



Bridgeport Food Policy Council – June 21, 2017
Ralphola Taylor Community Center, 790 Central Avenue

Members in attendance: Margot Gotterer, Jacob Robison (OPED), Angel DePara (CAO), and Jessica Zielinski Meffert (BDHSS)

Guests in attendance: Taylor Edelmann (Optimus Health Care), Erin Harkrader (LifeBridge), Raquel Rivera Pablo (A Pinch of Salt), Cristina Sandolo (GVI), Breanna Natale (BFMC), Landon Horan (FEED Center), Mary Green (Park City Initiative Corp), Sharlene Wong (Nutrition Center), Michelle McCabe (CCGB), Maria Ramos (Resident), Sam Johnson (GVI), DD Vasseur (GVI), Miriam Bonhomme (CCGB), Luis Luna (Make the Road CT), and Lisa Neff (American Heart Association)

Staff in attendance: Jessica Zielinski Meffert (BFPC Coordinator)

The meeting began at 6:06 pm. Maggie stated that the sign-in sheet for this meeting is voluntary.

Attendees introduced themselves.

Council Vote

The council held a vote to approve the meeting minutes from April and May 2017. Angel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Jacob seconded the motion. All members voted in approval of both the April and May meeting minutes.

Old Business

EPA Grant

Maggie explained that the steering committee for this grant is still welcoming new members to join. This committee will hold three planning calls before September. September 7th and 8th are the workshops. Interested persons can be in touch with Maggie. Maggie will have more updates to come.

Food Policy Council Vacancies

Angel reported that three of the applications (Raquel, Christine, Anna) are still pending approval. Mary Green's application is with the Office of Internal Affairs.

FPC Event

Raquel provided the following details about the FPC event:

- Planning with the Health Department should begin sooner
- Planning for the award should begin sooner

- More volunteers should be recruited from a greater variety of organizations
- The event should be better attended by Food Policy Council members
- Overall the event went well and participation was good

Sharlene suggested next year the event might be held at a school in order to engage more parents. Raquel agreed and noted that a school meal wellness theme for next year's event could go well with having a school as host venue.

Erin suggested the event be put on the Food Policy Council calendar sooner so that members could ensure they are free to attend as well as helping with preparations.

Council Rules

Maggie reported that there is a council rules draft that is being polished to share with the group. Angel has shared the draft with the City Attorney's Office for input.

Maggie and Angel shared that the meeting protocols are being altered to comply with Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements, and these alternations will be included in the council rules document once they are solidified. Angel noted that in the next few months there are plans to host training for council members about FOIA and other topics pertinent to council members.

Raquel asked that the Council by-laws explain how and when guests are able to speak up.

Mary asked what are the requirements for those who are serving on a sub-group, given that sub-group members are not necessarily council members. Maggie answered that there are not written guidelines yet on what requirements exist for advisory board members or sub-group members, but these will be written into the council rules.

AmeriCorps VISTA Position

Maggie reported that she and Chelsea have been holding 1st round interviews for the new AmeriCorps VISTA person that is shared with the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative. There were two applicants ready to move into 2nd round interviews, however 1 of them removed themselves from the running. Other applicants are being accepted on a rolling basis. Currently Juniper is the candidate that will be moving into 2nd round interviews, and Raquel and Cristina have offered to help with the 2nd round interviews. It is hoped that by the July meeting, the position will be filled. The focus of the VISTA position is community outreach and policy research.

Sub-group Updates

Maggie shared printouts of the most recent FPC public-facing document, which summarizes the recommendations from each sub-group in the FPC report.

Urban Agriculture

Cristina provided an overview of the urban agriculture sub-group's goals and current activities, including drafting a zoning ordinance.

Luis asked how outreach for community garden activities will reach immigrant communities, as well as whether there are resources on how to build a garden. Cristina answered that some of their outreach materials are translated, and they also hold trainings at GVI for community members interested in learning more about farming and gardening.

Maria Ramos explained that they currently have 3 community garden beds in their neighborhood but they are still waiting for water to be available for their garden. Sam and Maria asked when the water would be turned on. Cristina answered that this has been an issue for the past 2 years, whereby there is a delay in payment from the City to Aquarian. Aquarian will not turn on the water until they receive payment from the City.

