

Buffalo and Erie County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes

January 25, 2017

Present:

Rob Free
Elias Reden
Matt Kaufmann
Della Miller
Nathan Attard
Cheryl Thayer
Connie Ervin
Kathy Petersen
Kelly Asher
Kelly Fletcher
Mike Raleigh

Guests:

Beth Machnica

The meeting was convened and the minutes were reviewed. A correction was noted, and a motion was made to accept the minutes with the correction. The motion was then seconded and all were in favor.

Standing Committee & Working Group Updates:

Policy Monitoring Committee (Standing Committee)

Lucia Leone, Mike Raleigh, Cheryl Thayer, Mark Rountree, Kelly Asher, Kathy Petersen, are on this committee

Awareness and Education Committee- renamed Community Engagement (Standing Committee)

Julie Levin, Connie Ervin and Kelly Fletcher are on this committee

Nutrition Education Working Group

Education Policy working group will come under the Awareness and Education Committee Their purpose is to provide a platform for community involvement to improve healthy living to become a primary source of food education by informing officials about food safety and security concerns; and implementing food and nutrition education for children and adults, youth organizations and schools. They are working on their reason for being and then they will reach out and focus on children and divide that into sub groups. Individuals went out to do some research on kids 0 to 4 in age, middle school, high school, private school, public school and are

gathering that information together. They are now creating a questionnaire, and will be selecting two groups from the people they spoke with so that they can assimilate the information. They are attempting to work on school wellness policies. Policies that affect daycares and after school programs who are affected by the same food guidelines that are set by the Office of Child and Family Services. The Committee is attempting to push their recommendations from our council up to the State Food Policy Council, and working to include better nutrition standards and wellness policy. There are very specific things that the group is trying to work on being policy oriented.

The Education and Awareness piece is what the working group is doing on policies they can have an effective change on and get the right community partners. Standing committees are supposed to provide oversight for all the working groups. Standing committees will be meeting before the full food policy council meeting in April. Education and the standing committee are about educating the public and not educating anything specific other than the actions of the committee. Ideally the working groups will work in between sessions and come back to report, and not double up on the work of the working groups. Education should be about getting out what the working groups have done.

Nutrition Education is a working group, working toward a purpose.

Distribution of Members on Standing Committees to working groups:

Every working group needs a representative from the standing committees.

We have Healthy Food Retail, Lucia's policy, Nate is advocacy and justice and Kelly Fletcher is Community engagement. Procurement has Cheryl and Mark from Policy, Pat and Rob from Advocacy and Justice, and Julie from Community Engagement. Urban Food production has Kathy and Mike from Policy and Matt from Advocacy and Justice. We have three members from Community Engagement. We need someone from Community Engagement on Urban Food Production. Recruitment and Review includes Kelly Asher, Patricia Watson, Connie Erwin and Mike Raleigh and has all standing committees represented. Nutrition Education has Connie Erwin, Nate Attard, Della Miller, Sara Jablonski, they need someone from Policy.

Meeting of Working Groups is up to the discretion of the group. Nutrition Education is very different from the others. Procurement and Healthy Food Retail are now separate. The mission or goal of the two is not quite the same. Healthy Food Retail also involves Food security and food deserts where procurement is more dollars driven toward institutions purchasing local food. People from Healthy Corner stores are not working on procurement as much as program management of a number of healthy corner stores programs that include sampling of foods but also finding possible people to work with in other concerns that were brought up. Healthy foods and local food procurement run hand in hand, and are not necessarily separate.

Healthy Food Retail Working Group

Kelly Fletcher gave an update on Healthy Food Retail. Group members have now met twice. There was discussion around local affordable food access. They are working with the healthy corner store initiative on a grant proposal to get money for software development to keep track of healthy food establishments; for distribution and to look into other grant proposals to help healthy food retail to access food locally and get it distributed and source identified. The focus also was to look into developing policies for licensing corner stores and achieving certification for the legislature. The short term goal was the concern over food demonstrations that require a temporary food service permit. Kelly Fletcher did some investigation she spoke with NYS Agriculture and Markets. They implement the regulations but do not make them. There would be much work involved in changing state policy. Reaching out to the ECDOH Environmental Division would probably provide us with similar answers. We spoke about working with current guidelines. There was discussion regarding putting together a map of healthy food retail in the Western New York area and what is going on in Erie County. The council members were shown the map which included healthy corner initiatives, farmer's markets, community and school gardens. At a later date a map with specific data indicating areas with highest needs will be made available. Kelly Fletcher mentioned that a strategic plan will be developed where we as a group will target efforts. So that everyone will come together with mobile markets, grass roots gardens as well as Buffalo Niagara medical campus and the healthy corner store initiative centralizing among specific domains.

