

Buffalo and Erie County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes

May 30, 2018

Present:

Kelly Fletcher
Kelly Asher
Antonia Simeti
Allison Dehonney
Patricia Watson
Julie Levin
Lucia Leone
Birch Kinsey
Ingabire Adam
Rob Free
Dan Szewc
Sarah Herbst

Guest:

Rebekah Williams

The meeting was convened and the April minutes were reviewed. A motion was made to approve the minutes as written and it was seconded.

Agenda Considerations/Ciminelli Real Estate Presentation

Kelly Fletcher asked if anyone had anything that they wished to add to agenda considerations. She wanted to add the working groups membership, and officers, if there was time to discuss these issues. Lucia Leone mentioned the People's Food Movement should also be included. Kelly Fletcher said that Ciminelli Real Estate was supposed to attend the meeting with Robert McDonnell giving a presentation on them looking into Healthy Food Retail in some of their spaces in the business district. They wanted to reach out to the FPC for ideas on ways to help them accomplish this. However, the representative was not present at the meeting.

Good Food Purchasing Program

Kelly wanted to update the group on the Good Food Purchasing Program. She said that the FPC had signed on to be an initial coalition partner. When we looked at the standards, one of the things that should be considered is how it affects our farmers in the region. When we initially signed on, in the operating procedures there is a whole section on policy proposal. It states "any member or group of members seeking council support on a policy or an issue, before bringing it to the council must first be able to clearly demonstrate, explain the policy or issue and how it relates to the FPC goals and objectives." We should indicate if the issue has been adopted in similar locations and in other FPC's. A written policy explanation researching findings and job

policy proposals should be sent to the full council membership at least one week prior to the full council meeting. This gives members sufficient time to review the information, and to prepare comments and questions. This can be done via e-mail. It would then be presented at the FPC meeting. She said that after the presentation the council will then choose to support or not support the issue, request further information, thus tabling the issue until said information is provided. Decide if this policy information should be brought to the attention of the Board of Health before moving forward. If the FPC votes to support the policy issue, the proposing member will work to finalize policy proposal based on feedback. This will make sure that the final proposal is placed on the next meeting agenda and will provide a copy of the final proposal to all members one week prior to the next full FPC meeting. The final policy proposal is then recommended to the FPC for approval, and the final policy proposed to the Erie County Board of Health for informational purposes. In the event the BOH has reservations or requests more information, the FPC member or group of members will address the concerns and provide the additional information per the Board's request. Once determined, the FPC will decide when and how best to roll it out to the appropriate decision makers. Kelly said that when we signed on as an initial coalition partner, we did it via e-mail. We had a one sheet, and not the standards in front of us. She thought that we may have not thoroughly looked at it the way we should have as a FPC before we signed as a coalition partner. In light of this there are some concerns with the standards that how many of our farmers can actually achieve. There might be more research that needs to be done before we go forward as a FPC in supporting this initiative. It brings a lot of good issues to the table; we just might need to look at it from the lenses of the entire food system and how it relates to Erie County in particular.

Kelly Asher thought that we did not do our due diligence to look at the economic questions as well as the health ones. She asked everyone to take a step back and look at the proposal again, and hold off on becoming a part of this; or supporting the coalition until we are very certain that it meets our needs. It seems to put a hardship on our local producers as a whole in our region as some of the requirements are very steep. We will get a list of the requirements out to everyone to look at and take a vote at the next meeting. We have signed on as an initial coalition. This means that we were publicized as being a coalition partner. The standards are goals that we can reach in improving our food system, and what happens is an assessment. This rates our school district in terms of the standards. If the standards are not met they do not get the rating. The process is goal oriented, and there are different tiers of engagement; so that it gives a structure to work through it. Kelly Asher thought that it might not be possible for some of our schools (due to budget) to actually accomplish this. Working toward the goals would be more beneficial than not. Kelly Asher said that we need to establish a protocol. She said that in voting through e-mail, people tend to not read the information. Kelly also thought that it was not discussed as an entire council. She thought that everyone should take another look at it to make sure that it meets our needs and what we are trying to accomplish; perhaps through an ad hoc committee. Kelly Fletcher thought that there might be some merit in supporting the Good Food Purchasing Program; however she has hesitation in being an initial coalition partner without the whole council having really looked at it. At this point she encourages the council to pull back as an initial coalition partner without the entire council looking at it. This will fall to the procurement working group to take a look at it and present it to the full FPC. Julie Levin as head of the procurement group will look into this matter. Rebekah said that other school districts have passed the Good Food Program and it has helped them put measures in place that allows their

