

Community Food Security Coalition
Community Economic Development Committee (proposed)

Summary of Initial Meeting

October 9, 2006

Vancouver, British Columbia

Convenor: Ken Meter

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The meeting had three purposes:

1. To help CFSC and FSC members who work on community economic development issues in the U.S., Canada, and elsewhere get acquainted.
2. To explore whether a Community Economic Development (CED) committee should be formed in CFSC
3. To consider possible roles for a CED committee at CFSC

Executive Summary of Meeting:

Interest in CED seems strong in both CFSC and FSC. Thirty-nine people attended this meeting. Another 45 people expressed interest in being part of the effort, and many could not come due to competing committee obligations. Our mailing list is already over 80. Twenty attended a similar meeting held by Food Secure Canada — which formed its own CED committee, with Herb Barbolet as chair, during its conference.

Recognizing there is no budget yet, the group focussed on work that could be accomplished with minimal expense. It is the convenor's sense that a smaller leadership core should be convened by telephone to form a formal steering committee that can develop a strategic plan.

Key elements for now might well be (as suggested at the follow-up meeting Oct. 11):

- (1) A teleconference every two months or so, to get better acquainted, share news of upcoming events, and consider CED initiatives in CFSC. [The Canadian group would hold its own teleconferences. The two committees must remain in contact].
- (2) Develop a strategic plan with a mission statement to take to the CFSC board for formal approval as a committee.
- (3) Examples of potential first steps include:
 - (a) working with key CFSC leaders to ensure that CED is integrated at all levels of the organization;
 - (b) planning a plenary session and follow-up workshops at the next CFSC general membership meeting;
 - (c) As money is raised, developing educational and training materials that help inject community economic development concepts into local food security work, and also show CED professionals the potential for building local food systems to become an essential economic development tool;
 - (d) train-the-trainer trainings that develop wider awareness and capacity to act.

Any strategies adopted should be defined by a more representative group. The above list is meant only to start the discussion.

Summary of comments made at October 9, 2006, meeting:

Why people in the room came to CED Committee meeting:

Each participant listed their interests as they introduced themselves. Each comment was written down as stated by each participant, but have been organized into categories for easier reference. Many could fit in more than one category.

Inject CED into food security work, and inject food security consciousness into economic development practice

1. Bring CED into CFSC
2. CED sector has little consciousness about farms, farmers
3. Synergy between CED and CFS
4. Social enterprise for low-income folks
5. Form coops in low-income communities
6. Bottom-up development is better
7. Concerned about top-down approach
8. Stop chasing factories
9. Build food distribution systems
10. Micro-enterprise development
11. Form joint enterprises
12. Business clusters as in Italy
13. Community-created enterprise

Move beyond the charity model by building a stronger local economic base

14. Go beyond supplying emergency food
15. Food pantries are not socially acceptable -- have to move beyond

Build values-based exchanges

16. Instill community food system values into economic development efforts
17. Engage churches in CED
18. The centrality of food to our daily lives and cultures
19. Build "values" networks (not simply economic transactions)

Empower people of color/ethnic groups

20. Somali (and other immigrant) CED

Claim local power

21. Lack of food affects personal pride
22. Discourage local groups from yielding authority to experts
23. Attract professionals to live in our community because local/good foods are served at restaurants and available at grocers.
24. Community ownership

Get better informed or refine our analysis

25. Refine how we talk about CED

Build local health

26. Get fresher food to the consumer

27. Rural health depends on the food sector
28. Raise rate of food access

Reduce poverty

29. Our (and CFSC's) mission focuses on low-moderate income people

Build local wealth

30. Help farmers make more money
31. Build "value networks" that cycle/build local wealth
32. Need a CED piece if we are going to attract business to our community
33. Need to develop food processing and distribution capacity
34. We're forming a coop kitchen
35. Community and neighborhood revitalization
36. Need grocery where we can find fresh food
37. Produce auctions
38. Kitchen as business incubator also gets food to indigent

