

Buffalo and Erie County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes

July 25, 2018

Present:

Kelly Fletcher
Kelly Asher
Alison Dehonney
Beth Machnica
Patricia Watson
Elias Reden
Julie Levin
Kathy Peterson
Lucia Leone
Della Miller
Birch Kinsey
Ingabire Adam
Matt Kauffman
Rob Free
Dan Szewc
Alexander Wright
Sarahh Herbst

Via Teleconference:

Julie Barry
Antonina Simeti

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the May 30, 2018 minutes with Lucia Leone's change regarding her being on the Procurement Group (this was removed from the minutes), Elias Reden moved to accept them and Pat Watson seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion was carried.

Kelly Asher said that she would be sending out a doodle poll for the membership committee. The Executive committee is short of people. An ad hoc committee needs to be put together for policy and procedure review. Kelly asked if she could add this to the agenda, everyone was in favor. She asked if anyone else had any other additions, there were none.

Ciminelli

Sarahh Herbst said that they were talking about the applications that were submitted for being part of the Advisory Committee. Kelly Fletcher had everyone write in why they were fit to be on the Advisory Committee. There were some that did not submit a resume, some did, and we do not know who is still active in the poll. Three names could be submitted. Kelly Asher read a letter that Ciminelli Real Estate Corporation sent to Kelly Fletcher who are looking to convene

an advisory group to develop an achievable plan to realize a grocery store as a key component of their development project at 201 Ellicott St. in Buffalo. They invited Kelly Fletcher to participate as a member of this panel and to recommend others who might be good candidates to join in this effort. They also provided a summary of the project. They went on to say that realizing a grocery store is a key component of their 201 Ellicott St. development. They realize that achieving this project requires a creative approach and are looking for our proficient insights for their endeavor to succeed; including thoughts on perceived opportunities and constraints, and potential operator's possible supportive funding sources etc. In supporting and strengthening the project's food center planning there is potential to position a development as a micro-urban agri-hood; meaning that the work in community government's other food focused amenities are at the heart of this mixed use community. To this end Ciminelli has been proactive in discussions with east side urban farmers, not for profit organizations and institutions to broaden possible program uses and to create strategic partnerships for farmers markets, management and community based retail. They are requesting feedback. Matt Kaufman said that they did reach out to some of the east side farms that their farmers are connected to, but not to him personally.

Kelly Asher suggested giving them some names. Three or four people responded. She suggested giving Ciminelli the names, along with resumes. Allison Dehonney, Sarah Herbst, Lucia Leone and Della Miller were the individuals interested. Sheila Bass also was mentioned. There was a motion made to submit these individuals to Ciminelli, and it was seconded. All were in favor and the motion was carried. Alexander Wright said that the people involved may or may not have submitted resumes to Ciminelli. In not knowing this, if we submit names and say that we want the person, the person may not be interested. Kelly Asher suggested an urban planner, someone knowledgeable in food systems as far as farm to table and a community person. Allison, Sarah and Lucia were approved for the Ciminelli project. It was noted that it sounded that Ciminelli itself was recruiting from the community. Lucia commented that a large part of her job is developing communities. Alexander did not want to leave this in the hands of the developer; he suggested hiring people who live in and around the community be involved. He said that he did not have the time for it, but did not want to see this initiative in five years not involving people who live in the area. We need to modify the charge of the FPC to the three people submitted, to make sure that there is meaningful community representation. Antonia Simeti suggested Della Miller and Gail Wells, who is President of the Copper Town block club, who are working together on the mobile retail conference. They are working to try to find space for small healthy retail for their neighborhoods. Town Gardens was also mentioned, there is also senior housing that should also be involved. If there are people in the community that FPC members think would be vital they can recommend them. There is empowerment in having something good in your community and being a part of it is improving health. There was a motion made to nominate Allison, Sarah, Lucia to serve with Ciminelli and our charge to them is that there is meaningful community involvement; and the charge to the rest of the FPC is to submit names to them that would enhance the process from the community point of view. The motion was seconded and all were in favor. During the later portion of the meeting Kelly Fletcher asked Allison, Sarah and Lucia if they would contact Denise Juron-Borgese from Ciminelli and tell her they are calling from the FPC.

