

Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council Minutes
Wednesday, February 20, 2013
UROC, located at 2001 Plymouth Ave N., Minneapolis, MN 55411
3:00 – 5:00 pm

Attendance: Aaron Reser, Alison Rotel, Bob Lind, Cam Gordon, Deborah Ramos, Eric Larsen, Gayle Prest, Julie Ristau, Kristine Igo, Kurt Schreck, Mustafa Sundiata, Neil Oxendale, Patty Bowler, Rebecca Reed, Rhys Williams, Russ Henry, Sara Nelson-Pallmeyer, Katie Lampi, Tracy Singleton

Others in Attendance: Jane Shey (Homegrown Minneapolis Consultant), Vish Vasani (Prevention Specialist), John Parker (Humphrey School of Public Affairs student), Elissa Brown (U of M MLA), Linda Roberts (Minneapolis Licensing), Megan O’Hara, Phill Kelley (U of M Student Association), Robin Garwood, Heidi Yankovec (Second Harvest), Neerah Menta (CURA)

Absent:

Beth Dooley, Erica Prosser

1. Introductions of guests

Member Updates:

2. Patty Bowler: The City of Minneapolis is being honored by a national partner and Homegrown Minneapolis is a part of the work the City is being honored for. There will be a reception on the morning of February 22 in City Hall Room 319. An invitation to attend is extended to the Food Council.

3. **Presentation by Kristen Klingler (Minneapolis Health Department) and Robin Garwood (Aide to Councilmember Cam Gordon):** The Staple Foods Ordinance requires stores with a grocery store license to provide a variety of fresh, non-perishable food items for sale. Many owners had a hard time meeting the requirements of this Ordinance; as a result, the Healthy Corner Store Initiative helps corner stores procure, stock and market healthy, fresh, affordable produce. In the past two years, almost 40 stores have been enhanced. A potential policy issue to be addressed in 2013 was proposed: is the Staple Foods Ordinance sufficient? There is discussion on whether the Ordinance is clear enough or strong enough. Linda Roberts from Minneapolis Licensing Department has also been a part of this discussion. Two potential angles for this proposed project: (1) Revise the language of the Ordinance and clarify who is/isn’t exempt from a license [ex: Walgreens]; and (2) Strengthen the actual requirements – when the Ordinance was first passed, it was “cutting edge;” however, WIC guidelines have exceeded the Ordinance and set more stringent fresh produce requirements. The State of Minnesota uses WIC standards for stores that want to be WIC authorized. Feedback from Food Council will help the development of a proposed policy change, which will then be brought back to the Food Council again.

There are 350 stores that are currently licensed; there are approximately 100 stores that are not exempt and that do not accept WIC, who may or may not meet WIC standards. Thus, before moving forward, there is a need to know who meets WIC standards, how many stores meet WIC standards, where are these stores, what is the customer demand, how WIC standards might

affect these stores, might there be pushback, etc. There is room for the Food Council to assist with this research and maximize all efforts moving forward. For example, food council members themselves can go into stores with a checklist [or utilize their connections to increase a volunteer base].

Q1: Knowledge of compliance rates? A: There are few violations and there is overall good compliance. However, for example, with some corner stores, they are having a hard time selling fruits and vegetables, but they are meeting the standards; however, if we increase these standards, they will meet them, but might be slightly reluctant because they don't see the value right now.

Q2: Mapping of where current exempt stores are, where stores meeting standards are, etc.? A: This has come up in a discussion before and it can be easily done.

Q3: Have we thought about pushback due to actual customer demand? Thus, whatever we do must be done thoughtfully. A: Kristen mentioned that they have been working with over 30 stores; with seven of them, point-of-sale data has been analyzed over a 14 week period, before, during and after the enhancement; there was an increase in produce sales compared to the total store sales. She also mentioned their collaborations with community partners to address demand, visibility, etc.

Q4: Is there a way to incentivize stores by subsidizing healthy purchases? A: We are looking to create systems that provide stores with affordable means to procure food so that they can easily purchase food for their stores.

Q5: Are there barriers with CSAs and Farmers Markets? A: Currently, there is no delivery system so corner stores have to go pick up their purchases. Hopefully in the future, Farmers Markets can explore deliver options.

Q6: Direct vs. Retail selling? A: One idea is that farms can "Adopt-a-Corner Store."

4. Discussion led by Cam Gordon and Julie Ristau about the history and purpose of the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council [Referenced 2 document: (1) City Council Resolution 2011R-445; and (2) Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council: Developing a City-community co-owned Council] The Food Council is an advisor, advocate, and serves as the community's voice in City government. The Food Council is a "hybrid structure... best connecting the city and the community into their rightful relationship – one of trust, benefit, and shared vision." When the Food Council was started, different models were explored – hybrid, city entity, etc. – but there was more value and energy in a co-owned model. The emerging Food Council also connected with existing community efforts and entities, such as the Local Food Resource Hubs Network. An 18-month work group process examined different cities and their efforts at City advisory committees [meetings and interviews]. Also, there was a lot of community involvement in Phase I and II that drove the development of a lot of these Homegrown Minneapolis and Food Council documents. However, there were no *clear operating instructions* on how the food council was going to run under this co-owned, hybrid model. It was a new idea. The principles of how the Food Council would operate are also in these documents. The community has always been kept in mind; part of the strategy has been to make compromises in running the council and that has

proved to be successful. It would be helpful to go back and evaluate who we are and what we want to be as a unit.

