

Minutes

MA Food Policy Council meeting

Friday, January 28, 2022, 9:30 – 11:30 am

In attendance:

Douglas Botelho, office of Representative Donahue

Jared Freedman, office of Senator Comerford

Bill Fredericks, Office of Senator Fattman

Representative Kane

Torry Stamm Katsiroubas, Distribution

Commissioner Kershaw, DTA

Amanda Kinchla, Food Safety

John Lee, Farmer

Commissioner Lebeaux, DAR

Rob Leshin, ESE

Mackenzie May, Direct to consumer

Lea Susan Ojamaa, DPH

Caro Roszell, Healthy Soils

Danah Tench, MassDEP

Ayn Yeagle, Community Health

John Waite, Food Processing

Remote participation via Zoom was coordinated by MassDEP.

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 AM by Council Chair Commissioner Lebeaux. A vote to accept an updated version of the September minutes and the November minutes was made by Representative Kane, seconded by John Waite, and passed unanimously by voice vote: Douglas Botelho, Jared Freedman, Bill Fredericks, Representative Kane, Torry Stamm Katsiroubas, Commissioner Kershaw, Amanda Kinchla, John Lee, Commissioner Lebeaux, Rob Leshin, Mackenzie May abstain, Lea Susan Ojamaa, Caro Roszell (abstain), Danah Tench, Ayn Yeagle (abstain), John Waite.

MA Legislature's Food Caucus update

Representative Kane shared an update on earmarks for \$44.8M of ARPA funds. The FSIG program is making a difference for food processors and the ag and seafood sector. The Caucus met with food banks, the MA Food Association, the MA Restaurant Association, and the MA Food System Collaborative about state labor issues. They also discussed getting food to consumers through farmers markets, grocery stores, and supermarkets, and looking to other states for examples to increase reliance on the local food system rather than the national food system.

Committees will report out legislation soon. The house and senate will move for budget hearings this spring. The Caucus will be very focused on key food system issues, and very united in “inside sales” advocacy. Food system issues and challenges are a priority. Question: Public health funding was cut considerably, maybe relating to ARPA funds, but are there any plans to integrate any of those funds that were cut back in? Answer: A priority is to support the local public health system. There will be robust discussions to get those line items back. Rep Kane introduced her new staff, Sophia Flioni.

Officers Reports

Chair and Commissioner John Lebeaux, introductions:

- Rebecca Mulrean, EEA Director of Food System Resiliency
- Torry Katsiroubas Stamm, new Council member representing distribution
- Ayn Yeagle, new Council member representing public health
- Caro Roszell, new Council member representing healthy soils

DPH will have a new designee, Jessica Del Rosario. He thanked Lea Susan Ojamaa, Deputy Director, Bureau of Community Health and Prevention, for her important voice and contributions to the Council. She continues to be active at DPH.

Since the Commonwealth's administration will not seek reappointment, Commissioner Lebeaux will not be able to complete his two-year term as Council chair.

A motion was made to approve the **Annual Report** by John Lee, seconded by Representative Kane and passed via voice vote: Douglas Botelho, Jared Freedman, Bill Fredericks, Representative Kane, Torry Stamm Katsiroubas, Commissioner Kershaw, Amanda Kinchla, John Lee, Commissioner Lebeaux, Rob Leshin, Mackenzie May, Lea Susan Ojamaa, Caro Roszell, Danah Tench, Ayn Yeagle, John Waite.

At the November meeting, quorum was not maintained through the meeting. Re-votes were required on three motions:

1. A motion to accept the slate of officers: Chair & Commissioner Lebeaux; Vice Chair, Mackenzie May; Secretary, Danah Tench: was made by Representative Kane, seconded by John Waite, and passed via voice vote: Douglas Botelho, Jared Freedman, Bill Fredericks, Representative Kane, Torry Stamm Katsiroubas, Commissioner Kershaw, Amanda Kinchla, John Lee, Commissioner Lebeaux, Rob Leshin, Mackenzie May, Lea Susan Ojamaa, Caro Roszell, Danah Tench, Ayn Yeagle, John Waite.
2. A motion to accept the Nominating Committee candidates: John Waite, Danah Tench, Rob Leshin, Amanda Kinchla, Mackenzie May was made by Representative Kane, seconded by John Lee and passed via voice vote: Douglas Botelho, Jared Freedman, Bill Fredericks, Representative Kane, Torry Stamm Katsiroubas, Commissioner Kershaw, Amanda Kinchla, John Lee, Commissioner Lebeaux, Rob Leshin, Mackenzie May, Lea Susan Ojamaa, Caro Roszell, Danah Tench, Ayn Yeagle, John Waite.
3. A motion to allow the Advisory Committee candidate recommendations to move from the November annual meeting to the January meeting was made by Representative Kane, seconded by John Waite, and passed via voice vote: Douglas Botelho, Jared Freedman, Bill Fredericks, Representative Kane, Torry Stamm Katsiroubas, Commissioner Kershaw, Amanda Kinchla, John Lee, Commissioner Lebeaux, Rob Leshin, Mackenzie May, Lea Susan Ojamaa, Caro Roszell, Danah Tench, Ayn Yeagle, John Waite.