students to access some of the best food our country has to offer. In a presentation they learned that it has decreased the cost for the districts. Minneapolis has just gone through their benchmark assessment to encourage institutions to procure in line with the Good Food Program values. This translates to being transparent with who their vendors are, and help line them up by their standards. If we do not think the standards are quite right, this is another question. Other coalitions throughout the country tweak with their local group. With FPC partners at the table they could have an input. We could include things as minority owned businesses, and prioritizing that. Kelly Asher mentioned the organic piece as being the gold standard. She said that there is controversy about what is truly organic and what is not. We also do not want to exclude small farmers. Rebekah went on to say that when talking about the food system, it is more than about farmers, it is also the consumers. There are also other factors involved such as animal welfare, local economies as well as environmental sustainability.

Kelly Fletcher asked if anyone wanted to propose what the next step might be to reach a more informed decision. Birch said that in addition to having the procurement working group, maybe more time should be set aside to talk about it. Kelly Fletcher said that to anyone on the United Way working group there was a rubric for evaluating the food charter. She asked if anyone would take on the task of putting a rubric together on what we should be considering, and how it affects our food system; Sarah Herbst agreed to this. The procurement group will look at this and can propose how we can go through each at the next meeting. We can make an informed decision on this matter at the next meeting. Kelly Asher made a motion to send this to the procurement committee, Kelly Fletcher seconded the motion. All were in favor. The motion was carried. June 13 was set for the date of the rubric; to be discussed at the July 25 FPC meeting.

United Way Food Systems Grant

Kelly Fletcher said that the United Way asked us to work with a specific consultant. They came back to us and said that that consultant did not have enough time to work with the FPC. They did make some suggestions (29 names) for consultants that have done work for FPC's. The working group met in early May and they took eleven work plans and divided them up and rated them. We were going to present the work plans tonight, but she suggested tabling this, until a consultant is found. She suggested that the working group look through the names of the consultants. Working with a local consultant was also suggested, as much of the budget will go towards travel expenses. Hiring someone from out of the area would not be familiar with our local food system and has no vested interest once the project is completed. There was no one local of the 29 names suggested by the United Way. The closest consultant was in Baltimore. Kelly suggested meeting again as a working group to look at the names submitted, and perhaps someone would be familiar with someone locally to bring them to the table. Pat Watson said that her working group task was to read the Maryland plan. As Baltimore was a hub for food stuffs and had a very sophisticated state plan. She thought that there might be a great advantage for having someone from Baltimore as they are so far ahead of us and have a lot of prototypes that we could potentially borrow from. Kelly Fletcher said that all who read the plan thought that there were good parts of the different plans that could be adapted to our food system. She thought it was worthwhile to have the whole group take a look at the list. Kelly also suggested issuing an RFP. Lucia Leone mentioned that possibly Cornell could help with the process. She

also said that the Healthy Corner Store United Way grant is having a consultant, which she thought might be a Baltimore person. The listing of the consultants is on Box. Kelly Fletcher said that maybe a local person who does not specialize in FPC work but more in mobilizing the community toward community conversations, and getting information for the consultant, we could parcel out the consultant work. Kelly Fletcher said that we have a model RFP that could be utilized. We look at it as a group to see if any changes need to be made to it. We could do a doodle poll or a conference call for a working group meeting possibly on June 8.

Kelly Fletcher passed out revised project modification forms that were submitted last week. Nothing major was changed, but things were taken out that we do not have the budget for anymore. The first modified objective was to position the FPC to be an active advisor in planning and policy efforts in Buffalo and Erie County. This was our original goal. This was not changed. We had to identify potential consultants; one consultant with a scope of work has to be identified. Kelly Fletcher, Cheryl Thayer and the FPC working group, have this established. Consultant review of Buffalo and Erie County plans and policies and identifying opportunities. This would be the consultant and the FPC working group members acting as an advisory or steering group. Consultant is to interview past and present FPC members. This could be done via phone, skype etc. The consultant must be identified by August 1. We have \$30,000 for the consultant to accomplish the first goal. The second goal relates to the consultant and this involves a community conversation. We want to be able to serve as a proxy for Erie County residents to ensure their food system concerns and challenges are to be considered program and policy planning efforts. Kelly Fletcher will reach back out to Ciminelli regarding this effort and to see if they want to attend the next FPC meeting.

