

Draft MINUTES:

Friday, September 20 meeting, 9:30 – 12:30 PM meeting

MA Technology Collaborative, Weiss Conference Center, 75 North Drive, Westborough, MA 01581

In attendance:

Jeff Cole
Denise Courtney, EOESE
Representative Daniel M. Donahue
Billy Fredericks, Senator Fattman's office
Dr. Anna Goldenheim
Amanda Kinchla
Commissioner John Lebeaux
John Lee
Representative Hannah Kane
Commissioner McCue
Lea Susan Ojamaa, DPH
Danah Tench, DEP
John Waite
Sam Wong

The meeting was called to order at 9:52 AM by Commissioner and chair John Lebeaux. Introductions of the Council and attendees were made.

Acceptance of Minutes: Editorial comments were shared by John Lee. A motion to accept the minutes was made by John Lee, seconded by John Waite and passed unanimously.

Officers Reports

Commissioner Lebeaux: MDAR celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Big E! On a somber note, MDAR has worked closely with DPH re: EEE. It's been a great collaborative effort with DPH, local boards of health and other partners to address this public health issue though makes for long hours for MDAR staff. Commissioner Lebeaux shared congratulations to Dr. Anna Goldenheim on the recent birth of her daughter. We're working on a full slate of 2020 meetings dates, stay tuned. Typically, we have a local FPC on the agenda but doesn't this time due to scheduling conflicts.

Despite the Big E and EEE, we're maintaining as best our normal business functions. A special event at the Coastal Food Shed in New Bedford yesterday celebrated their mobile market in a beautiful redeveloped part of the community with a public housing component. There were broad support and 15 – 20 growers that were engaged. MDAR is a member of Food Export, a USDA cooperator that will support my participation at one of the largest food shows in the world called ANUGA in Germany. I'll look forward to sharing a report at the next meeting.

John Waite: It's important to acknowledge all the young people rallying for food and climate change. Local food processing is alive and well and taking place all over the state! The Boston Local Food Festival last Sunday was a great event for with a focus on small and medium sized food businesses.

Council member updates

Commissioner McCue. The MA Food Caucus offered a masterful letter for changes, with input from DTA, on the proposed rule changes for SNAP and the Caucus moved it forward. Potential impact in MA is loss of 100K clients. There is an opportunity for comments, due next Monday.

Danah Tench: MASS DEP is putting out our solid waste master plan and soliciting comments.

Denise Courtney: The Department of Education is coordinating with USDA for 2020 Farm to School Census. USDA is reaching out to each school to ask for data and info for local food purchasing and practices. There will be new data on how local schools are using local food. In other news, we have a new Farm to School and fresh fruit and veggie specialist on staff who will focus on local purchased and gardening.

Representative Donahue: Thank you to Commissioner McCue for working with the Food Caucus yesterday which had a very large turnout. To provide support for Hunger Action month and food access, trainings are being offered at the state house.

John Lee: The Massachusetts Aquaculture Association raised \$40,000 for a program to focus on industry outreach and web based education.

Program

- Summary Evaluation of the Healthy Incentives Program: An Analysis of the State of Massachusetts's Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Grant Program, www.jsi.com/HIP, Tammy Calise, Sr. Researcher, JSI Note: food access is highly complicated and is not just about distance to food/healthy food. The local economic impact is wide spread with 53% of municipalities having HIP sales.

Questions/comments: (Only 9 % of SNAP households are participating) At this point there isn't an economic value of the state's resources devoted to this program. Other sectors can have benefit by helping to fund the bill. **Q:** How is it that there are fewer supermarkets in MA than any other state? **A:** It's based on the data, though it is surprising. Increasing access through many different venues is important. It's an area that is an opportunity for a broader sense of purpose. In some cases, smaller stores don't have the capacity for an inventory of fresh produce. Some joint purchasing models are being explored, connecting large institutional purchasers and small stores. **Q:** Are there examples of a smaller entity combining purchases? **A:** There are several examples across the country. **Q:** What percentage of the CSA share is the \$28.00 savings? **A:** 31 to 49% savings after the HIP benefit was applied.

- MA Food Trust Program Team (LEAF/FCCDC/The Food Trust) One Year Summary and the year ahead, John Waite, FCCDC and Alex Plowden, LEAF

In 7 months 12 projects in 7 counties have been initiated, yielding \$108,000 in increased access with a high percentage of minority and cooperative businesses. 25% of the funds are allocated through mini-grants and the remaining through a revolving loan fund that will keep the program sustainable.

