

Meeting Minutes
Emergency Response to COVID-19
April 24 @ 3pm

Karen S. (SEMAP):

- DTA (Department of Transitional Assistance) is in charge of the SNAP program
 - o Currently can't be used online
- USDA is working on a pilot program
 - o Currently only allowing two clients (Walmart and Amazon)

**Will have time in the call next week to discuss*

Sam (NB Food Service Department):

- 15,500 meals this week (breakfast and lunch)
 - o Including Fresh Fruits and Vegetables including shelf stable items
- Added a new site at Little Peoples College

Holly Fowler (Northbound Ventures):

- Is NB Food Service deploying summer distribution type programs, and are they getting reimbursements?

Rob/Sam (NB Food Service Department):

- Yes, they are getting reimbursements
- Some issues are that not all districts are able to run the 'summer option'
 - o Currently in the process of putting a cost analysis for the USDA
 - o Hoping that this will trigger more funding down the road.
- There is another option - called the Child and Adult Care Program (year-round program)
 - o Can run when districts did not have summer programs
- There may be difficulty hiring staff for the summer program

Maura (Groundwork Southcoast):

- The Green team is managing a program called 'Sow and Grow'
 - o Distributing seed kits to residents in NB and Fall River
 - Focusing primarily on low-income residents
 - Reach out if interested

Kim Ferreira (Coastal Foodshed):

- Meal delivery program started 4 weeks ago for 180 NB clients (HPHC as the funder just extended for 4 more weeks)
 - o Have been struggles with the client referral – intake platform
 - There has been duplicates in clients
 - There needs to be a direct tie to the client from referral
- New Bedford Online Farmers Market has sold out
 - o Lots of demand
 - o Cooler space is the limiting factor!

- Pickup site is going well – and available for SNAP benefits

Carol (Damien's Pantry - Wareham):

- The board voted on Wednesday to re-open
 - Don't have a specific date (Middle of May)
 - Putting together protocols
 - Figuring out who they can support

Christina Connelly (City of New Bedford, Mayor's Office):

- HSPN and city have been talking about opening a shelter site that will require meal delivery
 - Would like group to think about how this could be implemented
 - There is funding for program and delivery, FEMA eligible, etc.
- *They would like it to be an expansion of the restaurant program
- Get Christina a cost estimate (22 individuals), per day, per person cost
 - Could employ Yes We Van, or other delivery service

Liz W: Will follow up from the program started in NB

Scott Stubbs (Dartmouth):

- They have a commercial kitchen that he is willing to let me used

Desa (Round the Bend Farm):

- Week 5 or 6 with the YWCA, Northstar, YOU, distribution
 - Hit 80 families last week -- Looking to hit 100 families
- RTB has permission to harvest Kale from Wainer farm
 - Desa is looking for harvest buckets
 - Harvesters at RTB are quarantined and protected
- Needs to know how much poundage of Kale people would want
 - Would need to be picked up
- This cannot be for sale, must be given to people in need
 - If this goes well, there is more opportunity for future harvest of different vegetable

Liz W:

- May be able to get a large distribution truck to pickup
 - Mike at United Way could pick up, and has bins
 - Restaurants in programs could take some
 - Coastal Foodshed would take some
 - Scott Stubbs would take some
- If you would like Kale, send email to Liz or Desa

Liz W:

- How do we aggregate more local food for local distribution?
 - Marion Institute, Coastal Foodshed, SEMAP, and RTB have been in conversation about this
- We hired Holly Fowler to update the 2014 Food System Assessment

- Coastal Foodshed and SEMAP received a grant for a Food Hub feasibility study
 - o While we have everyone here and involved is a great time to continue this conversation
- How can we build resources that will be long term and sustainable to support this, during the COVID response time?

Holly Fowler:

**See slides attached below*

- What are we learning right now that we want to capture?
- Goals:
 - o Deeper understanding of food system (even if its evolving)
 - o What Assets comprise that (what works well and not)
 - o Community network and partners
- Project elements
 - o What do we need to know about existing solutions to best adapt them to SE Mass
 - Community will be a part of this process
 - o This all applies to the Food hub feasibility study as well

Liz W:

- How can we include local food in the food pantry model?
- How do we get people the most nutritious foods, not just shelf stable items?

Wendy Garf-Lipp (Fall River):

- Families need fresh foods!
 - o Has funded to expand to 200 families and expand to 5 weeks
 - For families classified as most high risk
 - And for homeless population in Fall River
 - o Used TA and Harry's restaurant
- The disparity of the location for families to where they could access food
 - o Food Equity issues are more known now more than every

Liz W:

- We should be bringing a stakeholder meeting into the Greater Fall River region.

