

## **Buffalo and Erie County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes**

September 27, 2017

### **Present:**

Cheryl Thayer  
Mike Raleigh  
Sara Jablonski  
Connie Ervin  
Patricia Watson  
Julie Levin  
Kathy Peterson  
Lucia Leone  
Della Miller  
Kelly Asher – via teleconference  
Birch Kinsey  
Ingabire Adam  
Matt Kauffman  
Kelly Fletcher  
Julie Barry  
Rebekah Williams

The meeting was convened and the minutes were reviewed. There was a motion to accept the minutes as written and it was seconded. All were in favor.

Cheryl Thayer asked if anyone had any agenda consideration. Kelly Fletcher asked if there was time to add the People's Food Movement 2018 for discussion.

### **Member Updates**

Cheryl Thayer said that at the Cooperative Extension they hosted a farmer/buyer meeting. There were about 100 people, growers and buyers who networked together she hoped that some relationships were established.

Kathy Petersen said that the Broadway Market has just received their permit from the USDA for SNAP benefits and they are submitting the application to market link for the EBT service provider, and they will then receive tokens. They are shooting to kick-off the farmer's market part of the Broadway Market on Saturday, November 4.

Lucia Leone said that Healthy Corner Stores are moving the initiative forward to apply for a grant. UB related they are getting a grant from the National Cancer Institute to establish markets with eight organizations across the north and southeast. They will also choose one in Buffalo.

Kelly Fletcher mentioned that she is working with the United Way in the grant process regarding food systems. She said that there is a lot of synergy going on with regard to this issue.

Julie Barry said that they are in the process of updating the matrix as part of the Erie County Agricultural and Farmland protection plan. The Plan is to be updated every five years. They are now looking it over.

Connie Ervin has started a new class teaching food safety that will lead to a certification. She is a past instructor for the National Restaurant Association so that she can accomplish both manager and food safety. She targets young people who are looking to work in hospitality.

Julie Levin told the group that she runs the dining services at Nardin Academy. They are looking for new vendors.

Rebekah Williams said that she was at the meeting for a supporting role in the Massachusetts Avenue Project. She spoke with Kelly regarding sitting in on meetings to advise and bring students with her. The students told the group that they are interested in the workings of the FPC.

Kelly Asher wanted to give an update on the ECHD Board of Health. She was at the September meeting. The Board is pleased with the work the FPC is currently undertaking in applying for the United Way grant.

Cheryl Thayer told the group that there has been activity on the United Way grant. Last week she and Kelly Fletcher tabled at a roundtable that the United Way undertook. The attendees were from various locations around the country and General Mills (who provided the stimulus of money). Tours were conducted, one of which was at MAP among others. Capacity building, as well as the Council taking on more of an active role in the community in applying for the grant were discussed. There were 37 agencies that put in letters of intent. Many of them attended the workshop where they discussed what they did in north Minneapolis. They awarded the grants in April of 2017. They are looking to Buffalo as a pilot project so if it works here they will take the model and go elsewhere in the country with it. Minneapolis has a food charter that has five core areas. One was skill, another accessibility, and justice. The RFP was structured after the Minneapolis food charter and the five core areas. They spent six to eight months doing community conversations. Kelly Fletcher told them that we are coming up with a working group to put together and meet with them. Basically the community conversations structured the RFP and then they were going to do site visits to everyone that is going, to be awarded one of the grants. She thought that they are trying to figure out if they are targeting an area of the city, or the city and region. In Minneapolis they targeted north Minneapolis and structured the whole program with building up one area. Kelly thought that it was informative to attend the roundtable as there was also a lot of networking taking place with other organizations that are putting projects in and hearing what the projects are. Such as WIC trying to expand and do mobile clinics where they can enroll people. Kelly said that they are looking for the FPC to assume a role in sustaining the changes being made. How can we as a council become more knowledgeable with policy and best practices? She reached out to the Minneapolis Food Policy Council and is waiting for them to get back to her regarding their work plan, strategic plan etc.

Cheryl Thayer asked Kelly Fletcher if they want a program from the FPC if they do not want us to be a convener. Kelly said that they want more of a consultant. Basically the capacity of the

FPC should be lifted up. They want the FPC to bring about expanding knowledge of bringing about policy change and to research local laws, and proposals that affect our regional food system. Train new and existing council members on issues related to food policy, i.e. talking to politicians, drafting policy proposals and engaging the public. Kelly passed out information to the members.