Question: Is the line item for this in MDAR or Economic Development. **A:** The line item is in AGD and MDAR is doing the technical support. There are bonus points for us of local foods, living wages, etc. If healthy communities work is done well, it is an economic development project. MA in Motion is a great partner. Leveraging other funds is a big part of this program with partner organizations. The goal is to leverage the dollars at least four times over. The quality and characteristics of the loan are better for these businesses. We have experience in qualitative underwriting. **Q:** If a group came to you for a loan to subsidize food transportation, would it be considered? Not at this time even though access is important. We are working with Pioneer Valley Growers Assn. to distribute/transport food to these businesses however. We're not in a good position to support emergency programs, but rather a focus on business. **Q:** What happens when someone defaults? **A:** These are riskier loans than conventional. This fund allows for some loans potentially to be written off. **Q:** Can you separate out women from community of color? **A:** Yes.

- Highlights from the USDA MA Ag Census, Myron Inglis, MDAR
<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2019/09/23/snapshot-of-ma-ag-presentation.pdf>
Commissioner Lebeaux advised that though production declined, it mainly was due to the cranberry sector.

New Business

- Report from Council subcommittee re: structure, priorities and other topics: John Waite, Western MA Food Processing Center (minutes are included as an addendum)

The committee started by looking issues raised about what the FPC could do that it isn't? Our conclusion is that it's more a matter of a focus on communication and work with agencies so that when we vote on a topic the Council would have a good sense of the administration's priorities. During our discussion it became clear that there isn't an aggregate picture of resources for food system work/issues from the administration side. Can we strengthen systems and avoid duplication? RI has a food policy staff in the administration who speaks to their Council. We recommend that a connection to the Governor's office like this be created. We looked at answering what should be the activities of the Council? We concluded that The Food Plan was an important activity, which should drive the focus of the Council. Developing an inventory of food touch points is important. At the annual meeting at the state house, we recommend all agencies report on their activities that bear relation to the Plan. By adding FPC seats for DCR, Labor, F&G, and food businesses the Advisory Committee could be eliminated. Large food wholesalers are important; a more direct connection should be established. Method for Council appointments and terms are not adhered to according to FPC bylaws. The Council needs to strengthen diversity. Oct. 1 is the hearing to add F&G as a seat. Commissioner Lebeaux looks to provide significant time for review of the report and add to the agenda in January as a primary business item. Hannah Kane, suggested a need to flush out why the position we have recommended would do what is not happening now. Lots of groups say they want someone in the governor's office. There are alternatives. Can this be elevated with staff to get more attention? MDAR and DEP and potentially F&G would be three agencies of one secretariat that could coordinate better with EEA. The Workforce Skills

Council is a tripod type entity looking at broad based integrated activities. Seeking something that's based on an existing model is a good idea.

The Committee notes that at a future committee meeting, it would be helpful to have more Council member participation. We have the sense that because food touches everyone, a more dedicated resource person to gather information, engender conversations, and follow up on tasks is important.

- MA Food System Collaborative Update, Winton Pitcoff November 22 is the MA Food System Forum! Winton shared the new video which is more reflective of the food system.
- Planning for state house Council meeting, which is an important time to engage legislators. If you have thoughts for the agenda please share them with Bonita.

Public Comment

Just Roots Research Study, part one has been published and shows positive results. Part two to be published soon.

American Journal of Preventative

Greenfield Community College Food is Health Forum is coming up

Comment from Commissioner Lebeaux: The mission that we have is never going to go away. When you are looking at all that hasn't been done, remember to acknowledge everything that has been done. Last administration has several wins, Urban Ag, Superstar is HIP, Food Caucus, Food Ventures, Food Trust. Current administration has maintained these. Congratulations for all this success.

Announcements

- Wed, Nov 6, 2019, MA Food Policy Council meeting, 9:30- 12:30, RM 428 State House, Boston
- Fri, Nov 22, 2019 3rd Annual MA Food System Forum 9:30am - 4:00pm Worcester, MA
- Food is Public Health- oversight hearing at Greenfield Community College Sept 27, 2019 1-4PM

Adjournment: Representative Kane moved to adjourn at 12:40 PM. Seconded by John Waite. Motion passed.

MA Food Policy Council ad hoc committee on structure.

8/30/2019 meeting at Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge MA

RECOMMENDATIONS

Role of the Administration: is equally important to the public and legislature.

We recommend Administration Representatives remain voting members.

Resources: We noted that the private sector and the legislature have organizing and support structures, while Administration has no such organizing and support substantially in place.

We recommend creating a Food Policy Coordinator position (outlined in the MA Local Food Action Plan implantation goal 1, action 1.3.2) housed in the Governor's office that would help generate cross Secretariat perspectives, would support the Administration's work on the Council, and would provide a focused path for the Caucus to better ask and understand what the Gubernatorial/Administration priorities for the food system are.

Activity of the Council:

We recommend using the MA Local Food Action Plan as a basis for activity of the Council, for instilling more intentionality, and having more regular and direct conversation on the 6 major goals adopted by the council after acceptance of the Plan.