United Way Working Group Update

Kelly Asher said that there were some issues regarding the RFP. Kelly Fletcher had sent an e-mail to the members regarding this issue. Kelly Asher said that there were two applicants, one was Program Savvy Consulting, the other was Timbre Consultants, Jonathan McNiece, Cheryl Thayer and Antonia Simeti. There were questions whether people sitting on the FPC could apply. Kelly Asher looked into this and it was stated that internal members can apply for funding, however the funder believes this to be a conflict of interest. Would an individual have to resign from the FPC before submitting a proposal, current members would only have to resign if awarded, current members can apply. Would current FPC members be asked to resign from positions or could he/she take a leave of absence. ECDOH thought that resignation would be the best decision if a FPC member was to apply for the grant. It would make more sense to have a full council during the strategic planning period rather than have people on a leave of absence. The FPC would recommend that the member resign as opposed to taking a leave of absence, if awarded. There was no formal way that the RFP was put out. It was forwarded by individuals out to others. We did get a list that was put together by Cornell on who to send it out to. Kelly Asher thought that a better process should have been implemented. There actually was no time crunch involved. Joe Roccisano from the United Way suggested that the FPC step back and put out the RFP again in a more systematic way and if anyone on the FPC wants to apply, they need to resign before putting in a submission. Everyone is welcome to resubmit, but they must resign from the FPC. The United Way said that given the current climate and to insure a transparent and fair process that we reissue the RFP, and make some modifications to our RFP solicitation and review process. This could possibly increase the number of applicants received. They also advise that current FPC members could submit a proposal as long as they had no part in the development of the RFP and resign from the FPC before submitting a proposal. The United Way is looking at everyone that received funding, they want to further support us, and possibly bring additional funding to us. We want to make sure that we do things properly, so that if there is additional funding in the future we can continue to grow the FPC.

Kelly brought copies of the current RFP for the FPC members to look at. Kelly said that she knew the RFP went out to the 29 people that we had the list from. She said that she sent it out to two local consultants, and the FPC members sent it out also. We should look at a solicitation process. It was suggested that the RFP be revamped. Kelly Fletcher said that more meetings be held instead of e-mailing members. Lucia Leone suggested a team approach, as she knows many experts on FPC's that know the technical aspects, but they are not consultants and are not looking to spend the amount of time to facilitate this process. Both however are necessary. Kelly Fletcher said that when we were originally developing the grant, Jonathan and Cheryl brought up that perhaps it wasn't just one consultant for the whole thing, there are certain consultants that are better at one thing or another, so that divvying it up might be an option. The application did have spots for team members. Kelly Asher said that when the RFP is sent out again we could send out a list of possible partners. She went on to say that we need a strategist as the expertise remains with the FPC. We need someone to bring all of the expertise together and guide us to get us where we need to be. They need to know how to work within a system, make a plan and implement it. She also thought that piecing it out was not a good idea. Kelly

Asher suggested reaching out to the people the RFP went out to and ask them why they did not respond. What could have been done to make it more appealing? This would still be covered in the motion to revamp the eligibility piece; then make a decision from there. Kelly Asher said that she would reach out, and it was suggested that if someone sent it out, they should reach out to the person(s) they sent it out to.

The Grant money needs to be spent by March 2020. Kelly Asher made a motion that we reissue the RFP and make some modifications to RFP solicitation and solicitation review process. The motion was seconded, thirteen at the meeting were in favor, Antonia recused herself from the vote, and Julie Barry said that she was in favor of the vote, two abstentions. The motion was carried.

Procurement Working Group/Good Food Purchasing Program

Julie Levin told the group that Rebekah Williams left Massachusetts Avenue Project and is working as the Coalition Leader for the Good Food Purchasing Program here in Western New York. In developing the coalition she reached out to a number of community organizations to ask for support of the program. There was information that was e-mailed to FPC members and information was being disseminated such as standards and procedures. There was an e-mail on-line vote of support for the program. Which meant essentially that we were supporting this group and would join the coalition; we were not dedicating ourselves to any particular action or funding. Apparently this is not the proper procedure for voting for support as we have seen happen in other situations. Our operating procedures were revisited and it was established that we as the working group for procurement would offer more information if people were unable to look at the standards and procedures. There was a rubric that was developed by Sarah Herbst that went around in the working group assessing the program and rating it. There was a brief video shown. Paula Daniels, the woman in the video, was put into an environmental kind of development of their Food Policy Council by the mayor of Los Angeles in the 90's. That is why the Los Angeles school district is highlighted as they used this as the catalyst in the training round in developing the program. Then they became a non for profit organization in 2015. They are attracting some regional and even national attention, in having the program instituted in places besides Los Angeles, i.e. San Francisco, Oakland. They are working in NYC presently, Chicago, Minneapolis, Boulder and Austin. They take the catalyst for what they are working towards and their goal is that you can make personal choices with your buying power such as organic; if that is what you think is important. If you place this on an institutional level you can make an incredible amount of change. They are also arguing that institutions such as hospitals and schools are serving a lot of underserved communities and populations that don't always have access to certain kinds of foods. It can be very empowering if done in the right way. They have the five values so they are tying together a lot of different silos and systems. They have the environmental sustainability component, local economies, animal welfare, worker welfare and nutrition. This has been introduced to the Buffalo public school system. Julie said that she is not sure what initial part they have in accepting it or becoming involved. An initial part of the involvement is a one year vetting procedure where the program has support that comes in and helps assess purchasing and vendors, to see how closely they adhere to these different policies. There are very specific baseline standards; however it is a flexible system. People and different organizations can work in attaining points or stars in the system at varying degrees. They do not

