

Bridgeport Food Policy Council – January 20, 2016 – 999 Broad St., Bridgeport, CT

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*Members in attendance:* Christine Stafstrom, Kristin duBay Horton, Margot Gotterer

*Guests in attendance:* Sabine Kuczko (Health), Jonathan James (Health), Matt Bewley (Health), Cristina Sandolo (GVI), Nadiya Hafizova (GVI), Michelle McCabe (CCGB), Raquel Rivera (CCGB), Dan Roach (Mayor's Office), Lauren Hawkins (UB student), Briana Williams (UB student), Clinton Gee (Kings Pantry), Lydia Pearson (Salvation Army), Karyn Leito (Black Rock Farmers Market), Michelle Margo (Black Rock Farmers Market), Marcella Lawson (New Level Academy; Central High School), Harold Blackwell (Chestnut Hollow Farms LLC), Anna Greer (Sacred Heart U.)

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The meeting was called to order at 6:05PM. Members and guests introduced themselves.

*Introduction of Advisory Board:* Maggie explained the concept of the Advisory Board, created at the December 2015 Food Policy Council (FPC) meeting. As part of the FPC's transition away from program development and toward a policy focus, the Advisory Board will allow organizations and individuals involved in food-related programming to advise and inform the FPC. The FPC will then incorporate this feedback into its policy recommendations.

Christine noted that the Advisory Board will be helpful in bringing all relevant parties to the table to network and share ideas about food policy in Bridgeport. Future FPC meeting agendas will designate time for Advisory Board participation.

*Search for Nutrition Center Director:* Maggie introduced Danny Roach, from the Mayor's Office. Maggie, Christine, and others in attendance expressed the FPC's deep interest in being involved in the search for a new Nutrition Center director, who has significant authority in determining the food served in Bridgeport schools. Danny suggested scheduling a meeting with David Dunn, Personnel Director for the Civil Service Commission, possibly as early as Friday, January 22.

*Healthy Corner Store Update:* Sabine gave an update on the Healthy Corner Stores Initiative (HCSI). She has conducted site visits, and is in the process of revising the program's budget and locating additional funding for new sites and needed repairs. Matt is helping design applications and other program materials.

Kristin suggested that anyone interested in being involved in this effort contact her, Sabine, or Matt, so that they can be a part of quarterly HCSI meetings. Kristin also answered questions about the expected timeline and program assessments – ideally, the new sites will be set up by spring of 2016, and assessments indicated a 500% increase in produce sold at participating stores, though the assessments were hindered by refrigerator breakdowns.

*Structure of Food Policy Council:* Maggie reintroduced the Food Action Plan and described the FPC's planned Annual Report. The content of the Annual Report is still tentative, but will at least include the FPC's goals and specific policy recommendations.

A wide-ranging discussion followed about how the FPC could achieve its policy objectives, what its objectives should be, and how its objectives should be determined. The group discussed going before City Council to introduce itself and its goals, as well as to get a sense of the new Council's support for the FPC's priorities.

Members and guests suggested a number of possible initiatives and policies to support them:

- Ordinance to create a tiered system of license fees for store owners, with significantly higher fees for owners who do not stock certain healthy items and corresponding programs to improve compliance – St. Louis has used a similar approach;
- Take advantage of EPA's interest in helping to get a grocery store into the East End – possibly along the lines of Trader Joe's recently-opened "Daily Table" nonprofit;
- Emulate Austin, TX's ban on advertisements for unhealthy foods within city limits, possibly paired with advertisements promoting healthy food choices in stores;
- A policy to conserve and protect community garden space (e.g. long-term leases);
- Taking advantage of the newly-passed Cottage Food Act;
- Various food policy initiatives that overlap with education policy – (re)introducing home economics and cooking classes into high schools, incorporating gardening and cooking into curricula, and encouraging teacher or mentor engagement with students during lunch hours.

A formal brainstorm session was suggested for the February FPC meeting. A "health impact assessment" was suggested to evaluate the proposed policies by researching similar policies enacted in other areas and their health effects.

*Subcommittee Update:* Maggie reported on the Farmers Market Collaborative. They are applying for CDBG funding for a Market Coordinator position and a branding/marketing campaign. Kristin described the recent East End NRZ meeting, and reported that they would prefer to change the East End market's location and date to the Newfield Library parking lot not on a Sunday.

*New Business:* The group discussed long-running difficulties with achieving quorum for FPC meetings. Suggested solutions included a minimum attendance policy, encouraging the City to work through the backlog of appointees, and getting City Council assistance to recruit new members.

*Agenda for next meeting:* February agenda items will include review of the FPC appointment process and a brainstorm session.

The meeting ended at 7:30PM. The next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 2016.