

Buffalo and Erie County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2017

Present:

Cheryl Thayer
Kelly Asher
Kelly Fletcher
Robert Free
Julie Barry
Elias Reden
Matt Kauffman
Nate Attard
Kathy Peterson
Patricia Watson
Julie Levine
Sara Jablonski
Lucia Leone
Dan Szewc
Birch Kinsey
Ingamire Adam
Connie Ervin via teleconference

Guests:

Allison DeHoney
Beth Machnica
Dorothy Johnston
Rebekah Williams
Dorothy Johnson

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

Introductions around the table took place.

A presentation regarding community opportunity by UB was supposed to be given, but it will happen at another time. Agenda considerations may be accomplished in lieu of this topic. There were no other additions to the agenda.

Kelly Asher told the group that because we are an arm of the Board of Health she is not certain if the FPC comes under the open meeting law. If we are a notice has to be put out (this is done on-line). People can come and observe what is being done, and also when something is being voted

on. If an executive session is held the meeting is then closed. If someone wants to speak on something, and the item is already on the agenda they can sign up at the beginning of the meeting to speak to that particular agenda item. If a person is member sponsored they can also speak to what is on the agenda. There is a website regarding Roberts rules at ParliPro.org (a basic course can be accessed) a letter with this information and an orientation packet will be sent to new members.

Member Updates

Kathy Peterson – City of Buffalo Office of Strategic Planning – She is on the urban growers group of the FPC. There were issues regarding water usage sent to the Common Council that are now in the law dept.

Julie Barry – Erie County Dept. of Environment and Planning - She is on the Environmental Protection Board and they are in the process of updating its agricultural and farmland policy. They are bringing together the Erie County Farm Bureau and the urban farmers.

Elias Reden – Erie County Dept. of Environment and Planning – They are wrapping up the 2017 report given to the legislature. The board recommended 11 parcels from 24 acres of new farmland into the program.

Patricia Watson – She represents older people in the community and is under the roof at the moment of AARP.

Beth Machnica – She is a guest, works for UB and she is active on the council with Lucia

Kelly Asher – Erie County Dept. of Health

Julie Levin – Nardin Academy – Dining services – they have a sustainable dining hall and try to prepare locally grown food and scratch cook it. She is a member of the local procurement working group.

Dorothy Johnston – Dept. Chair for Culinary Arts at Erie Community College

Lucia Leone – University at Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions – They are awaiting a grant from the National Cancer Institute to expand a mobile market model called the veggie man to different communities across the country. They have received notice that they are starting in December. As part of the grant they are going to be helping organizations across the country to replicate the veggie man as a local produce market model that was initiated in North Carolina; as part of that there will be technical assistance and grant funding to those organizations. At some point they will be sending word out for assistance with the RFP process. Before that starts they will also be looking for people to assist with selecting people to receive the grants and organizations that are already running mobile markets and to help get feedback.

Robert Free – In charge of food and beverage for the Buffalo Bison, Canalside and the Outer Harbor – He also represents the Board of Health and the NYS Restaurant Association. In terms

of the NYS Restaurant Association his representation is to try to find ways to combine local farm to table and make it viable for restaurants in the Western NY area.

Rebekah Williams – She is the youth education director at the Massachusetts Avenue Project, she is here as a non- voting member to support the current youth participants sitting on the council and to ensure that they are able to access the council meetings and understand what is going on at them. She asked the FPC members to avoid acronyms so that the youth members could more easily understand the full name of organizations etc. She also participates in carrying out the People’s Food Movement that has become an annual event.

Ingabire Adam – She is a youth leader at MAP. She is involved in the community and holds a youth seat at the FPC.

Dan Szewc – Erie County Dept. of Senior Services – representing the older residents of Erie County.

Allison DeHoney – She is the CEO and President of Urban Fruits and Veggies as well as the not for profit arm Buffalo GroGreen. They have an urban farm, mobile produce market; and provide nutrition education and teach urban farming to children from 4th to 12th grade. They do farm to table with restaurants and also have a corporate wellness program.

Kelly Fletcher – Public Health Educator – Erie County Dept. of Health, she also serves as staff support for the FPC.

