

Youth – Della Miller said that she is in support of our youth in general being more involved in the FPC. As previously discussed sustainability depends upon our youth.

Transportation is an important issue. Youth to understand the flow and voting process. List of acronyms i.e. RFP. Youth should be more engaged in FPC meetings.

Ms. Williams suggesting in her letter when Strategic Planning process is underway there is a focused time and portion of the budget for strategic planning that is put towards the opportunity that youth have being on the FPC. Ours is the only council in the country that allow for youth positions. She thought that the FPC could get clout nationally if you continue to highlight and support youth as part of the FPC. She has done interviews with past youth members as part of the MAP strategic plan to include youth in a meaningful way into partnerships with community organizations. Transportation to and from the meetings is part of the process. Youth leaders are a critical part of the FPC.

Kelly Fletcher said that there is a training that the United Way does on how to be a board member. She felt that maybe we could offer this out as a training opportunity that people see this as important to the sustainability of the FPC.

Action items – will be sending out prior to the minutes by Kelly Fletcher as well as a doodle poll to establish the next meeting date.

The meeting was then adjourned.

/mac

Ciminelli - Next Meeting

- Follow up w/email about what were we stand

Food Policy Action – Forward

Youth- Focused Budget on youth development

-Info from youth about role Scope of work

-buddy up

