

Massachusetts Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Friday, June 7, 2013 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM
Worcester Union Train Station, Union Hall, CMRPC

In attendance:

Cynthia Taft Beryl, MA Department of Public Health
Kerry Bowie, Department of Environmental Protection
Frank Carlson, Carlson Orchards
Jeff Cole, Federation of MA Farmers Markets
Michael Hunter, Undersecretary, MA Dept. of Housing and Economic Development
Amanda Kinchla, UMASS Extension
Kate Millet, Department of Education
Vivian Morris, MA Public Health Association
Bonita Oehlke, MA Department of Agricultural Resources
Greg Watson, Commissioner, MA Department of Agricultural Resources

The meeting was called to order at 9:50 by Commissioner Watson.

Commissioner Watson welcomed everyone and introduced Vivian Morris, new to the Food Policy Council, and replacing Valerie Basset.

Commissioner Watson presented the report from the Chair:

A report from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (State Indicator Report by state) on fruits and vegetable tied together with locally grown food and prevention of chronic disease has been released and is available on MDAR's website.

The Boston Redevelopment Authority kicked off article 89: zoning regulations for ground and rooftop agriculture this past week. There are a series of public meetings relating to the topic, the result of a multi-year process. He noted the interest in such forms of production as well as the expanding interest by the private sector.

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) topic was moved from new Business to Chair Report: MDAR will share agency and Northeast regional comments so that Food Policy Council members will be better able to respond during the comment period which ends September 16, 2013 as well as to promote this opportunity to submit comments to partner organizations. As now drafted the proposed FSMA regulations include adverse economic effects to regional food systems and small - medium sized farms. In response, tree fruit growers are lobbying to be exempt. An FDA hearing is expected to be held in New England. It was suggested that the FPC submit a comment letter along with any organizations and Executive Offices that are able to do so. The Chair's report concluded.

A quorum was confirmed and a motion was made by Jeff Cole and seconded by Frank Carlson to accept the minutes of the March 1, 2013 meeting.

Jeff Cole noted the excellent job done by Amanda Kinchla and thanked her for stepping in.

The motion passed on unanimous voice vote.

Representative Kulik sent an update on the pending budget legislation through Commissioner Watson. He is working on the \$100,000 appropriation for the strategic plan in the final budget, as well as language that would enable the FPC to execute the strategic plan and for MDAR to administer public and private funds for this purpose.

Report of the Advisory Committee:

Christa Drew reviewed the draft RFR for a facilitating entity for a statewide strategic food systems plan. She recapped the process to date: The RFR was initially drafted by potential funders, reviewed and updated on 5/15/13 by the Advisory committee with a quorum, provided to MDAR to add procurement language and reviewed again at the 6/7/13 meeting prior to the FPC meeting. The overall intent is to identify a facilitating entity who would work at the direction of the FPC. The RFR posting date would be August 1, 2013, and posted on compass. Submission deadline would be September 1.

A question was raised if this was adequate timing and a suggestion made that the start date be stated as one month after the close of submissions.

Comments generated by consensus about the draft RFR:

One year is not enough time. The contract duration should be changed to 18 months with a goal for work to be completed by March 31, 2015 and presented in draft to the FPC and the new Governor. Suggestion from Jeff Cole to make it 18 months from signatory date.

Delete Phase III language as it is not covered by the funding. The \$350,000 would be for 1st two phases.

Question: Who is responsible for the \$250,000.00 difference between anticipated state funds of \$100,000.00 and this amount? Answer: This remains to be determined.

Remove the last bulletin in Phase II.

The second to last bullet of phase 2 be modified to include: to present the plan with recommendations for implementation to the MA FPC for its approval.

Total number of pages for submission to be increased to 10 pages.

Include indirect cost maximum.

Remove GIS mapping requirement. A discussion about GIS mapping followed. **Consensus was to keep mapping in the RFR, that must be compatible with public and state agency utilization.**

Other Discussion:

Language should be for a multiyear project with process for extension or termination if needed, considering that it will span two fiscal year cycles.

Report should include a dissemination plan and concept of engagement with Governor's Office.

Noted that citizen engagement would engender push to action and will be critical, though the FPC may be able to foster adoption of some specific recommendations.

Evaluation criteria - Personnel (including those in subcontractors) should be named. Process should reflect wide representation, and have public and private balance and implementation strategy should be designed to transcend administrations and be a continuously evolving and responsive process.

A score sheet and ranking system should be generated and ensure objectivity and complete transparency.

Other concepts: Focus on community engagement for ownership beyond this body, broad citizen engagement

Engage 52 MA in Motion communities

Initiate plans with administration

Confidence in the general draft and its concepts and Advisory Committee recommendations was adopted by consensus.

A motion to create a subcommittee to incorporate all the comments and revisions and to finalize the RFR for release was made by Kerry Bowie and seconded by Amanda Kinchla. The motion passed on unanimous voice vote. Katie Millet, Commissioner Watson, Jeff Cole and a legislative representative to be named were appointed to the subcommittee by consensus.

A motion was made by Jeff Cole that the FPC empower MDAR as the procuring agency to convene a proposal evaluation committee, for the purpose of evaluating and making a decision for a facilitation entity, composed of up to 9 representatives who represent the diversity of the state culturally, economically, and geographically and selected to include: philanthropy (1 member), Food Policy Council (3 members), Advisory Committee (2 members), MDAR legal staff (1 member), members of stakeholder community, preferably with grant review experience (2 members). Seconded by Amanda Kinchla. The motion passed on unanimous voice vote.

Katie Millet asked that the work of the FPC Advisory Committee be formally recognized for their very important contributions throughout this process.

Unfinished business: Expanding FPC Advisory Committee to consider adding two positions. Positions can be evaluated in terms of what has the most impact for the strategic plan. Suggestions included: climate change and disaster planning, restaurants, processors, wholesale supermarkets, fisheries, urban agriculture, and other areas where there may be gaps.

Significant discussion ensued. The question was raised as to what are current gaps. It was suggested to look at and account for transitions over time. It was noted that the FPC can and the Advisory Committee can invite groups or individuals to present and be otherwise provide input at all of its meetings. Though this process is not as formal as being an Advisory Committee member, it should serve

the desire to fill gaps. In addition, groups can and should also request to be added to the agenda of meetings.

By consensus it was concluded that this discussion will continue at the next meeting, with a list of categories to consider. Applicants can be solicited or self nominated.

Program: James Arena-DeRosa - Northeast Regional Administrator, USDA - Food and Nutrition Service provided a PowerPoint and presentation about the status and impact of the FNS programs in Massachusetts and the region.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 13 9:30 – 12:30 Union Hall, Worcester Union Train Station

A motion to adjourn was made by Frank Carlson and seconded by Katie Millet at 12:15 PM. The motion passed on unanimous voice vote.