

Minutes

Community Food Security Coalition

Community Economic Development Working Group

(Working Meeting)

Des Moines, Iowa, annual meeting

October 12, 2009

The meeting was convened by Katherine Pigott, co-chair of the working group

These notes by Ken Meter, co-chair of the working group

Names of the 60 people who attended this meeting are listed below.

Katherine Pigott recapped the discussion from the October 11th Orientation Session.

Highlights were:

- Need to describe economic impact of local food economy
- Need indicators to track progress (indicators must be timely and not be resource intensive)
- Communities need funding, capacity, resources and expertise to do the above
- Lobby for new data sets to help measure the local food economy; this will minimize the need to extrapolate
- Seek buy-in from economic development and extension officials
- Need effective scale-up strategies
- Local food economy has potential to complement existing economic development work, both business attraction and retention strategies
- How can we build local capacity (e.g. Chamber of Commerce ability to respond to food and economy issues)? This would allow smaller communities to by-pass larger systems
- Need to create compelling stories
- Need to link development of the local food economy to peak oil and pending water shortages
- Need help promoting and implement food procurement strategies
- Promote urban agriculture and its potential to support economic development and workforce development in de-industrializing cities (e.g. Flint, MI)

Introductions:

For about 20 minutes, participants discussed why they were interested in this topic and why they came to this meeting. As more people entered the room, it was pointed out that there were now too many people in attendance to complete such a discussion, so it was cut short without all people having a chance to speak. From that point on, the discussion was generated from themes addressed by participants who sought recognition to raise an issue or to speak to a concern of their own.

Some of the comments that were made include:

- The language makes sense, i.e., of suggesting that local food is a viable community economic development strategy.
- We are forming a rural economic development center, develop fully integrated farm enterprises, farming that makes use of natural processes.

- Our business, Local Burger (Lawrence, Kansas) has stimulated a great deal of local foods activity.
- One University of Missouri study found that traditional ways of doing economic development make more sense in smaller communities.
- I am a small business market trainer.
- I work with the Iowa Community Vitality Center, on food system mapping and agricultural entrepreneurship.
- This committee was formed at the 2006 annual meeting in Vancouver, BC; by “community economic development,” this effort means economic development work that is focused on improving the broader community, not simply making a profit. In many circles this is considered attention to a “triple bottom line,” or even a “quadruple bottom line.” In other settings, it refers to business activity, which builds community capacity and social connection as well as economic strength.
- A question was raised about whether this work focused more on attracting new firms, or retaining existing firms. Others argued that these were not mutually exclusive goals, but rather could be complementary. Still others suggested that part of CED would be to create new businesses owned by existing residents, not attracting new firms from outside.
- We also need to focus on how to define different investment models. In Montana, we have lost the infrastructure for local foods we once used to have.
- What are the best ways to tie existing food purchases using SNAP coupons (formerly called food stamps) so the dollars end up in the community?
- In many urban areas, infrastructure already exists that can be harnessed for a regional food system.
- I am frustrated with much of the discussion around scale. Microenterprise is not insignificant!
- We need to develop new language and new ways of framing our discussion, especially to counter greenwashing.
- It is upside down to consider job creation part of economic development; it should rather be stated that the end of economic development is job creation.
- I am interested in what happens from the bottom line on down — certainly need profits, but other impacts must also be achieved, such as social and environmental.
- Local governments have been investing in job training in a counterproductive way, paying for training when there are no jobs. Food work has jobs.
- It is important to invest in youth.
- International Economic Development Council has prepared materials on these issues.
- Communities need to have their experience recognized, not simply the expertise of outside consultants.
- We need to identify models of development that channel more money to farmer; this has often been missing from the discussion.
- Perhaps the national health insurance companies could be funding this work; they stand to reduce their insurance payments as people eat better.
- We should also focus on micro-businesses.
- How do we build democratic governance?
- We need to be more nuanced as we discuss the quantitative externalities, for example transportation.
- We want to create good *work*, not just *jobs*.