say that you have to be organic, so there is flexibility and adaptability within the program to suit specific institutions. In a region such as Buffalo our access to the same kind of agricultural products that they have in Los Angeles is going to be very different. So procuring many of the necessary items to prepare meals involves many variables. Julie has been at a few of the Good Food Purchasing Program meetings that take place; they meet on the last Wednesday of every month. Bridget O'Brien is the head of the Buffalo Public School district food program, will be presenting at the Good Food Purchasing Program's Coalition next meeting. She will be talking about the steps and direction, and history of moving toward a goal that the Buffalo Public Schools lunch program has taken. She will be talking primarily about the farm to school initiative which is something they have adopted fairly successfully and put out through the district.

Sarah Herbst said that the discussion today is about whether or not we want to stay as a coalition member supporting the Good Food Purchasing program. Pat Watson said that she wants to figure out how impactful this will be. She thinks that if a change can be made in the Buffalo Public Schools she would be all for it. If it is maybe or maybe not, she is going to reserve decision. Sarah asked what the youth members thought. Birch Kinsey said that she thought that as a council we should remain as a coalition member. She went on to say that the food we get is not the food we need in most circumstances. Framework needs to be put into place that states what needs to be done. Lucia Leone said that this states how the food is produced not the nutrition standards within the schools. Julie said that this is one of the five components. Lucia said that there are nutrition standards within the schools that are being met. Kelly Fletcher commented that we need to listen to the presenting group's findings and then we can open up for discussion. Sarah Herbst said that the general concern was that the members of the working group do not want to isolate, disenfranchise or exclude people by the terminology that the good food purchasing program presents. It has five categories, there is not a very clear expectation in what a coalition member is, but there are clear expectations from the institution's roles involved in this whole process. So for the FPC to say we are a coalition member is still very unclear. The roles and responsibilities of what we are expected to do are not forthcoming in the document. We met with the Good Food Purchasing Council group, we tried to solicit what it means and it was very unclear. It was the group's suggestion that we retract from being a coalition member until this is clarified. We also suggest that one or even more of our members attend the monthly meetings to stay engaged. We thought that there was a lot of great positive action. There is a \$100,000 fee to join for the first year as an institution. Every year after the farmers are expected to be audited, whether there is a third party audit or submitting KPI's that are submitted, they are analyzed, it is a two year commitment. Sarah said that they were worried that it would isolate farmers that do not have the capacity to participate. As a coalition member we are unsure what it means. We suggest that we reach out to clarify what being a coalition member entails.

Alexander Wright said that it seems that the coalition member's responsibility to dictate what the Good Food purchasing program looks like is where you are. His worry with retracting is that we would not be able to influence how it should be shaped and what it should be. He said that many of us understand the benefit of what buying local can be done with nutrition policy. The FPC's name could help structure this. If we do not there could be people who aren't involved at ground level, so the program will not have any real teeth and will not be able to do what they are supposed to do. The \$100,000 is ridiculous; this is something that needs to be addressed. We

should be more inclusive (small farmers); we have a voice that can do this. But it is a matter of what we want to do. Sarah Herbst said in clarifying the \$100,000, the farmers do not pay, if BPS were to join, there would be a possibility of grant money. What BPS would get in return would be that the GFPP would do an assessment and survey their supplier base. Then they would funnel the information into their internal data base and make a report. They then sit down with the institution and have the institution set goals within each of the five categories. The next year is when the audit against the goals occurs, the second year they publish your successes and recognition of it. Lucia Leone questioned if you are improving by actually doing something to help the supplier change, or just stating that they need new suppliers? Sarah said that they are stepping in to help create a strategic plan in going forward. And using their measurements to create your future suppliers.

Julie Levin went on to say that Rebekah Williams is a coordinator for the program, not a regional manager. She is bringing together various groups, i.e. Northwest Organic Farmers Association, Environmental Sierra, Grassroots Gardens. Various entities have shown up and tried to get local union members there representing school food workers. The meetings have had general background information regarding things such as animal welfare, and local SPCA involvement in regional animal welfare issues. Sarah Herbst said the question is what do people perceive by the Food Policy Council. Will we have to commit time, going to the meetings, and having our logo publicly shared versus us not doing this.