Kelly Asher made a motion to go forward with the five groups and then merge Procurement and Healthy Food Retail and revisit during the year. All were in favor and the motion was carried.

Procurement Working Group

Rob Free made mention that Julie Levin created a questionnaire/survey that was passed along to selective school districts and institutions (retirement homes etc.) to see what their levels of locally sourced food products are. The school nutritionist association also could assist in filtering the survey through twelve schools. The questions might need to be tailored differently for private schools. A list of where surveys were sent will be compiled so that there is no duplication of efforts.

Urban Food Production Working Group

There was an update on Urban Food Production. Last week the group met with the Buffalo Environmental Management Commission. Urban Food presented a draft of the proposals to the Commission for feedback and they also provided a list of department heads that need to be contacted regarding the green code and strategic planning.

Membership Working Group

Membership Review – They have not yet selected any other members, and a chairperson needs to be selected. Kelly Asher indicated that they had not yet had a meeting.

Chairs need to be selected for every working group. For the Healthy Food Retail, Lucia Leone is the chair, Nate Attard said that he would fill in for her. For Procurement Julie Levin is the chair, Urban Food Production will meet then decide who will chair.

Kelly Fletcher mentioned some housekeeping updates. The MOU has been signed by Dr. Burstein, it now needs to be signed by Cheryl Thayer. It was then given to Rob Free who will bring to the ECDOH Board of Health. Operating Principles will also be directed to the ECDOH Board of Health by Rob Free. Marcia Amadori Crosby who is the secretary for the ECDOH Board of Health was present to take minutes. She will be recording minutes at upcoming Food Policy Council meetings as well.

Kelly Fletcher said that the website for the Food Policy Council is currently housed at the University of Buffalo. It is the original website that was developed at its inception. UB has let us continue with the domain, however as the Food Policy Council is an arm of the Board of Health it was determined that the website should be tied in with the ECDOH website. In the future those contacting the Food Policy website will be redirected to the ECDOH website on the Erie County website. Kelly Fletcher will be working with Mary Jo Carlo on the website. The name on the page will probably be Buffalo and Erie County Food Policy Council. Kelly Asher made a motion to move the website to the Erie County website. All were in favor and the motion was carried.

There was no new business and the attendees then broke into their respective working groups. Kelly Fletcher said that every standing committee should have a secretary and a chair.

After coming back from the break out period, Cheryl Thayer said that Policy Monitoring talked about divvying up but not formally. In their description it states that they are going to look at a healthier Buffalo and Erie County; but they would like to include New York State and the Federal level as well for policies that will affect food, agriculture and nutrition. They want this expanded. Mike Raleigh commented that there is a federal proposed regulation on organic farming. The Northeast Organic Farming Association New York had an annual meeting and discussed this proposed ruling and voted unanimously against the ruling. The ruling addresses a marketing program called checkoff for organic farming but for a number of reasons the proposal seems unfair and does not make a lot of sense. It would inflict an unfair bureaucratic burden on organic farmers for no benefits. In developing the rule it was not representative of small scale farmers. He is bringing this to the attention of the council. A comment period of either 60 or 90 days is out now so it is something that we could submit to a federal proposed rule. We should be prepared to discuss this at the next meeting.

To vote on policy we need a majority vote with a quorum. Kelly Asher will chair. Kelly Fletcher will be web site development. We will meet as a standing committee with Mary Jo Carlo to place a template together. If anyone has any input as to the layout of the website, communications template we will go ahead and do it together and have it available by the next full council meeting. There will be a standard form to complete for any news articles or events that people would care to connect to the website. It will be the responsibility of standing committees and working groups to provide updates on events going on in the community. Kelly

Asher asked if there was a way to have an app for people to comment or ask questions that the policy could respond to. Kelly Fletcher answered that we could build this into the website.

Advocacy and Justice

Previously they identified that they could provide support to work groups for advocating on their behalf and to provide a critical eye to some of the initiatives that are happening in the work groups and also locally. They started with the healthy corner store group, to offer support and commentary. On the support side Rob Free said that he would reach out to his contacts that he works with at Environmental Health, when it comes to develop a protocol when the types of groups that are looking for permitting, demonstrations etc. More discussion needs to be had. The other commentary on healthy corner stores initiative basically was the idea that many of the programs are funding initiatives of existing stores where we want to see they maybe pushed in a more policy oriented direction. So that we are not just reinforcing bad behavior in corner stores but to an extent there are many good operators, but others that are more questionable. We should get involved in some of the evaluation around this issue. There was discussion on Corner Stores. There is a group called the African American Group Cooperative that has been contacted.

There was no new business. The working groups will set their own meeting dates. The next full council meeting will be April 26, 2017. Kelly Asher made a motion to adjourn the meeting, it was seconded all were in favor.

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