- One model for this committee to consider is to hold a one-day pre-conference, like the food policy group did, focusing on CED issues. Walk through data we can take home to make the case in our own locales.
- How do we develop streams of revenue? Some charities are open to being part of business activity.
- This committee needs to have multiple face-to-face meetings over the year, to create a community of practice around this work.
- Perhaps we could have regional meetings, and regional committees.
- We could break down the discussion by sectors; organize according to specific industries.
- What is the appropriate niche for CFSC given other groups that do similar work?
- We should have something tangible in place for next year's annual meeting.
- We need to promote both tacit and contextual learning.
- We should focus on how to connect urban agriculture to grocery stores in each community.
- If there is no staff for this work, we still need some champion at CFSC.
- Are there templates we can draw upon to know how to do this work better? Northeast Iowa (Decorah) has posted the surveys they used to solicit community interest. Northern Iowa (Cedar Falls) has good templates.
- Another model is affinity enterprises.

One of the participants then suggested that the meeting clearly was of the mind that this work was important and should be formalized. Participants were asked if they supported applying to CFSC for status as a formal committee; those in the room emphatically said "yes." Further, the group authorized the co-chairs to work with CFSC staff and funders to procure funding to get this work underway.

Meeting participants:

Katherine Pigott, Food Secure Canada (Waterloo, Ontario) *co-chair and Facilitator*
Ken Meter, Crossroads Resource Center (Minneapolis) *co-chair and Minute Taker*
Scott Allegrucci, Local Burger restaurant, Lawrence, KS
Allison Arnold, CBMRC&D
Stephen Arellano, Ruth Mott Foundation, Flint, MI
Ernie Bendfeldt, Virginia Co-operative Extension
Matthew Benson, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Warrenton, VA
Daniel Bowman Simon, The White House Organic Farm Project
Jonah Brown-Joel, Leopold Centre for Sustainable Agriculture, Ames, IA
Dan Carmody, Eastern Market Corporation, Detroit, Michigan
Cassandra M. Cato-Louis, Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition
Steve Cohen, City of Portland Office of Sustainable Development, Portland, OR
Carol Coren, Cornerstone Consultants, Southhampton, PA
Lindsey Day Farnsworth, University of Wisconsin
Jennifer Fahey, Farm Aid, Boston, MA
Greg Fogel, Gerald Ford, School of Public Policy, Ann Arbor MI
Michelle Frain Muldoon, Wallace Centre at Winrock International, Alexandria, VA
Sarah Hackney, Gorge Grown Food Network, Hood River, OR
Alethea Harper, Oakland Food Policy Council, Food First, Oakland, CA
Leanne Harter, Story County Planning and Zoning, IA

Reginaldo Haslett-Marouquin, Rural Enterprise Centre, Northfield, MN
Rita Hinden, Maria Isabel Food Center, Newark, NJ
Andrew Jameton, University of Nebraska Medical Centre
Eddie Jessup, Central California Regional Obesity Prevention Program, Fresno, CA
Linda Kingery, NW Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, Crookston, MN
Marcia E. Kingslow, Kingslow Associates, Annapolis, MD
Robert Klusen, UD/IFAS Extension, Sarasota, FL
Peter Komendowski, BLZ
Tawnya Laveta, Farm to Table, Santa Fe, NM
Jill Lucht, University of Missouri
Maggie Menefee, Healthy Youth Partnership, St. Louis, Missouri
Alfonso Morales, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI
Tammy Morales, Urban Food Link, Seattle, WA
Ken Morse, Healthy Oxford Hills, Norway, ME
Katherine Mortimer, Sante Fe Food Policy Council, Sante Fe, NM
Libby O'Sullivan, UC Davis
Cynthia Price, Greater Grand Rapids Food Systems Council, MI
Lesley Provence, San Antonio, TX
Tom Quinn, West CAP, Glenwood City, WI
Jen Risley, Hannah Grimes Center
Wayne Roberts, Toronto Food Policy Council, Toronto, Ontario
Carol R. Smith, Iowa State University
Thomas Spaulding, Angelic Organics Living Centre, Caledonia, IL
Jill Stankiewicz, Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association
Noah Swinney Stein, Chicago Artillery, Chicago, IL
Cynthia Torres, Colorado Farmers Market Association, Boulder, CO
Jan Tusick, Lake County Community Development Corporation
Noreen Warnock, Local Matters,
Katie Weaver, Community Action Program of East Central Oregon, Pendleton, OR
Yelena Zelster, Cornell University, NY