Birch Kinsey – She is a youth leader at MAP, and holds a youth seat at the FPC.

Cheryl Thayer – Cornell Cooperative Extension – The local cooperative extension office submitted a school grant to the NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets. We will find out if it is funded in the next few weeks. This would continue to support the effort in Buffalo. We have noted that in the last few years that we need someone on the ground to make it happen. It would support that school district and three rural districts that expressed interest in farm to school, Alden, Eden and Springville. At the next meeting of the FPC she will know if the grant has been funded.

Matt Kauffman – Urban Farmers – they work with farm to table

United Way Grant

Cheryll Thayer told the group that Kelly and she met with the United Way to position a new proposal to them that really focused on strategic planning. The buckets include professional development, strategic planning and community engagement. This is due January 11, decision will be made in March and the subcommittee met prior to the FPC meeting to work on the proposal. She said that if anyone wants to look at the proposal before it is submitted to let them know. With professional development they will be encouraging folks to attend conferences with the funding to meet with other FPC’s that are in close proximity to try and determine best practices. The biggest part of this would be to hire a consultant to work with us to do a very targeted strategic planning process to take us to the next level, and to dedicate some money to a

marketing community engagement that will tie into the People's Food Movement as well. Kelly Asher has been invited to a conference involving cities and opportunities; it is called the 21st Century City Initiatives Symposium. Kelly Fletcher said that going into the People's Food Movement it is being planned as part of community. Cheryl Thayer said that the grant will run from April 20, 2018 until March 2020. The grant information is on Box and everyone on the FPC has access to it. The grants are arranged from \$25,000 to \$200,000 and we are asking for \$45,000 a year for a total of \$90,000. Joe Roccisano from the United Way encouraged the FPC to develop a non-profit arm to apply for the grant. If we are able to do this we will be able to write money into the grant.

Kelly Fletcher said that the buckets that Cheryl Thayer spoke of as part of the grant, to reiterate are professional development, strategic planning and community engagement; where the People's Food Movement has a big role. A date of February 24 has been tentatively scheduled for the movement at the Broadway Market. Kelly asked Rebekah if this date could possibly be pushed farther down into the year. Kelly thought that if it took place in November 2018, the growing season would be avoided, the Broadway market would not be as busy, and it would give us time to get sponsorship. She also thought that if we get the funding for the United Way Grant we could utilize funds for the 2018 People's Food Movement and it would give us the seed money. Rebekah went on to say that the Food Movement could be a big event grounded in urban planning type engagements where ideas for moving forward on food issues in Buffalo and Erie County could be displayed around the room; and the public could then engage with that and with volunteers to give their input on these issue. And also to share their experience in terms of as an example healthy corner stores initiatives, this could be a featured issue. There could be volunteers to engage the public on whether healthy corner stores could be helpful for them or what they would like to see in that kind of thing; if there could be an alternative. Each of the initiatives should be lifted up and be present. There should be a good volunteer base to engage people in it. This was the concept of the People's Food Movement. It was first held in 2015 with 300 people predominately food pantry clients, and lead gardeners from grass roots gardens. They skipped a year and another was held in 2017 at the Delavan Grider Community Center. It had a mixed outreach; Rebekah thought that pushing this year's event to the fall would make sense to make a more robust outreach process. Kelly Fletcher said that if everyone thinks this to be a good idea we will look at dates in November. There is a group working on the grant that will continue to work, and she invited other councilmembers to work on the planning process that might have experience with marketing, graphic design, and corporate sponsorship. Planning will start in January after the grant is submitted to get together a timeline when things need to get done.

Cheryl Thayer asked if there was any way to combine this movement with what Julie Barry spoke about (Buffalo and Erie County Farmer days), or should there two separate events. There is a year to plan so perhaps it could be a feasible endeavor. Beth Machnica offered assistance with graphic design for the event. Kelly Fletcher will send out invites to the working group after the grant process is completed.

Rebekah went on to say there are two ways to gather information from people. One is that they have been creating posters on what is going on in Buffalo and Erie County. They are not necessarily posters about individual organizations or people, but more about initiatives regarding

action things going on. MAP has been interviewing people in the community to see what is being worked on. Then they will work with UB Food Lab to create presentation posters on what is happening in the region. There are also action alerts regarding policies that people can be engaged in. In the past there have been opportunities to engage the public in getting involved in advocacy issues.