Bylaws, Council, and Structure Committee

Vice Chair Waite:

- Advisory committee nomination slate:

Lisa McKeag, Educator, UMass Extension;
Theresa Cohen, Owner, Oxford Farm;
Mohammed Hannan, Organic Farmer, owner Hannan Healthy Foods Farm;
Miranda Jennings, Heal Winchendon;
Danielle Collins, Wakefield Public Schools, School Nutrition Director;
John Wang, Deputy Director, The Food Project, Lowell;
Jorge Marzuca Rosas, Manager, Whitemarz Farm;
Grace Sliwoski, Director, Regional Environmental Council;
Andy Varela, Maitland Mountain Farm;
Katelyn Parsons, Head of Government Affairs, MA Farm Bureau;
Patricia Spence, The Urban Farming Institute of Boston;
Jessy Gill, Program and Policy Director, World Farmers.

The Advisory committee candidates were shared, with a focus on climate change and racial justice as it affects the food system. Stipends for this committee are being explored. A motion to accept the slate of candidates was made by John Lee, seconded by Representative Kane, and passed via voice vote: Douglas Botelho, Jared Freedman, Bill Fredericks, Representative Kane, Torry Stamm Katsiroubas, Commissioner Kershaw, Amanda Kinchla, John Lee, Commissioner Lebeaux, Rob Leshin, Mackenzie May, Lea Susan Ojamaa, Caro Roszell, Danah Tench, John Waite, Ayn Yeagle abstain.

- Advisory Committee liaison from the MA Food Policy Council. Advisory Committee liaisons include Danah Tench and Ayn Yeagle. Commissioner Lebeaux, as Council chair, made these appointments. John Lee offered to help.

Program

- **Supply chain disruptions and effects on Massachusetts grocers and food manufacturers, Brian Houghton, Senior Vice President, Government Affairs and Communications, MA Food Association**

Supermarkets remain under stress with many categories such as beef with high prices, shortages including cardboard and certain items such as chicken tenders, higher delivery costs due to higher energy costs and driver shortages due to the pandemic, and higher swipe fee costs for retailers since use of electronic payments have increased. Winter weather slows down trucks coming from other parts of the country. Even climate change has an effect since more land is needed to feed livestock to bring them to market. Some grocery items are in short supply, including wine and spirits since it's difficult to source glass. Demand for ingredients for home cooking continues. Manufacturers are increasing their prices due to increased ingredient costs. Hopefully we're at the peak of this disruption and will soon be getting back to normal.

Question: Have there been an increase in sourcing of MA products? We're promoting the MA Grown Exchange. If gaps can be filled locally, it's a win/win. Question: The late December legislative changes to animal welfare standards for the egg industry resulted in worry about products shortages and higher prices for a high-demand product. What were the impacts? Answer: The regulations to put the law into effect came out last August, allowing the industry only a few months to come into compliance. Legislation allowed a transition time for the industry to understand how to comply in the absence of clear directions. Retailers didn't know what to do and were recalling all eggs except those designated as cage free. The supply chain has been adjusting over the last few weeks. Massachusetts is a net egg

importer, with some six million eggs consumed daily in the Commonwealth. On the WIC list of most purchased foods, eggs are #3.

Comment: Identifying how local can be supported is critical. Response: Some direct market ag businesses such as farmstands have had increased in their business. The FSIG is a tool to build local supply in an efficient way. Question: Are there educational materials on local purchasing, to raise public awareness and advocacy on the complexities of the food supply chain? Answer: The MFA visual will be shared with Council members.

- **The Solid Waste Master Plan and MassDEP's Updated Organics Action Plan, John Fischer, Deputy Division Director, Solid Waste, MassDEP**

Results were highlighted and new goals and objectives.

MA Food Policy Council member updates: Council members share priority projects, topics, and issues relevant to their work, the Council, and the MA Local Food Action Plan

Danah Tench unveiled MassDEP's new Massachusetts Gap Energy Grant Program, "Bringing Energy and Resiliency Results to the Water Sector", a partnership with The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, and Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. Danah explained how this grant was expanding from the water sector to funding small business and nonprofit food and agricultural distribution and processing facilities. Questions were asked about eligibility, and which inquires go to MDAR versus MassDEP.

Announcements

February 15, 16, Farmland plan listening sessions

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScXZdpPS0TU2Mxv68t5TLILNcyWU_DwSLdywklubEv-sollyw/viewform

February 23, 1 PM, End Markets for Finished Compost Webinar

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8245067692714994704>

March 11, 2022, MA Food Policy Council meeting

Public Comment

Adjournment: A motion was made to adjourn at 11:21 by John Waite, seconded by Danah Tench and passed via voice vote: Douglas Botelho, Jared Freedman, Bill Fredericks, Representative Kane, Torry Stamm Katsiroubas, Amanda Kinchla, John Lee, Commissioner Lebeaux, Rob Leshin, Mackenzie May, Lea Susan Ojamaa, Caro Roszell, Danah Tench, Ayn Yeagle, John Waite.

On March 10, 2020, Governor Baker, acting pursuant to the power provided by Chapter 639 of the Acts of 1950 and Section 2A of Chapter 17 of the Massachusetts General Laws, declared a State of Emergency due to the outbreak of the 2019 coronavirus ("COVID-19"). In accordance with the State of Emergency, the Massachusetts Food Policy Council ("MFPC") meetings are being conducted through virtual means to allow real-time public access.