

Comments on the Notes

from the first meeting of the
Proposed Community Economic Development (CED) subcommittee
Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC)

First meeting — held October 9, 2006
At the CFSC conference in Vancouver.

To read the original notes from this meeting, go to:
<http://www.crcworks.org/cfscCED/ced1.061009.pdf>

*[This lists actual comments received — some have been edited slightly for clarity.
Words in brackets are added by the recorder to clarify or
provide context to comments made by respondents.]*

Comments on the notes themselves:

- They are very clear.
- Looks good.

Recommended next steps [process]:

- Some sort of introductory phone call would be nice.
- Teleconference.
- My experience in bringing together large groups to work on complex issues is that its worth spending some time up front to make sure everyone has a shared understanding of the topic at hand. This is particularly true if the communication will be primarily via email or teleconference.
- I think we need a facilitator (largely thankless job) to keep us on track. That seems to have fallen on you — thanks! — but we should determine how we will make decisions, who can/cannot be on the committee, etc.
- There are ways to have mega-conference calls that you suggest, but they are best if presenting information and accompanied by a computer presentation. Still, they are no substitute for face to face.
- Would it be possible to organize the 80+ folks [on our e-mail list] into regions with regional coordinators who would communicate with regional constituents (phone, email) on the direction this should go? Then the call could be had with a reasonable number of folks 5-10. This could discuss the steps needed to move forward, based on input from their constituents. We could develop key questions that each rep will email/interview their constituents about.

Recommended next steps [projects or products]:

- I love the ideas mentioned, especially the plenary session [at CFSC devoted to CED].
- I would be happy to contribute to training on the relationship between economic development and CFS, either for the CFSC board, the CED Committee, or the CFSC advocates at large.
- I think education, training, and information dissemination would be much appreciated.

- Develop some communications tools. Community economic development is a bit of a conceptual and complex term — as are food security and food systems — and we are talking about melding the two together.
- Communications tools could be basic - a fact sheet, a page on the CFS website etc.
- I am also wondering if it would be helpful to identify existing CED arguments and research to show the obvious connections.
- I think it would be helpful to pull together some *schemas*. For example, your "local value network" schema could be adapted to explain in words that we are trying to build a community "values network" (regarding food) as much as a "value network" in terms of increasing economic activity. I could lend some time to developing some tools in the new year if helpful.
- The other key immediate action item is the development of a strategic plan.
- At this point I don't know how feasible it is to develop a strategic plan. They take a lot of work. In my experience [this is] almost impossible to do in the virtual environment. Maybe that is something we can shoot for in the next year or two if needed.

Issues that should be addressed:

- This goes beyond the current US definition of "economic development" — to focus development on communities and local economies, beginning with food — I would hope for a mission that brings this focus forward.
- We need new language and new forms of organizations to do this work. I think that this group would do a great service in that same direction
- The Public Health Law Program [in California] will be releasing a toolkit on economic development in January which largely focuses on how tools of traditional economic development can be leveraged to promote healthy food retail in underserved communities.
- Sustainable Seattle has an upcoming local food multiplier research paper [January].
- We want to help refugees and immigrants develop their own farm/food sector enterprises. We are in the process of developing different support programs to do that (IDAs, assistance getting land, relationships with commercial kitchens, mentorships, etc). Gaining a better idea of the economic development tools and programs that are available, especially at the micro level, would be very helpful. There is a vast ocean of things going on that we need to learn from. Hopefully the Committee could serve this purpose.
- I especially appreciate item C: "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." I hope to equate "local economic security" with "local food system security" in our work. Right now, it takes an immense amount of education and patience to inform our "power people" from city councilors to state legislators.
- The Outreach and Diversity Committee of CFSC has formed a policy committee, and this effort could be brought into that group.
- I see a possible future role for CFSC in CED, and in supporting food retail development in underserved areas. I think there is a growing sense that it is important for CFSC to find a way to play more of a role in promoting food-related economic development on a broader scale, and that we need to build our capacity to do that.

Other comments:

- I am definitely interested in being involved.
- It is a really good time to be moving forward with this new committee. I am glad you are taking the lead on that! I am very interested in being part of these discussions.
- Thanks for spearheading this.
- Thanks for putting in all this work!