

## **Minutes: Massachusetts Food Policy Council Meeting**

Tuesday, March 3, 2015 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Worcester Union Train Station, Union Hall, CMRPC

### **In attendance:**

Kerry Bowie, MA Dept. of Environmental Protection

Jeff Cole, Federation of MA Farmers Markets

Suzanne Condon, MA Dept. of Public Health

Representative Kimberly Ferguson

Representative Steve Kulik

John Lebeaux, Commissioner, MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources

John Lee, Allandale Farm

Frank Martinez Nocito, MA Dept. of Transitional Assistance

Vivian Morris, Boston Public Health Commission

Rosemary Scrivens, MOBD Regional Director of Central Mass

Jared Valanzola, Chief of staff, Senator Robert Hedlund

John Waite, Western MA Food Processing Center (not yet sworn in)

Meeting notes recorded by Bonita Oehlke, MA Dept. of Ag Resources.

**Reading and approval of minutes:** The meeting began at 9:56 by Jeff Cole, Secretary, with introductions. Vivian Morris was asked to take notes while Jeff was acting as Chair. A motion to approve the December 5, 2014 minutes was made by John Lee and seconded by Frank Martinez Nocito. The motion passed unanimously on voice vote with an editorial correction made to clarify access to food versus access to fresh food. A motion to accept the September 11 minutes was made by John Lee and seconded by Rosemary Scrivens, and passed unanimously.

**Reports of Officers:** FPC Secretary asked for nominations for Chair. **A motion was made by Frank Martinez Nocito and seconded by John Lee for Commissioner Lebeaux as Chair. Commissioner Lebeaux shared his background. The motion passed unanimously.** The meeting was turned over to FPC chair Lebeaux.

### **Unfinished Business**

**Adoption of Food Systems planning description:** The description was presented by Marc Draisen, MAPC, Executive Director, along with a background on the document and drafting effort. The document was vetted through the FPC Advisory Committee, and then went to the FPC for debate and discussion, which concluded with final input/ comment via Bcc.

**A motion to adopt the presented description was made by Jeff Cole and seconded by Kerry Bowie, and passed unanimously.**

Marc Draisen introduced Winton Pitcoff as the new project lead facilitator for Phase II of the project.

### **New Business**

A legislative update including a possible Agriculture Caucus was presented and discussed by Representative Kulik. Ag Day is March 31. MA Farm Bureau will have a white paper with a focus on top

priorities. Rep acknowledged that Ag Day at the Statehouse is very effective. The FPC will have a table at the event to be able to discuss the food systems planning.

**Food Systems planning status report.** Winton Pitcoff described the Working Groups, including the topic areas and lead personnel, objectives and the process for the Working Groups and communication among the Working Groups. He also described the timeline and thorough review process that will take place. The website: [www.mafoodplan.org](http://www.mafoodplan.org) provides more details. Winton is available to the FPC to address any comments.

MAPC will conduct outreach for collaboration to support topics that are challenging to agencies, and do not have time to join the Working Groups. FPC members were challenged to be involved in the Working Groups.

The contents of the chapters of the food plan were reviewed, as well as the timeline for review. The public and all parties will have access to the review process.

The Berkshire Grown listening session was very successful. Public engagement continues.

A question was asked about the New England perspective in regards to the plan. MAPC is in regular contact with other state counterparts. MAPC did a comprehensive literature review including regional work. Many Working Groups are looking from a regional perspective.

A goal of healthy access in the plan is important.

Working Group leads in attendance provided a brief description of their activity including the Land Use, Distribution, Production, Urban Ag and Food Access.

Rosemary Scrivens: Food Hub event was held recently in Worcester, with a focus on economic development. The March 16th event at Old Sturbridge Village focused on making connections between food producers and users with restaurants, manufacturers and wholesalers.

Food safety and food safety education with food business staff: Issues of seasonality of employment, and a need for consolidated clear information about food safety were raised. Some regulations aren't easily read by non-English speakers. There is a need for an inventory of co-packers and their capacity. Business financing is always an issue, as well a facility upgrades. Issues were noted re: branding. MA Grown and Fresher has been around for 20+ years, yet the Boston Globe had an article on how to cook a Vermont meal.

Food processing group reports storage, distribution and slaughter is a large element of their discussions.

### **Member Announcements**

Suzanne Condon shared an example of 3 state agencies collaborating related to the closure of oyster beds for public health issues. Over 12 - 18 months, the interagency collaboration developed a plan that addressed relevant issues of all agencies, which was unprecedented.

Frank Martinez Nocito shared an example of agency collaboration between MDAR, DTA and DPH with good outcomes relating to the Health Incentives Pilot and the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives grant for which the state submitted a successful application.

The Federation of MA Farmers Market and NESFI have reached the number needed for an ag plate. It has taken 7 years to get to this point - a significant achievement!

MA Maple Producers Association Maple Kick off, March 6, Fitchburg 11 AM

MA Urban Ag Conference, March 28, Worcester

Just Food: Harvard Food Justice Forum, March 28, 29

Ag Day at the State House, March 31

Farm to Institution Summit, April 7 – 9, Amherst (New England Wide)

Food Solutions New England regional summit, June 11 – 12, Boston

### **Public Access**

A recommendation was made to include the Ag Schools, college students and 4Hers in the Food Systems Planning Process.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Rep Kulik and seconded by John Lee at 11:15 AM. The vote was unanimously passed.