Member Recruitment Update

Kelly Asher said that we have received thirteen applications and have five positions available. The member recruitment team will be meeting the week of December 11th. All of the members will have the applications beforehand so that decisions can be made, and the applicants will be notified. She said that they will be working on an orientation piece, a list of meetings, etc. Cheryl Thayer told the group that at the second iteration of the FPC, the Food Lab did a great presentation on the food system in Buffalo and Erie County, including slides. She did not know if they had the capacity to offer it to us. What they also did was give three case studies about FPC's around the country and what they are doing. They also helped break down ordinances versus variances. This might be something to be considered for orientation information. Kelly Asher said she would speak to someone regarding obtaining material for this. Cheryl said that they have grad students and it seems like they are looking for opportunities to share information.

World on your Plate (Daemen College) and NESAWG (Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group) conference report out

Matt Kauffman attended and went on to say that as a member of the FPC there were two workshops that he attended. One was on a seven year research project that was region wide. The discussion at the end of that demonstrated the need for FPC throughout the region to collaborate together. He connected with people from Rhode Island, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. There was an openness to work together. The other workshop was an urban agriculture working group where they went down a wish list that they had, and how policies were applied. He also mentioned that his working group met with Grass Roots gardens; they broke into several committees addressing user fees and taxes, water access, and animal husbandry.

Birch Kinsey told the group that they did a pre-NESAWG day, as it was youth advocacy day. She and Ingabire Adam and some others, spoke about the farm bill, and to representatives about it. They went to Brian Higgins' office. They spoke with his representative regarding the farm bill issues. Ingabire Adam told the group they had a workshop on climate change and youth. They inquired what other thought about climate change and gave others a chance to speak on the subject. They also attended other workshops hosted by youth from New York City. They spoke about their community work. Birch told the group that a legislative assistant reinforced that they should continue to visit legislators as opposed to phoning, as they are inundated with phone calls from constituents. They were also advised to speak with representatives that do not necessarily agree with their issues.

Rebekah said that she attended NESAWG as a chair of the youth track. NESAWG is a region wide conference. There are five different tracks going on simultaneously. FPC track, Sustainable Farming, one on poultry, they provided contacts. She attended some of the poultry workshops,

predominantly for the good food purchasing program. This is to set up procurement policies that are a national initiative. There was also information provided on the connection between agriculture and climate change. She attended setting up a procurement policy and good food purchasing program. They are looking to set up a good food purchasing program in Buffalo. They are speaking to legislators and partnerships for public good is going to help them put together meetings with the school board members to try to encourage them to pass the good food purchasing program here in Buffalo. This should be coming out in the first quarter of 2018. This is all connected to the national good food purchasing program that was a real thread throughout the entire NESAWG conference. There were many presenters, poultry workers, farmers and different people trying to push the good food purchasing program. It has been very successful in Chicago, Los Angeles and Cincinnati.

Cheryl Thayer said that there is a Community Food Systems conference in Boston next week, which she will be attending. The day prior to the conference there is training on FPC's being hosted by the Johns Hopkins center for a livable future. In meeting with other councils she hoped to get some leads on who to send our RFP to. Initially the United Way told them if they are funded and we know of a consultant, we do not necessarily have to do the RFP process, but collectively we think it would be good to see who is out there, who responds, and what they can bring to the table. That is her goal next week at the conference, identify and connecting with other people who are working on strategic planning.

Kelly Fletcher asked new members to send their information to her so that she can update the website, Erie.gov/fpc.

Cheryl Thayer asked if anyone had anything else to discuss. Ingabire Adam had an idea for the FPC to get together for dinner for more social interaction. A potluck was suggested. Perhaps this could be done after the new council members come into the group and an orientation could also take place.

The next full FPC meeting is scheduled for January 31, 2018. Kelly Fletcher gave the members the full meeting schedule for 2018.

Cheryl Thayer mentioned that the FPC is losing some members, Connie Erwin, Sara Jablonski, and Nathan Attard.

Kelly Asher made a motion to adjourn, it was carried and the meeting was adjourned.

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