Holly Fowler:

- Wendy highlighted a great learning coming out of this time
- Question to the group: what are the gaps to accessibility, and what are long term

Wendy Garf-Lipp:

- Gap in providing fresh fruits and vegetables to those in need
 - o Culturally appropriate foods are important, because families waste what they don't know how to use
- People who do not qualify for assistance programs, in some cases had private food delivery, and now don't have that access

- Saw an intense increase of Green card holders with decision of public charge (delay in citizenship)
 - o Went to Wendy's program as a primary source

Olivia Behrens (Fall River):

- Getting food to our street homeless is important,
 - o Street kitchens have closed, and there is not enough being taken to street encampments

Holly Fowler:

- Impressed by the resourcefulness of how to get things done, but also what will it take to keep this going into the future
 - o Equipment, capacity, funding, etc.?

Liz W:

- Would farmers feel like they had more ability to grow if there was a food hub?

Susan Murray (Flying Carrot Farm / Coastal Foodshed):

- There are a lot of different angles with mixed feelings
- Currently farmers are pushed to the limit, when there isn't a lot of local food
 - o Winter storage vegetables have run out, greens next month
- It's hard to say that I would increase capacity to sell into a system without the system being in place
 - o There is a lot of expense and risk to increase growing
 - o There needs to be someone heading the charge, "I'm willing to pay a good wholesale or retail price for what you're growing"
 - You can't increase your growing capacity for the risk of the buyer backing out
 - This has happened in many cases in the past
- There are currently supply chain issues, everything is currently pushed to the limits
- There is great awareness of importance of local system right now with COVID - hoping this continues

Liz W:

- These conversations are important now, this will not be the last time crisis happen - we need to take this opportunity to recognize the ability to improve our resilience in our regional food system.

Pam Kuechler (PACE):

- They have some resources coming out of this that could support some of the farms (including current relationships)
 - o The output this summer will be increased
- Right now they don't have any vegetables, how could this be supplemented?

Slides from Holly Fowler (Northbound Ventures):



Objectives & Outcomes

OBJECTIVES

- Identify gaps in food system assets and services
- Increase partnership opportunities
- Assess policy changes to support an equitable and sustainable food system for all in the region.
- Assess producer/buyer demand for and feasibility of a food hub
- Document findings and provide recommendations/concrete action steps prioritized by the advisory group and core partners

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Deepened stakeholder understanding of the regional food system
- Increased awareness of the food system's assets, challenges, and opportunities
- Improved connections and alignment across sectors of the food system
- Informed decision-making aided by recent data
- Improved indicators of population, environmental, and economic health

Project Elements

- 1 **Landscape Analysis:** What exists currently; where are there needs/gaps?
- 2 **Stakeholder Engagement:** How could these needs/gaps be met?
- 3 **Benchmarking:** How can proposed solutions benefit from peer experience?
- 4 **Prioritization:** High/Low Impact vs High/Low Effort and Investment
- 5 **Community Readiness:** Who can help implement new initiatives?
- 6 **Report & Recommendations:** Roadmap moving forward



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Progress to Date

- Project Kick-off Meeting / Information Gathering (*Feb. 13*)
- Stakeholder Identification
- SEMAP Meeting Presentation / Producer Engagement (*Mar. 2*)
- Stakeholder Survey Development
- Secondary Research
 - Updated regional agricultural data (2017)
 - Reviewed community-identified data sources
 - Started list of regional food system assets
- Upcoming
 - Stakeholder surveys/interviews/engagement including community stakeholder engagement session (postponed from 4/15 to 6/2)
 - Food economy research



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Food Policy Council Activities & Focus Areas

KEY ACTIVITIES

- Coordination and networking of food actors, information sharing and advocacy

FOCUS AREAS

- Food production, processing, distribution/procurement, consumption, and waste recycling
- Healthy food access
- Economic development
- Planning and land use
- Fair labor and wage practices
- Environmental impacts



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ADDENDUM: WEEKLY MEETING LOG-IN INFORMATION

Topic: Southcoast Food Policy Council COVID - Response Effort

Time: Apr 3, 2020 03:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Every week on Fri, until May 29, 2020, 9 occurrence(s)

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system. Weekly:

https://zoom.us/meeting/vJUtdumppj4i5ivcY73HPfx0faHUZORxzA/ics?icsToken=98tyKuiprjoqG9yQuF_9Z7ItA4H9bvG1iyRHvKBky0zNMyZLMqX3Htd4HYBnCvmB

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SFPC RESOURCE LIST:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/1/d/1MN7NJKRQf50G9f3ek7mJGYmgn0w6dwHnh3Hx0V/BW_Q4/edit?usp=drive_web&oid=117774638526057657372