The last is to strengthen food system connections between businesses, non-profits, educational institutions and consumers. The United Way is gathering the grantees every few months for meetings and it is almost an informal coalition building among grantees working on the east and west sides of Buffalo on different projects.

Revised MOU with ECDOH

Kelly Fletcher circulated copies of this. Since we are receiving funding we need a signatory. We do not have a treasurer, as we have never had funding. We need to amend the MOU with the ECDOH that goes through December to allow Kelly Fletcher and the Chair, Cheryl Thayer to be the signatories. Everything else will remain the same on the MOU. Kelly Asher said that we will provide financial oversight for the FPC, by approving and signing all spending requests. The FPC chair will act as secondary signatory on all spending requests. The Wellness Institute will act as the fiscal intermediary as we are a not for profit. Because there is representation from the ECDOH, we have amended the MOU so that it states that Kelly Fletcher does not have a vote anymore. She also spends in-kind time of 25 hours per month working on FPC business. Unless Kelly Asher is not present at a meeting, then she can vote on Kelly Asher's behalf (Kelly Fletcher will have Kelly Asher's proxy) so that there will only be one ECDOH vote. There also needs to be an odd number of members on the FPC. Ordinarily the Chair does not vote, unless there is a tie vote. There was a motion to approve the new MOU with the ECDOH. All were in favor and the motion was carried.

Member Updates

Rob Free said that at the last Board of Health meeting, Kelly Asher told the board that the FPC did get grant funding. The BOH members were excited at this, but now this puts the FPC on the clock. Moving forward he thought that a 1 or 2 page synopsis could be done for the BOH meetings keeping them updated moving forward with the grant.

Rebekah Williams suggested indicating her on as a non-voting member and or guest on the meeting minutes.

Kelly Fletcher asked if anyone else had any updates. There were none.

Agenda Considerations

Kelly Fletcher wanted to review the current working groups.

Healthy Food Retail – Lucia Leone mentioned that she had hired a student to assist, and pulled together information and sent it out for everyone to review. This seems to be a problem to have everyone look over the information. Kelly Asher suggested that at the next working group meeting, they should have a meeting register, where you keep track of what individuals say that they can do. Kelly Fletcher had a copy of one. Lucia said that she did not get a lot of information from Ag and Markets on Mobile markets (as they do not fall under the ECDOH). There were suggestions on how to assist with Healthy Corner Stores Initiative, and see what we are doing with the Good Food Purchasing Program. Then there will be a base to start the healthy food retail, and one or two policy issues. If you are selling food and you want to do taste tests, then you go through the ECDOH. Kelly Asher said that in hiring a consultant we will be able to figure out the direction of our work. There needs to be structure with a strategic plan. If we assess the working group, we should not make any decisions regarding internal structure until a consultant is hired.

The grant is broken down into \$30,000 to the consultant, \$5,000 for community conversations, \$5,000 for staff development and training. \$40,000 and \$2,000 as in administrative costs going to the Wellness Institute.

Kelly Fletcher said that the working groups that need to stay are the procurement working group that is working on good food purchasing.

Healthy Food Retail has Lucia Leone, Kelly Fletcher (she will not be able to commit to this group as she is working with the United Way), Rita Hubbard, Danielle, Beth Machnica, Margaret Lapp and Allison Dehonney. There are people that are on the working groups but not on the FPC.

Urban Food Production has been active and meeting outside, Kathy Petersen, Mike Raleigh, Matt Kaufman, Kelly Fletcher will be stepping back from that group. They are trying to move agenda items forward that based on the green code would help farmers regarding user and water

fees. It was suggested that in going forward there be working group updates as opposed to member updates.

Membership Review and Recruitment – individuals just came on board in January, so they will not meet again until the end of the year to look at the membership. Kelly Asher said that a meeting should be held in the fall for recruitment. Kelly Asher, Pat Watson, Connie Erwin, Mike Raleigh and Julie Barry are on this group. It will have to be determined if those members still want to be onboard.

Nutrition Education has not met recently. Della Miller is on this group

Food Systems Working Group - Kelly Fletcher, Beth Machnica, Birch Kinsey, Julie Levin, Kelly Asher, Pat Watson, Elias Reden, Sara Herbst and Dan Szewc.

Lucia Leone wanted to join the Procurement Group.

The People's Food Movement was tabled. Lucia asked if the time period of 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM could be scheduled for meetings. 4:00 to 6:00 was also mentioned. There was a motion made to hold the next meeting from 4:00 – 6:00 on July 25, 2018, it was seconded, one was opposed, the motion was however carried. The meeting was then adjourned.

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