Create new products, businesses and venues

39. Ethanol as fuel
40. We have ethanol plant that makes vodka!
41. Grain shortages

Build local connections

42. Bridge gap between producer and processor
43. Food links communities with each other
44. Lawyers can promote change by building linkages
45. Foster dialogue among various actors in food system

Create labor opportunities:

46. Reduce labor shortages and unemployment
47. People need additional jobs

Policy and Planning:

48. Imagine how it would look in the future if we had a healthier food system
49. Food planning should be part of urban planning
50. Measure redundant trade (regions that export what they also need to import)
51. Regional planning to support small farms
52. Inject a CED voice into food policy
53. Public Health lawyers can help shape food policies
54. Economics and culture too often wield negative power

Possible Functions / Frameworks for a CED Committee:

In small groups, participants developed recommendations for the possible framework/scope of work for a CED Committee at CFSC, if one were formed. These recommendations are listed below. Once again, they are written down as stated by each small group, but have been organized into categories for easier reference. Many could fit in more than one category.

Inform each other (CFSC / FSC practitioners)

Terms:

Define what Community Economic Development is
How is CED different from Economic Development (ED)?
How does CED relate to food security?

Communication:

Maintain regular e-mail communication
Notify each other of upcoming events
Share links to valuable CED resources
Create a web site that shows how to engage in/expand CED efforts

Build collaborative networks

Form new or unusual partnerships (cut across sectors that are often divided)
Involve youth in CED efforts
Host teleconferences with guest speakers

Refine our practice

Publish resource guide(s) covering CED: background, strategies, models
Research and report on victories
Research, analyze and report: most economically valuable strategies/business models
Assess costs and benefits of various approaches
Develop standards, criteria and indicators for CED practice
Evaluate CED efforts in our network
Create climate of honesty
Ensure that fresh local food is offered at meetings
Ensure that community planning covers food security
Offer T&TA (training and technical assistance) to Community Food Project groups, CFSC/FSC groups (train-the-trainer model)
Become the "go-to" source for T&TA in CED
Provide access to CED expertise

Launch educational campaigns

Inject CED into CFSC at all levels. Host a plenary event on CED with implementation workshops
Educate CFSC partners about CED
Educate CED partners about community food security
Identify and advance the roles food can play in building community health, wealth, capacity and connection
Ensure that food security work places value on the common good

Rekindle entrepreneurial spirit in our communities
Attach to a university food center or law clinic

Launch action campaigns

Expand income through social entrepreneurship
Create strategic frameworks and implementation plans for fostering CED
Obtain investment for food-related CED work
Connect local groups with, or offer, accounting services
Connect local groups with, or offer, evaluation services
Develop a template and help local groups build community business food kitchens
Develop new value-added food products

[Agenda of meeting]
Community Food Security Coalition

**Community Economic Development (CED) Committee
Exploratory Meeting**
Vancouver, October 9, 2006

Convenor:

Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis)
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Purposes:

1. To help CFSC and FSC members who work on community economic development issues in the U.S., Canada and elsewhere get acquainted.
2. To explore whether a Community Economic Development (CED) committee should be formed in CFSC
3. To consider possible roles for a CED committee at CFSC

Agenda:

1. Overview of CED committee exploration (5 min)
2. Introductions (35 min)
3. If a committee is formed what would you like to see it do? (45 min)
4. Next steps (5 min)

What is Community Economic Development?

Personally, I use the term 'community economic development' to focus on the community capacity-building aspects of economic development. In my professional work, the test for any CED effort is whether it builds capacity, social connection, and financial assets for those who live in the community in question.

A word about CFSC:

(The broader context in which we work)

CFSC was born out of US legislation that formed USDA Community Food Projects, intended to ensure access to food for low-income citizens. Work advancing this goal will most closely tie into CFSC's mission. Some of the CED openings that are emerging might nudge us into a broader arena, where we might have greater impact, but also may risk mission drift.