

FOOD SYSTEM SUMMIT MINUTES

February 10th 2014, Catholic Center

The Food System Summit started at 9:45 a.m. Names and contact information for attendees is attachment 1,

Kristin Dubay-Horton the Health Director for the City of Bridgeport, did the welcome and gave a brief overview of the meeting.

Maggie Reynolds introduced the members of the Food Policy Council and introduced the structure for the day. Those Food Policy Council members present included:

Maggie Reynolds – Chair,
Christine Stafstrom – Co-Chair,
Audrey Barr – Secretary,
Alanna Kabel,
Krsitin duBay Horton, and
David Kooris

Four Breakout Groups groups were formed according to interest in the topics generated for the meeting from the two previous community conversations. Individuals were allowed to join the group that best met their interest. The four groups included:

1. Lessons learned from implementing farmer's markets – how can we work better together? What happens when farmer's markets are expensive? How to break the cost barrier and build sustainable retail models?
2. Reduction and recapture of Food Waste in Bridgeport
3. Buying Local and Going Green– how can small businesses feature local produce and what are the benefits
4. Community Gardens

Each group had a facilitator with guidelines and questions that were asked to members among the group. The questions to be answered in each group were:

"How do we make the healthy, local choice the easy choice for all parts of the Bridgeport Food System?" in order to:

- share/celebrate the good things that are already happening in Bridgeport within this topic;
- identify barriers/challenges to achieving this goal;
- identify opportunities for us to work together under this goal.

"What can the FPC do to support this effort?" during the report back section of the day.

The Mayor offered thanks to the group for coming together and awarded several past and present city council members and community members for their work on launching the Food Policy Council.

The following is a summary of their recommendations for the Food Policy Council.

1. Lessons learned from implementing farmer's markets – how can we work better together? What happens when farmer's markets are expensive? How to break the cost barrier and build sustainable retail models?

- A few lessons learned from implementing farmer's markets: consumers were concerned about the prices, the people who purchased from the market were not from the area, and the farmers were concerned about lowering their prices which result to being a deficit.
- We can work better together by hiring a farmers market coordinator for the City of Bridgeport, who will inform the markets about market spacing, pricing, community outreach, transportation and also centralize the knowledge.
- The farmers market being too expensive for some people will always be a barrier, however the City of Bridgeport provides a few incentives that can help the citizens of Bridgeport with their farmers market purchases. Incentives such as SNAP, Senior Vouchers, and WIC cards are accepted at the market.
- The best way to break the cost barrier and build sustainable retail models is continuously educate the citizens of Bridgeport on the benefits on shopping at the farmers market, which is to have delicious fresh fruits and vegetables that are anti-oxidants and phytonutrients; Also hand-picked by the farmer and locally grown.
- The best way to break the cost barrier and build sustainable model is by exploring CSA opportunities (especially winter CSA). Engage in community conversations and education, such as produce storage, preparation, and price/value. Policy change involving bringing back home economics to students in secondary schools.

2. Reduction and recapture of food waste in Bridgeport

- Start an initiative in one neighborhood (ex. a food desert like the East Side) to test how all of these ideas could come together
 - ID food donors (grocery stores, restaurants, farms, gardeners)
 - Help Community Plates expand to gleaning local produce from farms
 - Conduct outreach to licensed businesses that could donate excess food
 - Recruit volunteers to help glean produce (e.g. at GVI's farm)
 - ID drop off site for Community Plates
 - Recruit volunteers to drop off donated food
 - Raise awareness among community members about where to pick up donated food
 - Develop a central website that tells where food access points are for picking up donated food in Bridgeport
 - Cooking Matters could help spread the word to their program participants
- Send out city-wide communications to share updates on these initiatives and host events to bring people together

- Bring publicity to these initiatives by sharing good stories with the newspaper
- Set city-wide goals on reducing food waste, connecting with food recovery efforts, composting + recycling, etc. and track institutions' progress toward those goals
 - Help facilitate connections: e.g. GVI could collect schools/hospitals food scraps to compost (already starting small scale, could use more food scraps)
 - Able to sell compost for income or recirculate with community gardens
- Recruit volunteers for Community Plates, GVI, other organizations
 - Connect with Council of Churches
 - Connect with area schools/universities like SCSU
- Map opportunities/gaps for food waste across Bridgeport institutions and businesses
 - Ex. schools always have excess milk
- Mayor Finch interested in seeing city brownfields be used to grow local food

3. Buying local and Going Green- how can small business feature local produce and what are the benefits.

- Increasing access to local produce ---
- Corner stores need to be made more attractive – so that we change what people see when they go in – perhaps we can change city ordinances so they can sell healthy foods on the street outside- like NY and New Haven. It would change the look of the neighborhood to see vegetables rather than lottery signs and beer ads outside the corner stores.
- Transportation from farm to inner city is a major issue
 - Work on developing a co-op so all the farms can transport to one location where people can shop and stores/restaurants can pick up produce wholesale at one location.
 - Support a new small business where a person buys a used refrigerated truck and goes to pick up produce from farms and deliver it to the restaurants and small grocers – with low up-charge.
- Cannot bring the produce into food desert neighborhoods without education for community on how to be locators (eating seasonal, local produce)
 - Provide recipe cards in corner stores for how to cook locally available produce
 - Ask local chefs to do short video recipes and create a YouTube channel where people could view them and learn to cook it at home
 - Coordinate with SNAP education providers
 - Coordinate with other local educators (Cooking Matters)
 - Educate the kids and they can educate the parents
- Look at the Mercado Farmer's Market in Hartford as a year round market option
- Consider ways to bring the cost down of healthy foods in corner stores so apples can compete with chips!
- Use transportation to bring foods that are inexpensive (seasons end tomatoes – produce that would be plowed under) to get that food to the needy!

4. Community Gardens

Spoke about their challenges which include the scarcity of land and resources, having a hard time finding individuals to manage the community gardens; lack of information sharing, lack of appropriate producer, having difficulties sustaining the involvement of the community; lack of water access and inventory tracking. The group recommended several solutions to the FPC:

- City-wide consortium of community gardens
- Libraries as resources – tap into seed program at Fairfield Public Library
- Utilize social infrastructure, ex. NRZ
- Schools and conservation corps as community educators on gardens
- Mobile resources
- Backyard gardens
- Community engagement at every level
- Community garden toolkit
 - Build community capital
 - Promote extended resources
 - Provide recipe cards

Lunch, networking and conversation followed. Food had been provided by Bullard Havens Technical School who utilize local produce. All food available after the Summit was transported to community kitchens and events for use later that day.

Attachment I: Summit Attendee List

Name	Organization	Contact info	Volunteered to serve on future committees
Shiu-Yu Kettering	CT DPH	Shiu-yu.kettering@ct.gov	✓
Irina Lisker	CT DPH	Ilisker@ct.gov	✓
Luigi Sartori	UCONN SPH	I_sartori@hotmail.com	✓
Brianna Trudell	Get Healthy CT	trudell.bri@optonline.net	x
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Bill Scholl	Bpt Hosp. Food	SWSCH0@BPTHosp.org	x
Melody Merola		outreach@goldenhill.org	
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Tom Hauser	Community plates	tom@communityplates.org	x

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Steve Hladun	City of Bpt – parks	Steve.hladun@bridgeportct.gov	x
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Maria Hernandez		No email provided	
L. Echevarria	Optimus health care	No email provided	
Lindsey Greene-Upshaw	Yale New Haven Health	Lindsey.greene-upshaw@ynhh.org	
Not in attendance – but have expressed interest in staying engaged			
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