Cheryl Thayer asked Kelly Asher if she had a conversation with Joe about the details on the first iteration of the letter. Kelly said that she did and then wrote the second letter, because he was saying that basically capacity building and hiring a consultant to help with a strategic plan to better know your policy and to build our capacity is necessary. He said to look to Minneapolis to see what they had done and to basically use the funding to build a stronger council. Kelly Fletcher thought that if we submit a strong proposal there is a good chance that we will be funded. There were three different types of grants that are funded in Minneapolis; they are planning grants, implementation grants and capacity building grants. \$10,000 to \$50,000, for planning grants which were six months to two years in length, implementation was from \$25,000 to \$100,000, and capacity building was \$50,000. Kelly Fletcher said that she would share the exact amounts and information with council members from notes that she had. Basically most of the grants were implementation grants. Not many people applied for planning or capacity building grants; these were then worked into the implementation grants. It sounds like it will be a competitive process here due to the 37 agencies vying for the funds. Mike Raleigh said that they did not explain much about what the United Way process will be like in Buffalo. While it is modeled after Minneapolis, ours would be different. United Way is attempting to secure funding beyond the two year period so that work continues.

Introductions ensued from FPC members to the new two students.

One person from each working group will be chosen so that we have representation across the council to submit a proposal in the event that we are invited to do so. This will require time outside of the FPC meetings.

Urban Production will have Mike Raleigh and Healthy Food Retail will have Beth Machnica. The other three groups will be chosen by either Friday or Monday.

These working groups will dissipate as soon as the grant is submitted

### **Working Group Updates**

There was discussion on the farm to school program. Sara Jablonski told the group that the Buffalo Public Schools food systems department is expanding farm to school to the entire district. They will be serving locally sourced food two Thursdays a month at every Buffalo public school. An event on October 3 will be held to kick off the event at Waterfront Elementary from 4 to 6:30. There will be four local chefs competing and preparing food in partnership with teens for sampling.

Matt Kauffmann said that their fall fundraiser is October 20 at 17 West Delavan from 5 to 9. It is open to everyone. There will be food from the farm available and music. Donations will be

taken. Kelly Fletcher asked the group that if there were more events coming up like this one could they notify her so that she could put it out on the FPC website. Sara Jablonski asked if we have tracking on people accessing the website. Kelly said that the information is available; she could obtain quarterly reports on tracking and seeing if traffic is increasing over time. The Standing Committee and Community Engagement were overlooking the website. Cheryl Thayer thought that at some point it would be a good thing to have people opt in to receive news from the FPC so that we could build a list served. Kelly Fletcher said that this is in the works. We have a list from the People's Food Movement that we could possibly build into a list. Once a database is compiled we can start spreading information. Kelly Asher thought that this could be a task for an intern. Sara Jablonski said that she has a student to help with her working groups that might be of assistance.

### **Opportunities for continued learning**

Chery Thayer asked if the FPC was interested in continued learning. If this is a part of the grant we can scrap it for now, but there are a handful of other FPC's around the country that are making good advances in urban centers similar to Buffalo. She asked if there was an interest she could help setting them up. Kelly Asher thought there was an interest; she asked Cheryl if there was a cost related to that, we could build it into the grant as part of capacity building. Learning from other peers across the country and how to successfully advance policy would be beneficial, as these are big changes. It would be beneficial to be able to get some best practices from them. Lucia Leone said that one of her colleagues put together a policy assessment. She thought that this might be included.

There is a training in Boston as part of the community food systems conference. There is a one day training prior to the formal conference exclusively on food policy. There is a cost to travel, Cheryl Thayer will be attending. Building in funding for the grant to attend conferences would be beneficial.

Kelly Fletcher had updates on what the working groups were doing.

Julie Levin said that they were successful with their survey that had been open with response questions since the spring. They have a small slice of people and what they are interested in working on. Buffalo Public School Nutritional Services has a connection so that we could be working with them to see what kind of program could be developed that would be of benefit and interest to food service directors for getting local food. 94.4% said that they are offering scratch cooked food at their facilities. This seemed to include apples and dairy.

Lucia Leone said that her group had not had another meeting recently. She spoke regarding that there was no easy information about places with food policy, so more research needs to be done. She has a student who will be assisting with this.

Mike Raleigh said that he did not have much to report on his working group. They have submitted their policy to the common council in June or July before they recessed. They have reached back out to Sean Mulligan to see how everything was going. The corporation council, who is the law dept. for the common council, is looking over the policy. They are attempting to

schedule a meeting with Sean and invite as many from urban production who are interested to attend also, to see if anything else can be done to expedite the process. There is a piece regarding water access for growing in the city to obtain a better city water policy. He would like Grass Roots to attend FPC meetings as they play such a big part in the food system in Buffalo for community garden access.