Dede shared that at the garden Sam and Maria tend, Sam spends some time teaching others about how to garden. Mary Green also shared that Sam will be teaching youths this summer how to grow collard greens which will be harvested and frozen for the Thanksgiving Festival.

School Wellness

Sharlene reported she went to the governance committee and they decided to push through the School Wellness Policy and the Allergy Management Plan to the Board of Education (BOE). The plan now awaits BOE approval. seeking BOE approval.

Sharlene stated that she will be scheduling a meeting for the end of July to start developing goals for schools and metrics for the up-coming school year, which will be shared with the principals in August.

Sharlene explained that Bridgeport has no protocol for handling food-borne allergies in schools, so she is pulling together protocols from other school districts to share with the BOE.

Food-Based Economic Development

Michelle McCabe outlined the recommendations that this sub-group made in the FPC report. Michelle stated that she wants to meet with Kim Staley in the CAO office about how to proceed with these recommendations. Angel offered to help arrange this meeting.

Dede suggests the FPC connects with people in other cities who are working on improving farmers' markets. Michelle agreed that making these connections is important and shared that she has connected with others working elsewhere. Dede offered that she could provide a list of contacts involved in food businesses if Michelle is interested in this. Dede also suggested that visiting Hartford to attend food waste policy meetings could be beneficial because the state may be offering to fund projects in places like Bridgeport.

Community Outreach

Taylor relayed this sub-group's excitement in their recent formation and shared that currently they are:

- Creating flyers to be distributed at up-coming events that list FPC monthly meeting information
- The flyers have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese
- Taylor will pass out these flyers at the Saturday Health Fair from 11am-3pm at McLevy Green

Taylor also shared that he witnesses a lot of food insecurity issues with his patients at Optimus.

Maggie brought up that in order to better publicize the FPC Report, the Council will have it posted the City website and have it officially presented to City Council and the Mayor by October, as stipulated in the Council's ordinance.

Angel recommended the proposal for this presentation to come through the Dept. of Health, and to present to a committee such as Education and Social Services or Economic Development. This committee will hold a discussion of the report before it goes to the full council. Angel offered that we have time to discuss whether the report should go to committee before going to the full council, and which committee it should go to. Maggie agreed that this can be discussed in more detail and decided on at next month's FPC meeting.

Make the Road CT

Luis explained that Make the Road CT is a community organization pushing for solutions to food worker exploitation. Luis said he would like to engage his members (mostly immigrant) with the work the FPC is doing. Luis also shared that many of his members used to farm in their native countries and are interested in farming here in Bridgeport. Some of the cases Make the Road has been working on include cases of wage theft in restaurant work and Make the Road CT would like to team up with the FPC on these issues. Luis relayed that Make the Road CT also has monthly and weekly meetings. Worker weekly meetings are at 8pm on Thursdays at the Make the Road CT office (850 State Street).

New Business

GVI

Cristina passed out flyers for the following up-coming opportunities at GVI:

- Volunteers are invited to the farm every Saturday from 10:30am-2pm through October
- Gardening workshops are held each Saturday from 12:30-2pm through September
- Community nights are the last Thursday of each month July-October, 4-7pm
- The Farm stand is open Saturdays 10am-2pm and many but not all Thursdays 4-7pm

Make the Road CT Fund for Detention Cases

Luis announced that Make the Road CT is working on setting up a fund to enable bond to be posted for those who are being detained for too long / wrongfully. There will be a fundraiser for this cause on Sunday July 9th from 2-6pm at Seaside Park, including a BBQ and raffles for various prizes. The event will also include a play raising awareness on the topic of "know your rights." There is a Go Fund Me page associated with this cause as well. Luis will send all the details to Maggie in an email.

Bridgeport Farmers' Market Collaborative

Breanna announced that by the time we have the July FPC meeting, 6 out of 7 of the Bridgeport Farmers' Markets will be open.

Resilient Bridgeport

DD shared that in a report about resiliency in Bridgeport, it was recommended that the city lean toward aquaculture to strengthen its economy. DD can share more about this topic if anyone is interested.

The next meeting will be held on 19 July at the Bridgeport Public Library Main Branch, 925 Broad Street, in the Community Room on the 3rd floor.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 pm.