



Bridgeport Food Policy Council – September 20, 2017  
Thomas E. Carroll Nutrition Center, 139 Federal Street  
Downstairs Classroom

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*Members in attendance:* Margot Gotterer, Jacob Robison (OPED), Angel DePara (CAO), and Albertina Baptista (BDHSS)

*Guests in attendance:* Cristina Sandolo (GVI), Michelle McCabe (CCGB), Breanna Natale (BFMC), Landon Horan (FEED Center - CCGB), Sharlene Wong (Nutrition Center), Ellie Angerame (GVI), Anna Greer (SHU), Juniper Renee (AmeriCorps), Chelsea Gazillo (former AmeriCorps), Misharo Fraser (Student-UB), Julio Reinoso (Friends of the Library)

*Staff in attendance:* Jessica Zielinski Meffert (BFPC Coordinator)

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The meeting began at 6:07 pm. Attendees introduced themselves.

### **Council Vote**

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

### **Old Business**

#### EPA Grant – Local Food, Local Places

Maggie explained that the Local Food, Local Places event went well on both Thursday and Friday. On Thursday, there was a tour of several places around Bridgeport involved in the local food movement, followed by the evening session which was catered by Raquel's students. About 40 community members, mostly representatives of other local initiatives and organizations, attended the Thursday evening session to brainstorm ideas for making food access a driver of local economic development. During the Friday session, the 4 overarching goals developed during the Thursday session were worked into actionable strategies. The 4 goals for Bridgeport are:

1. Expand the role of farmers markets as inclusive, safe places for community-building and sustainable (e.g. non-exploitive, transparent) commerce.
2. Increase awareness of fresh food outlets (e.g. farmers markets, retail pop-ups, super pantries) and participation among Bridgeport's low-income residents, especially those enrolled in SNAP. Build partnerships and strategic collaboration between the Bridgeport Farmers Market Collaborative (BFMC) and the wider community of organizations concerned with fostering a socially just and equitable food system, health, and livability in Bridgeport. Lower the barriers to entry in Bridgeport for people who want to grow food or food businesses.

Maggie said that anyone interested in helping to pursue the actionable strategies should be in touch with her, and she will send the PowerPoint slides from the sessions to anyone who is interested. Maggie reported that there are 3 more technical assistance calls with the consultants, after which a Community Action Plan will be generated summarizing the continuing work.

#### Food Policy Council Vacancies

Angel explained that the current applications are on hold because former council members have not officially vacated their seats. Angel will contact these former council members to determine whether they will officially resign their seats or if they wish to remain on the council. One such council member, Audrey Barr, may be interested in returning to the council. Once Angel has been able to determine how many seats have been officially resigned, the pending applications can move forward. There are 4 seats requiring this determination. If this matter is not cleared up by the end of December 2017, the application process may need to be reinitiated.

Furthermore, Angel explained that new members cannot join the council if it drives political affiliations on the council past 2/3 majority of any one party.

#### Council Rules

Angel reported that he forwarded the council rules to the City Attorney for review and is waiting to hear back.

#### Thesis Presentation

Chelsea presented her thesis findings and recommendations to the Food Policy Council. It was requested that feedback about the presentation content and delivery be given at the end of the presentation. The thesis recommendations included:

1. Bridgeport should develop a land trust that is owned by black and brown community members to protect public lands from development
2. Bridgeport should promote leadership opportunities among those who are food insecure and / or are living in food insecure areas
3. Bridgeport should involve community members in the development of new policies from the beginning of the policy development period, not once the policy has been put into effect

Those interested in reviewing this thesis in more depth can find it linked here and may send related questions and/or feedback to from Chelsea at [clgazillo@gmail.com](mailto:clgazillo@gmail.com).

#### **Sub-group Updates**

##### Urban Agriculture

Cristina explained that this group is meeting every other week, and is looking for more members to assist with writing the urban agriculture master plan. The aim is to complete the urban agriculture master plan before April 2018 in order to incorporate it into the City's overall economic development plan, which should be finalized in April 2018. The urban agriculture master plan is currently focused into 4 chapters:

1. Preserve and Protect Open Space
2. Make Clear the Roles and Responsibilities of Urban Agriculture Entities

3. Protections Concerning Consumer Food Safety
4. Urban Agriculture as a Community-Driven and Resident-Owned Process

Cristina explained that they require funding to hire a consultant for working on this master plan. Aspetuck Land Trust has joined their sub-group as advisors.

#### School Wellness

Anna reported on the progress of the Healthy Eating Initiative at Caesar Batalla, where photos were taken to document in the grade school what was served onto lunch trays and what was going into the trash from lunch trays, as well as what supplemental snacks were being sent to school from home. Many vegetables were being thrown away, and unhealthy snacks were being sent from home. Anna stated she is working with Sharlene to make sure parents are aware of how they can support the Healthy Eating Initiative.

Cristina offered to work with Batalla to make sure GVI can continue to provide in-season vegetables to match their menus needs. Anna explained that they are working on integrating the Healthy Eating Initiative into curriculum so that students are not just encountering the food at lunch-time without additional context. Michelle described a once/month mobile market that could come to the school to distribute fresh produce and recipes to the parents to better engage the whole family in the program and help the students become more comfortable with the fresh produce by offering it in a variety of settings.

Sharlene explained that the program is going very well at the high school level, despite the slower acceptance by students in grade school. Anna said that the presentation of the food in all grade levels is beautiful, so the training given to the chefs has paid off in this respect. They will focus more going forward on working with parents to limit unhealthy snacks being sent to school so students will have an appetite for the healthy lunch.

Sharlene also said that the School Wellness Plan is back with the Board of Education and she is working with them to advance it.

#### Food-Based Economic Development

Michelle reported that they are working on the recommendations from the Local Food, Local Places sessions, and this means working with City officials from several offices. She requested a meeting with Albertina Baptista of the Health Department, they are working together to set a date so they can discuss the shared East Kitchen, which is planned to open soon.

This sub-group requested further members to join, such as farmers' market managers, restaurant owners, etc. Breanna offered to join the sub-group as both a market manager and the BFMC representative.

#### Community Outreach

Brenna reported that this sub-group had 2 meetings in September at 2 different locations and both were well-attended, indicating early successes in their outreach strategies. At these meetings, school-wellness was a main topic, as well as sharing with participants what the BFPC is, how it operates, what its goals are, and who makes up the council, etc. Meeting participants have invited this sub-group to join and speak at their resident meetings.

## **New Business**

### Announcements

Cristina shared that October 12<sup>th</sup> is the Harvest Fest at GVI, all are welcome. The fest is from 4-6pm at Reservoir Community Farm, 1469 Reservoir Avenue. There will be food, refreshments, live music, and more.

Breanna encouraged participation in the remaining farmers' markets as the season winds down.

Julio Reinoso from Friends of the Bridgeport Public Library shared that Sacred Heart University would be holding volunteer day on September 21<sup>st</sup> from 10am-2pm at the University Commons. He invited the BFPC to present about themselves and recruit volunteers with the other invited non-profits. If interested in participating, contact Arlene Carmona at the Office of Volunteers and Service Learning, (203) 396-8421.

Albertina shared that on September 30<sup>th</sup>, the Health Department would be co-sponsoring the Healthy Family Fair with the Hispanic Health Council and Cigna at 752 East Main Street from 10am-2pm.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 pm.