

## Minutes

Massachusetts Food Policy Council

Friday, September 5, 2014, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Worcester Union Train Station, CMRPC's Union Hall, Worcester

In attendance:

Jeff Cole, Federation of MA Farmers Markets

Manny Costa, Costa Produce

Suzanne Condon, MA Depart. of Public Health for Commissioner Bartlett

Steve Kulik, State Representative

John Lee, Allandale Farm

Robert Leshin, DOE Asst. Director, Office for Nutrition, Health and Safety Programs

Vivien Morris, Boston Public Health Commission (was promoted and has a new title)

Bonita Oehlke, MA Depart. of Agricultural Resources, recorded the minutes.

Beth Riportella, DEP Deputy Chief of Staff

Rosemary Scrivens, MOBD Regional Director of Central Mass

Greg Watson, Commissioner, MA Depart. of Agricultural Resources

The meeting began at 9:45 AM. FPC members and those in attendance introduced themselves.

Commissioner Watson shared an overview of the Boston Public Market, with a plan to have Liz Morningstar provide a detailed update at a future Food Policy meeting.

Minutes: A motion was made to approve the minutes by Vivian Morris, seconded by Suzanne Condon. The motion passed on unanimous voice vote.

Program: Regional Food systems planning as a foundation for the MA food systems planning

NE regional perspective: NE Food Vision, Brian Donahue, PhD, Brandeis, shared A New England Food Vision. The study is by multiple authors, and is not reflective of any specific organization <http://www.foodsolutionsne.org/new-england-food-vision>. Brian noted 5% of land is in agriculture and 80% of the total land area is forested. The plan requires the North East to connect with agriculture in other parts of the country, finds we cannot get to the USDA recommendations for fish consumption, nor did it address local food pricing structures.

MA regional perspective: SE MA Food System Assessment: by Rosa DeCosta, Coordinator, SE Mass Food Security Network and Sarah Kelley, Sr. Program Officer, Island Foundation. They emphasize this is an assessment not a plan. Key findings are: The idea of a food system is not in the public eye as of yet, farmers markets get most of the publicity, food insecurity, distribution and waste go unnoticed, and increased demand for local food from the more affluent will only partially solve food system issues.

<http://semaponline.org/se-mass-food-security-network-releases-its-local-food-system-assessment/>

Comments: Public health issues are often described as a barrier. Some regulations are not consistently implemented which needs to be addressed. In addition to fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen and canned have a similar nutrition profile and a lower price point, although the perception of quality for frozen isn't the same as fresh. Production and processing development is important.

MA Statewide Food Systems Planning: MAPC update, Julie Conroy, Sr. Environmental Planner

Most tasks on the project startup list are complete including some general data analysis on food system trends that will be shared at the September 10th Advisory Group meeting. The next priority is looking at key policy and planning issues. Two regional workshop listening sessions have been planned, one in New Bedford and the other in Lawrence. Central and western MA sessions are on the drawing board. These sessions will provide an opportunity to learn about some of the issues, opportunities and legislative issues in the stakeholder communities. Leading questions are being developed with the help of the Advisor Group. Regional issues will be included.

MAPC has a subcontract to help to engage groups that are typically not at the table.

UMASS Medical has offered to provide assistance on clinical information related to health. MA Audubon re: land management, and Tufts.

Commissioner Watson described efforts with MDAR and the UMASS dining facility, Amherst. Hampshire Dining Commons has a commitment to Buy Local, now on the order of 30% and not just produce. It is the largest college feeding program in the US.

Review and approval of Work Group Leads and the Executive Committee:

The Massachusetts Food System Plan Planning Team is interested in appointing an Executive Committee, which will liaise between the Project Advisor group and the Working Groups. This Executive Committee will be comprised of knowledgeable Project Advisors who have expressed interest in deeper involvement in the Massachusetts Food System Plan.

The list below identifies the individuals we propose to lead our Working Groups and/or to serve on the Executive Committee, and as such will be engaged in the broader project work and in facilitating productive conversations related to one sector of the food system.

Cris Coffin American Farmland Trust Production WG Co-lead / EC

Nico Lustig WMA Food Processing Center Processing WG Lead / EC

Jeff Cole Fed of Mass. Farmers Markets Wholesale/Retail Dist. WG Lead / EC

Jessica del Rosario Mass Convergence Food Access/Hunger WG Lead / EC

Lorenzo Macaluso Center For Eco-Technology Inputs, Waste, Nutrient WG Co-Lead / EC

Jennifer Rushlow Conservation Law Foundation Inputs, Waste, Nutrient WG Co-Lead / EC

Winton Pitcoff Maple Growers Association Interdisciplinary (Education/Policy) Advisor / EC

Ruth Goldman Merck Family Foundation Urban Agriculture WG Lead

Brad Mitchell Mass Farm Bureau Production WG Co-lead

\*WG = Working Group, EC = Advisor Executive Committee

As indicated, some Committee members will play the dual role of Project Advisor and Working Group Lead. It should also be noted that MAPC has reserved a modest amount of funding to offer stipends to each Lead or Committee member (\$1,500), to cover travel and other expenses.

Commissioner Watson asked for a motion to approve the MA Food System Plan Executive Committee and Working Group Leads. The motion was made by Rep Kulik and seconded by Vivien Morris.

Discussion: How do we bring regulators into the discussions? MAPC is working with the Executive Advisor Group and leads on this and other cross cutting topic areas such as public health.

Motion Passed on unanimous voice vote. Recommended to put Executive Advisor Group and Working Group leads on the website.

#### Advisory Committee

Legislative updates will be brought forth at the December FPC meeting, however Rep Steve Kulik shared that informal sessions are in progress. He will put together a comprehensive list of food and agriculture bills considered and why they did or didn't pass, including concerns and objectives. Though certain members of the FPC are not able to take a position on legislation, it is the FPC's job to be informed and a forum for providing information. Note: Bills under review can be discussed by the FPC. He asked for those in attendance to share ideas at the December meeting about legislation that legislators might consider to file next session, including research or background advanced in other states. The filing deadline is the third week of January. The December FPC would be a good forum to discuss these issues.

Representative Kulik noted his pleasure that Representative Paul Schmid was in attendance at the FPC meeting. They share a mutual interest in food and agriculture legislation. Towards the end of the formal sessions in July, Representative Schmid asked if he might establish an agricultural caucus. There are many caucuses, but agriculture is glaringly missing. The timing may be good since there are many issues that resolve around food and agriculture. A few legislators have floated the idea of an omnibus farm and

food bill to keep it in one budget so there would be a vehicle for all bodies of food and agriculture legislation.

#### Member Announcements

The MA in Motion program will be continued with awards in 50 communities with a over a million dollars for grants in the \$40-60,000 range. Representative Paul Schmid commented that the program has been so important to Fall River, bringing everyone together for a common good.

On November 6, there will be a gathering of MA food policy councils, organized by the Food Policy Council Alliance.

Representative Steve Kulik and Representative Paul Schmid were recognized for the work they accomplished in the legislature including the bond bill and tax credit that are both important for MA agriculture, by the FPC and those in attendance.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 on a motion by Suzanne Condon and seconded by Vivian Morris. The motion passed on unanimous voice vote.