We recommend the FPC take on the task of developing an inventory of state programs related to food across all Secretariats.

We recommend that all agencies report once per year, at the FPC calendar year end meeting, on what they have accomplished towards implementing their designated Plan priorities, any additional related programs or efforts, and the budgets of each identified program. We further recommend that each commissioner of agencies represented on the council attend this meeting.

Makeup of the council: We note that representation of the workforce is lacking and that DCR owns significant amounts of land suitable for agriculture/food production. We note that the food service and large commercial food wholesale/retail are not represented on the council.

We recommend expanding the council and removing the advisory committee.

We recommend, on the agency side, that the council be expanded to include DCR, the MA Dept. of Labor, and MA Dept. of Fish and Game.

We recommend the FPC engage with the Dept. of Corrections in some fashion.

We recommend thinking about how food service and large food wholesale/retail be included on the council.

We recommend a review of the roles current non-agency or non-legislative reps play in the council and increasing private sector representation as agency representation is increased.

MA Food Policy Council ad hoc committee on structure.

8/30/2019 meeting at Hyde Public Library, Sturbridge MA

Present -John Waite, chair, Danah Tench, Eric Stocker, Winton Pitcoff, Jeff Cole

Meeting opened by Chairperson Waite at 10:04 AM

The committee began discussion talking about the topics we were asked to discuss: resources, structure, roles, and composition of the FPC. One concern is the frequent abstention by Administration representatives on matters of policy, potential legislation, and funding. It was noted that under the current makeup of the Council these abstentions do not hamper decision making as a majority still exists for voting. The concern is abstentions can be seen as a lack of support, divided opinion, or general lack of consensus on the topic which may hamper further activity or lower the importance placed on the recommendation or decision made.

We noted that administration representatives can provide insight and help craft details of proposed programs that impact the agencies and insight as to how any legislation or other actions might impact agencies, which is valuable in itself and may lessen the impact of not voting. We discussed the possibility of amending the Council process so that administrative members are non-voting members. We concluded that the role of the Administration is equally important to the public and legislature and that it was not desirable, or fulfilling the legislative intent in creating the council, to place them as nonvoting members.

We noted that the private sector has the MA Food System Collaborative as an organizing and support structure, the legislature has the Caucus as an organizing and support structure, and the Administration has no such organizing and support substantially in place. As a result, while there has been cross agency collaboration, which is one of the goals of the Council, it has not been as intentional and strategic as it might otherwise be if there was some support. We note that food/the food system touches just about every element of state activity and that it is materially important.

We recommend creating a Food Policy Coordinator position (outlined in the Plan implantation goal 1, action 1.3.2) housed in the Governor's office that would help generate cross Secretariat perspectives, would support the administration work on the Council, and would provide a focused path for the Caucus to better ask and understand what the Gubernatorial/Administration priorities for the food system are.

We looked at the general purpose of the Council. In addition to fostering agency collaboration the Council exists to develop recommendations and develop and promote programs. This broad purpose is affirmed as desirable by the committee and it is noted that such does not preclude recommendations on policy and legislation.

We discussed the activity of the Council. We recommend using the MA Local Food Action Plan as a basis for activity of the Council, for instilling more intentionality, and having more regular and direct conversation on the 6 major goals adopted by the council after acceptance of the Plan. We recommend the FPC take on the task of developing an inventory of state programs related to food across all Secretariats. To facilitate this, we recommend that all agencies report once per year on what they have accomplished towards implementing their designated Plan priorities, any additional related programs or efforts, and the budgets of each identified program. We recommend this be the focus of the Council calendar year end meeting and that each commissioner of agencies represented on the council attend

this meeting.

We note that the Commissioner of DTA and Mass DEP have regularly attended the calendar year end meeting.

We discussed the makeup of the council. We recommend expanding the council and removing the advisory committee. We note that representation of the workforce is lacking and that DCR owns significant amounts of land suitable for agriculture/food production. We recommend a review of the roles current non-agency or non-legislative reps play in the council and consider increasing private sector representation as agency representation is increased. We discussed non active members and note active representation from all FPC members/sectors is important. To that end we discussed the value in keeping an active member with years of sector experience, even if they are no longer working in the sector.

We recommend that, on the agency side, the council be expanded to include DCR, the MA Dept. of Labor, and MA Dept. of Fish and Game. We recommend the FPC engage with the Dept. of Corrections in some fashion.

We note that the food service and large commercial food wholesale/retail are not included and recommend thinking about how they might be included on the council. We concluded that an organizational flow chart would be helpful and will work with Nicole and Johns Hopkins to see if one can be generated.

We celebrated Danah's birthday (which was today) with cake provided by producers from the Franklin County CDC Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center.
The meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM.