

Massachusetts Food Policy Council Annual Meeting
December 9, 2011
Doyle Center, Leominster

In attendance:

Cheryl Bartlett, designee for Commissioner John Auerbach, MA Department of Public Health
Marion Browning, designee for Katie Millet, MA Department of Education
Frank Carlson, Carlson Orchards
Jeff Cole, MA Farmers Markets,
Manny Costa, Costa Fruit and Produce
Alex Rittershaus, designee for Representative Kimberly Ferguson
Representative Steve Kulik
John Lee, Allandale Farm
Frank Martinez Nocito, designee for Commissioner Daniel Curley, MA Department of Transitional Assistance
Alex Rittershaus, designee for Representative Kimberly Ferguson
Commissioner Scott Soares, MA Department of Agricultural Resources

Introductions and Welcome: The meeting was called to order at 9:40 AM by the Chair. After members introduced themselves, the order of the agenda was altered by unanimous consent and Commissioner Soares introduced Wayne Castonguay, Trustees of Reservation Statewide Agriculture director, who welcomed the group on behalf of the world's oldest land trust.

Mr. Castonguay stated that The Trustees of the Reservation has a mission to preserve special places for the public, including 106 locations across the Commonwealth that conserves over 50,000 acres. Agriculture is a newer focus, though it has been part of organization's objectives for many years. Nearly one-half of its properties have agriculture as a component including Appleton Farms in Ipswich which includes 1,000 acres and is the oldest operating farm in the US.

The Trustees of the Reservation's strategic plan includes actively engaging the public with agriculture and farming at the Trustees' properties so that they may better understand the significance of agriculture, especially for those in urban spaces. Goals of the Trustees of the Reservation include helping to support local food and agriculture and connecting people to conservation. A post meeting tour of the Doyle Center was offered.

1. Reading and approval of minutes

A motion was made by Jeff Cole and seconded by Representative Kulik to accept the minutes with the addition of public comments that occurred at the meeting if they were recorded by the recording secretary. Mr. Cole noted comments made by Representative Forry regarding access to ethnic produce. The recording secretary stated Representative Forry's comments were recorded and can be added accurately. Editorial corrections were made to the minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Reports of Officers

- a. Chair
 - Special Rules of Order and Adoption

Commissioner Soares reported that the bylaws were adopted at the last meeting but that the Council should adopt the Special Rules of Order presented at this meeting and which require separate acceptance. Representative Kulik moved to adopt the Special Rules of Order seconded by Cheryl Bartlett. Discussion included further defining SRO-1 by filling in the blanks of the third column of the table as follows:

Number of Representatives	Represented Organization	Organization
2	farmer associations	Farm Bureau New England Farmers Union NOFA MA Aquaculture Assn
1	organization engaged in farmland protection and conservation	MA Association of Land Trusts MA Association of Conservation Commissions
1	organization engaged in developing new farm businesses, urban and community supported agriculture, community gardening, immigrant and refugee farming or youth education through agriculture	Food Project Gardening the Community, Springfield Lutheran Social Services New Entry Sustainable Farming NESFI New Entry Sustainable Farming Nuestras Raices Square One, Springfield Worcester Regional Environmental Council
1	cooperative extension service at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst	UMASS Cooperative Extension
1	food distribution, processing and marketing interests	MA Buy Local Groups MA Specialty Foods Association New England Produce Council Northeast Organics PVGA Red Tomato Western MA Food Processing Center
1	school of nutrition or public health	Boston University Harvard School of Public Health Simmons Springfield College Tufts UMASS
1	community-based coalition or health care provider addressing obesity and chronic disease	MA Convergence Partnership MASS in Motion Mason Square Health Task Force MDPH Coalition for Chronic Disease North end Campus Coalition

		Partners for a Healthier Community Pilgrim
1	citizens in need of transitional assistance	MA Assn of Community Action Programs MA Law Reform Institute MA Refugees and Immigrants Coalition
1	anti-hunger organization	Project Bread Boston Food Bank and regional Food Banks

Jeff Cole moved to amend the Special Rules of Order 2 and 3, so that more than 15 minutes can be devoted to discussion by adding after the word “minutes” the following: “which may be extended according to the will of the Council”. Representative Kulik seconded the motion. Jeff Cole further moved to amend SRO – 4 after the word “minutes” by adding the following: “which may be extended according to the will of the Council,” which was seconded by Representative Kulik. Discussion on the amendments revolved around ensuring that in no way do we wish to require each speaker to talk for 15 minutes. The amendments to the SRO were unanimously adopted.

The amended motion passed unanimously.

- b. Vice Chair no report
- c. Secretary no report

3. Reports of Standing Committees

Commissioner Soares: sought unanimous consent, to take nominations from the floor for the election of officers based on the Provisios, as well as the identification of the nominating committee. Unanimous consent was given.

Commissioner Soares called for nominations from the floor for the three officer’s positions. Representative Kulik nominated Commissioner Soares for the Chair, which was seconded by Frank Carlson. Alex Rittershaus, nominated Representative Kulik for Vice Chair which was seconded by Cheryl Bartlett. Frank Carlson nominated Jeff Cole for Secretary, which was seconded by Manny Costa.

Commissioner Soares requested nominations for the Nominating Committee, of which Representative Kulik as Vice Chair, is the chair. Frank Martinez Nocito, Cheryl Bartlett, Frank Carlson and Manny Costa were nominated and appointed.

Commissioner Soares appointed the Bylaws Committee to include Jeff Cole, Representative Kulik and John Lee.

All nominations and appointments were approved unanimously.

- a. Bylaws Committee
- b. Nominating Committee

4. Reports of Special Committees none

- a. Adoption of Annual Report: The first annual report is due June 31, 2012.

5. Unfinished Business and General Orders

- Massachusetts Grocery Access Task Force Summary Recommendations

Commissioner Soares suggested that additional comments be added after the Advisory Committee is formed. Jeff Cole: The additions from Commissioner Soares are quite relevant. Representative Kulik made a motion that comments to the Task Force Summary Recommendations be tabled to the next meeting which was seconded by Marion Browning and unanimously passed.

- Matrix update/reminder

Commissioner Soares reminded Council members to add information to the Matrix for a comprehensive review of programs in relation to the legislative objectives and for the use as an appendix for the annual report.

6. New Business

7. Program

- Wayne Castonguay, Director of Agriculture Programs, Trustees of the Reservation

8. Good of the Order

a. Member Announcements

Since the bylaws identify the first Friday in March as the next meeting which coincides with the kick-off of Maple Month, Commissioner Soares proposed that the **next meeting be the second Friday in March**. Cheryl Bartlett made a motion to accept the recommendation which was seconded by Representative Kulik and unanimously passed.

Commissioner Soares suggested to the Council that the **New England Dairy Promotion Board be invited to the next meeting** to increase FPC awareness of their programs in relation to Farm to School and the new requirements regarding ala carte foods, the breakfast program and flavored milk. His suggestion was unanimously supported.

Commissioner Soares: Please note that **on December 14 there will be a Roundtable Discussion** with Chairman Jeffrey Sanchez, Chairman of the Joint Committee on Public Health, State Representative Smitty Pignatelli, students, school administrators, representatives from the Department of Education, Department of Public Health, town officials and various local stakeholders to talk about the new guidelines to improve nutrition for students. Please call Kerry Sullivan: 413-637-0631.

Cheryl Barlett: **The Governor will be cooking a healthy meal through Chop Chop magazine. This partnership will be celebrated at a special event on December 20th at 11am-12noon.** Governor Patrick will prepare the recipe from the first ChopChop flyer together with children and a number of special guests including Executive Office of Health and Human Services Secretary Judy Ann Bigby, Department of Public Health Commissioner John Auerbach, Dept of Agriculture Resources Commissioner Scott

Soares, and ChopChop Editor, Sally Sampson. The event will be held at Community Services at 18 Marbury Terrace, Jamaica Plain: <http://www.servings.org/about/directions.cfm> For information: Eileen Sullivan at Eileen.M.Sullivan@state.ma.us.

Cheryl Bartlett: We are kicking off our Community Transformation Grants – anti obesity, smoking and active and health living with multiple teams.

b. Member Observations or points of discussion relevant to the work of the Council

Representative Kulik: Is there information available about the **Healthy Incentives Program**? Frank Martinez Nocito: The program was launched on November 1 to 7,500 SNAP participants, but there is no data yet. Some data will be available at the end of the winter. It's been well received in the community and a good number of retailers and 13 farmers' markets. Commissioner Soares: Our first annual report will be due in July; will there be data prior to that? Frank Martinez Nocito: There will be some but the pilot will be reported in September 2013. Jeff Cole: There was a very low refusal rate on the part of potential participants, which was an initial concern. Frank Martinez Nocito: Out of the 5,000 so far, ten didn't or could not participate. They have an option within their benefit period to come back, especially if they have interest based on positive word of mouth.

Jeff Cole mentioned that **Agriculture Day at the State House is April 3**, a good opportunity for the FPC to present themselves as a cohesive group and to commune with the farming community.

Representative Kulik: Would there be room for the group to have a table? Jeff Cole: I will make sure that there will be room but the table rental cost is \$40. Representative Kulik volunteered to pay the \$40 fee. Frank moved and Cheryl seconded a motion to have the FPC represented at Agriculture Day with a table, which was passed unanimously.

c. Public Access

Several members of the public suggested that the list of groups to be solicited for nominations for members of the advisory committee be expanded. Betsy Johnson suggested that the MA Food Policy Alliance, with whom she is affiliated, be able to add candidates, and Melissa Hoffer, VP of the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF), suggested that CLF also be added. Both felt that the Council should expand the Advisory Committee to include more members and to include their respective groups. The Commissioner and other members of the Council suggested ways that their suggestions could be considered, not the least of which would be to contact members of the Nominating Committee.

Sheila Lumi, Fitchburg Farmers Market Association and Growing Paces Garden Project was recognized by Commissioner Soares. She is coordinating a new winter farmers market at the art museum and a new CSA for low income individuals, among other initiatives such as using SNAP benefits at CSAs. Betsy Johnson: The Food Project in Boston has demonstrated that SNAP benefits can be used for CSAs. Frank Martinez Nocito: We have also explored this but have had challenges. Jeff Cole suggested that USDA FNS be consulted for advice.

Cheryl Bartlett: MA is one of three states to be awarded a Childhood Obesity Research Grant for Fitchburg and New Bedford for children ages 2 – 12 to try to address obesity in a comprehensive way. Commissioner Soares: The FPC should document those components in the matrix as related to the FPC objectives such as increasing produce consumption.

Jeff Cole: I am getting calls about farmers' markets in distress. We've been in a period of extreme growth, and more people are willing to shop but not as much as the markets have expanded. Increasing the number of people who buy local food is important. Frank Carlson: There may be oversaturation of farmers' market in some areas. The same issues are important to farm to school. Manny Costa: Verification of local produce is important. Shelia Lumi, Fitchburg: Our markets are designed for a specific audience and target population. It's a constant job to address the needs of the community and make sure that the market fits those needs – so education is critical.

A motion to **adjourn** was made by Marion Browning, seconded by Frank Carlson and unanimously passed at 11:25 PM.