Q1: Have we established metrics for success? A: There is an evaluation section in the following document: Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council: Developing a City-community co-owned Council. Currently, we have the 2012 one-pager and the annual report presentation to the City Council's PSCRH Committee, but more in-depth evaluation can be conducted approximately every three years. Under the section entitled 'How We Work,' there are some bullet points that seem measurable. Involving the community and getting their feedback is really important for Food Council evaluation and it would be healthy to have that happen annually – like we did at the Open House event. This way, community members can be a part of the decision making process. The council has been successful in representing food systems; however, a persistent challenge is to be representative of the diversity in Minneapolis when it comes to the demographics of council members. This is a challenge for many City advisory groups. It can be improved via deeper outreach, but it continues to be a challenge. Because one of the Food Council priorities is to have a multicultural outreach strategy, ensuring diversity on the council can be a project for the Food Council as the current terms expire at the end of this year, 2013. Guest from CURA offered information about the Boards and Commission's Leadership Institute in the Twin Cities. Jane will connect with him in the future.

5. Discussion led by Vish Vasani about the Vision, Mission, and Roles of the Food Council: Data from the year 1 evaluation collected from community members, community partners, and food council members demonstrated a lack of clarity regarding the role/function of the food council members and of the food council itself as a unit. Similarly, there was a lack of understanding regarding the vision, mission, and goals of the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council. Research was done on other food councils nationwide and Vancouver; websites of many food councils displayed a clear vision and mission statement on the homepage of their website. This might be a good idea for the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council – individuals can speak to Homegrown Minneapolis as an initiative, but there is confusion when it comes to the Food Council. Also, the vision and mission vary for an initiative [Homegrown Minneapolis] versus an entity [Food Council]. To maintain the integrity of the historical documents developed for the council, ideas and language for vision and mission statements were drawn directly from the documents Cam and Julie referenced in the earlier discussion. General discussion around the vision and mission statement: healthy versus local food, or both; inclusion of 'right to food'; notion of celebrating food; advisory versus advocacy, or both, etc. Food council members who wanted to form a group to work on this document could sign up at the end of the meeting – signed up members include: Deborah Ramon, Rhys Williams, and Alison Rotel.

6. Discussion led by Kris Igo about Food Council member roles and 2013 projects: During the Executive Committee meeting, two paths for the Food Council were discussed: (1) the Advocacy piece = pushing the City to do good work; and (2) the Action piece = doing good work ourselves.

Group Activity: Think about our roles as food council members in the areas we do work, or in work that we as members are doing as a part of the Homegrown Minneapolis team. What are some words that capture the role(s) you can play? Think about your strengths, what you like, etc. In that same 'space,' think about what you would like to do as a Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council project.

Roles:

- Convener/Networker: bring people together [ex: nonprofits], regulations, people working on land access, urban/rural, farmers, farmers markets, financing, create space for convening to happen [ex: more community gatherings similar to the open house]
- Educator [formally and informally]: educate community on healthy eating, share expertise, bring information to the people we want to affect, facilitating conversations with community organizations, educating elected officials around food issues, educating individuals about different policies and regulations so they can have a better understanding, interpreting city-speak
- Collaborator: listening, rooted in community systems/groups, work with community groups to learn about their needs
- Connector : to people in the business work, connect with many efforts
- Engager: invite people to meetings and/or events, serve as a cheerleader, community organizer, create a feedback loop = listen to what people say and help them answer the “now what”
- Communicator
- Problem Solver/Troubleshooter: interpreter, ideation, define problems, policy and engagement work, policy revision [which can be its own role as well]
- Activist/Organizer/Instigator: go out in the community and “do good work,” go beyond listening and partner with community to help them take action as well
- Researcher
- Entrepreneur
- Strategizer: program development and planning, advocacy, proactive
- Fundraiser: finding resources
- Evaluator
- Implementer: can be inclusive of all other roles
- Facilitator

In summary, Food Council members possess a multitude of strengths. This conversation’s goal is to expand the definition of what a Food Council member *can do*.

List of potential 2013 projects [Criteria: (1) Can accomplish the majority of the project(s) in 2013; (2) priority for food council; (3) Project must have a convener = someone who will serve as the group ‘Lead’; and (4) SMART project = specific, measurable, actionable, realist, time-oriented]

- Staple Foods Ordinance work proposed by Kristen Klinger and Robin Garwood
- Food coop in N. Minneapolis
- Evaluation of the urban agriculture plan
- Establish selection process for incoming Food Council members [2014] that will help increase diversity on the council
- Increase EBT uptake at Farmers Markets in Minneapolis
- Chickens at urban farms
- Program for leasing land to urban farmers
- GMO bill: what can the Food Council contribute to help move it along
- Climate change issues and how it connects with food production – how can food policy worsen or mitigate climate change and how it can influence public health
- Legislative activities

- Develop an intentional ambassador role/project, which connects back to establishing a feedback loop
- Establish criteria for signing off on letters
- Establish criteria for writing letters of support for other organizations; create policy for formally endorsing outside group activities

Next steps:

Think about what role you could play and would want to play in the list projects. Think about what projects the group can advance with its collective skillset. Look for further instruction on how projects will be narrowed down to a workable list for discussion.

Food council members are encouraged to take on and participate in projects outside of this 'core' list of 2013 projects.

Administrative:

7. Mustafa took a motion to pass the meeting minutes from January 2013. Prior to the approval, one correction was made on page 1: "desserts" → "desert." Russ moved to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded by Eric and minutes were approved.

8. Discussed electronic voting on letters: Since many Food Council members encountered challenges with accessing Google Docs, Dropbox is not being explored.

9. Council members had been asked to vote on several letters electronically. Concerns were raised about submitting letters of support without the council developing criteria. In addition, a concern was raised about adding new language to a letter after members had come to consensus about the content of the letter. Criteria regarding letters of support will be developed by the Executive Committee and a recommendation will be brought back to the FC for discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.