

Community Food Security Coalition
Proposed Community Economic Development Committee

Minutes
Steering Committee Meeting

February 13, 2007
telephone conference call
1:30 to 2:30 pm central time

Members participating:

Brahm Ahmadi, Hannah Laurison, Ken Meter, Katherine Pigott, Rich Pirog, Kai Siedenburg, Kelly Thompson

1. Introductions:

In this first meeting of the steering committee, members of the committee began by introducing themselves to each other.

2. Application to CFSC for formal status:

CFSC is preparing guidelines for the formation of new CFSC committees. These are to be announced following the Baltimore conference in March. It is likely that our committee will be required to frame a mission statement and proposed work plan, to be submitted to the CFSC board, in order to gain recognition as a formal committee. In the meantime, we have been granted funds for periodic telephone conferences such as this.

Committees such as ours are likely to be viewed by CFSC as advisory to the CFSC board. Each, however, will create its own style of working.

3. Potential additional members:

This steering committee is composed of volunteers who stepped forward during the process of planning and following up from the initial committee meeting at the Vancouver CFSC conference in October, 2006. The purpose of creating a small subgroup is to form a leadership group that can develop cohesion as a working unit, provide continuity to the larger meetings that will primarily be held at CFSC annual meetings, and plan potential initiatives.

Recognizing that this initial group may want to recruit additional members, the steering committee decided that any new invitations should wait until we have defined a potential scope of work for the committee.

4. Possible scope of work:

Members of the committee then made suggestions as to the scope of work that the committee might define for itself. These were primarily suggestions for specific projects or initiatives, rather than broader definitions of a proposed scope of work. These suggestions included:

- (a) Develop a toolkit for CED practitioners and community food security groups. This would help bridge the gap that is often drawn between economic development concerns and food security proponents. [Each side may benefit from such materials.

Local food system groups can build stronger initiatives by working with an economic analysis of their locale, and by working with low-income communities to build their own capacity to raise and process foods for themselves, rather than viewing themselves strictly as recipients. Economic development professionals may devise more effective strategies by thinking of local food systems as an important approach to economic development.]

- (b) The committee should focus on fostering food retail outlets in low-income communities. This will require coordination with other CFSC committees who are also tackling this issue.
- (c) There was a strong consensus in the committee meeting in Vancouver that many of us lack a strong understanding of how food fits into CED. There seem to be significant benefits, and important messages to communicate these connections to a broader audience. One group that this committee might partner with is the Canadian Community Economic Development Network.
- (d) There seems to be an intent and a desire here to be more than informational. The Leopold Center could make a good contribution to this.
- (e) There is no shortage of opportunities here. The challenge will be to start small and to generate the resources needed to mount a larger effort.
- (f) The groups we work with in our business face many questions of how to start effective food enterprises. The need for technical assistance goes way beyond what we can provide ourselves. The committee might be able to help fill this gap.

Several committee members said they had some time they could devote to this committee work.

As a first step, the group decided to draft a brochure that would show some of the ways to build bridges between the food security and economic development conversations. Kathryn Pigott and Ken Meter will prepare an outline of this for the next committee meeting, which will be held Tuesday, April 10, 2007, at 1:30 pm central time.

Notes taken by Ken Meter