Kelly Fletcher said that one of the reasons this was brought to the working group was because we are a regional council, Buffalo and Erie County FPC. We represent the entire region. So we must keep in mind the people that we serve. If we have something that would alienate parts of our region, we need to look closely at it. We are re-voting on whether to remain a coalition member. There was a question on whether this is only for schools or for hospitals, and institutions. Julie Levin responded that they have independent and institutional partners, and have private sector partners as well. Kelly Fletcher said that finding information on the Good Food Purchasing was difficult. It is a thirty page document that gives standards and how they work.

Matt Kauffman said that we are dealing with institutional procurement, large scale procurement. He thought the Good Food Purchasing program would be good for large scale farmers, but not for small farms. A smaller scale farm is not going to seek out fifteen certifications. As a small scale farmer he thought it would be good for larger scale farms to be pushed in a direction that is more sustainable. As a grower himself he would not be too worried about neighboring parts of the agriculture community being pushed in a certain direction. Alexander Wright asked if there was a small farm coalition that was open to the Buffalo Public Schools, Kaleida etc., that wanted to work with urban farms. So that orders for different items could be completed by smaller farms. This is something that possibly could be incorporated into future grant funding that we could support if there is interest. It is difficult to buy small and also to sell small. Mr. Kauffman said that a farm has to be structured on a scale of how selling is being done. If you are direct marketing you are getting all the value. If you are selling to institutions you are getting pennies on the dollar. You need to have a whole different farm structure. Kelly Fletcher asked if there was a motion on the table. Motion to pull back as an initial coalition partner member from the Good Food Purchasing Program, but to maintain attendance at meetings to remain engaged with

them. The motion was seconded. A vote was taken, there were eleven yes votes, and five no votes, one excused, the motion was carried.

There is an action item associated with this, the working group will be tasked to draft a letter and e-mail it out. If there are changes it will be edited. Kelly Fletcher thought that ultimately the chair would have to sign the letter. This issue could ultimately be revisited in the future. Kelly Fletcher said that she will do a tutorial on Box and send it out to FPC members.

Member Terms and Executive Committee

Kelly Fletcher said that at the present time we only have a Chair. When the Chair is not at the meeting we do not have an executive committee that can run meetings. Her role is to track votes and accountability in following the rules, i.e. operating principles etc. Originally we had a Chair, a Vice Chair, and two Secretaries and now that we have funding, a Treasurer might need to be added. She asked if anyone wanted to be considered for one of the seats, she said that the ad hoc committee was going to develop position descriptions for the Chair, Vice Chair and what the Secretary does. In assisting with this will be the Executive Committee. They will do more of the governance. She asked the group to think about applying, and to do so at the September meeting. The Chair's term is up, so we need to talk about a replacement. In term limits there is an eighteen month term beginning January or July 1st, this was adopted in January, so the term has ended from this time period, as this was done in 2017. The Chair can continue to serve until a successor is elected, but may not serve as chair for more than two consecutive terms. She asked the group to think about running for a position. The ad hoc committee will come together before the next meeting to send out the position descriptions for the group. The ad hoc committee consists of Kelly Asher, Dan Szewc, Sarah Herbst and Ingabire Adam has agreed to look over our operating principles. Kelly Fletcher will send out information to the original membership committee as there are some gaps. If you are on the membership recruitment committee and just want to do membership recruitment, we will follow up with the ad hoc proposal to look at the executive committee descriptions; this will be sent out to the group before the next meeting so that we will be able to have a discussion on this at the next meeting.

Kathy Peterson said that she had received several reports in her office regarding food deserts. She wanted to know if these were the most current for Buffalo. She asked if she sent them to Kelly Fletcher if she would send them out to everyone or if she should send them to the Food Lab. Kelly responded that if Kathy sent them to her she could act as the clearing house to get them to Samina Raja's group.

Action Items

Kelly Fletcher said that regarding the RFP solicitation and review process, if you sent out the RFP you will reach out to whomever you sent it to. She thought that as far as deadlines for that working group we should have the group convene before the September meeting to pull together all the comments. She asked to have everyone send them to her and she would get them out to the working group. Then there will be a new RFP to review at the next meeting. She thought that if a Consultant could be brought on board at the end of the year this would be a feasible

deadline. She also asked if the meeting timeframe of 4 to 6 was working out better, everyone responded that it was.

Kelly Fletcher asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Sarah Herbst motioned, it was seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

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