Kelly Fletcher gave an update on the membership recruitment committee. Kelly Asher said that per Pat Watson's request they discussed having an additional appointed seat from the EC Dept. of Sr. Services to ensure that the interests of our Senior Citizens are addressed. Pat currently serves as a consumer advocate for seniors but feels this could be enhanced by having an appointed representative. She recommended Daniel Szewc, and the group agreed with this. After examining current membership they noticed there was some duplication, and gaps in term limits that did not lend to smooth transition. Mike volunteered to come up with a proposed matrix of terms and limits that will lend itself to smoother transitions. The group recommended that there would only be one representative appointed from the same communities and institutions. Orientation for new members will need to take place; there was a question on who would take responsibility for this. The group recommended that an exit interview process be created. Kelly Asher will request that a letter will be drafted as an invitation to apply as well as a welcome letter and will state the council's mission, expectations and time commitment. Once it is received Kelly Asher will provide Kelly Fletcher with the list of potential invitees and their addresses and the ECDOH will be responsible for sending out the letters. We will also recruit via the website; some ads will be put up on it. Kelly Asher also said that they will take recommendations from people on the council. The deadline to apply will be November 15. Kelly Fletcher and Kelly Asher will compile all applications and the group will then meet. This will occur before the next FPC meeting. Also discussed who was missing from the table, Rural Erie county farmer eating co-op, Mike Keller, Paul Zittel, Niagara Frontier Growers Co-op, Big Distributor Niagara Frontier Food Terminal, Tarrentino Foods, Latino Food Services and Willowbrook Farms, Us Foods and Tripi Foods. A smaller distributor was Urban Fruits and Veggies, Allison DeHoney, Lexington Co-op, African American Heritage Food Co-op, East Aurora Co-op, big retailers Tops, Wegmans, Aldi's. Institution BPS Food Services Director, Bridget O'Brien Wood, and other school food district directors who filled out the procurement survey, Schofield Nursing Homes, Emergency Food representatives being the Food Bank of Western NY, and emergency food stamps and the Restaurant Association. Rob Free is an appointed seat from the ECBOH. Cheryl Thayer said that at the farmer buyer meeting there were six representatives from the restaurant association who were all supportive. So that if filling the role separately, outside of Rob Free, will be fine.

Cheryl Thayer went on to say that the council is made up of appointed seats, which are a lot of our agencies, the ECDOH, BOH, Cooperative Extension, Dept. of Environment and Planning, Farmland Protection; there will always be one representative from each of these divisions. There are at-large seats where we are trying to represent the food system. They are considered consumer at large seats but there are recommendations within to try to have these particular spots filled. She asked what the limit was on the council; Kelly Asher said that they are waiting for Mike to come up with a matrix. So that as we transition people out, we have a smooth transition with new members. We will know by the next meeting exactly how many seats we need to fill. There are currently 18 members on the council. Also there could be an opportunity to extend

terms. It was mentioned that it is important to have a nursing home representative. The working groups can also be expanded. We will look into whose terms are expiring and who is interested in staying on the council. This will determine how many open seats we have to fill.

It was suggested that everyone relooks at the operating principles, as there are areas where there are questions as to what constitutes a voting membership in a quorum. Kelly Fletcher has been utilizing Box on-line and suggested to the others to utilize it. She suggested it to the members for working group updates, there is also a member list on it. She will send invitations to the members, she suggested accepting it, then you will go on to see file folders, it is a desk top organizing on line. Cheryl Thayer said that we will get Mike Raleigh the information he needs regarding term limits, and she will give Kelly a welcome letter, we will determine what vacant seats are available. We will also work on recruitment, is there are seats that can be filled; we could also invite people to be on working groups. We will also reach out to the EC Dept. of Sr. Services.

There was a motion made to add an appointed seat to the council, it was seconded and passed. Mike Raleigh was opposed. Cheryl Thayer will draft a letter to the Commissioner of Sr. Services.

Kelly Fletcher asked about agenda considerations. Della Miller said that the goal of nutrition education is to understand the environment of what different institutions are doing. Such as schools, daycares, and community centers if they are offering nutrition education and what it looks like. They came up with a survey of questions that we can ask food service depts. For, or a day care director. They will be doing a pilot first on targeting certain organizations, such as wellness policies for school districts; one had a really good wellness policy, as opposed to more generalized policies. They will be asking what they think about what nutrition education is and how they are implementing it.

The People's Food Movement 2018 was brought up. Rebekah Williams and Kelly Fletcher met to talk about when this would take place etc. And getting the FPC involved in the planning stages of it for a more active role. She asked what the members thought about taking part in it. Rebekah said that the United Way in preparing for their grant, asked for the outcomes and or feedback from the community regarding the people's food movement. The UB food lab partnered with them last year and Erin Sweeney from the food lab made sure that they had a student involved. There were several strong outcomes. Around the food sector posters, we had a youth translating in different languages, and sharing ideas and concerns regarding the posters. There were bullets under each food sector. Outcomes need to be reached from the posters. The action items themselves in that they innovated things that people were working on throughout the region. In the future it would be good to have the FPC action items front and center, but also doing outreach so that we would be aware of things going on throughout the region in food systems work and good food purchasing programs. The FPC could also be more active in the action alerts to pull events together as well as capacity building. Last year's event took place at the West Delavan Grider Community Center. This will be set as an agenda item for the next meeting. There were suggestions made as to when to hold the next People's Food Movement such as before the start of the next growing season. There was a motion made and it was

seconded for the FPC to be a lead partner in the 2018 People's Food Movement. All were in favor the motion was carried.

Anyone is welcomed to attend FPC meetings, as they are subject to the open meeting law.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 29, 2017. A conference call line will be set up for call-ins. There was a motion made and carried to adjourn.

/mac