



Food System Committee

Thursday, September 5th, 2019

3:30-5 PM

Health Department

1500 State Street Suite 201

Bellingham

Minutes

Members Present:

Name	Sector	Present
Vacant	Export Sales Farming	
Margaret Gerard	Local Sales Farming	X
Riley Starks	Fishing	
Adrienne Renz	Processing/Distribution	
Riley Sweeney	Food Access	X
Amber Noskoff	Nutrition/ Public Health	X
Maureen Darras	Labor	X
Krista Rome	Natural Resources	X
Mardi Solomon	Whatcom Food Network	X

Staff: Ali Jensen, WCHD

Call to order: Riley started the meeting at 3:40

Land Acknowledgement

Determination of Quorum

Quorum

Approval of minutes

Margaret moved to approve July Minutes, Amber seconded, group approved.

Public Comment

There are many public buildings, including this one (WCHD), that do not have compost receptacles. We propose that our food system plan recommendations include that public buildings encourage composting food waste service, particularly those in cities like Bellingham that have compost pick-up services (Food Plus).

Interview Updates

Group revised question 1, combined questions 2 and 3, and included "practices" in question 5.

Questions for Everyone

1	How would you describe your role in the local food system
1a	When you think about our local food system, what comes to mind?
2	What are some emerging issues in [your sector of] the food system?
2a	What unmet needs, challenges, or barriers do you see in this sector of the food system?
3	How is your sector impacted by external market forces?
4	What are the biggest upcoming or current opportunities for improving our local food system that you know about?
5	What policies [or practices] are currently in place in Whatcom County that hinder a thriving local food system from your sector's perspective?
6	What policies [or practices] could we enact in Whatcom County to support a thriving local food system from your sector's perspective?
6a	Are there any best practices you've seen in other places you'd like to see replicated in Whatcom County
7	Is there anyone else you think I should speak to

The group was reminded to send these questions to interviewees ahead of the meetings. At the November meeting, the group will check in with interviews, timelines, and updating the list of Subject Matter Experts.

The group is free to record the interviews, if the interviewee gives permission, and/or write notes.

Themes

The group should begin thinking about themes that come up in interviews. Staff will review interviews and also search for themes. Maureen has heard several references to climate change.

Food Policy Forum Process

The WA State Food Systems Roundtable was the first attempt at a statewide food system plan. It never got beyond draft form, as a discussion about labor ended the process. The second iteration of a process is called the Food Policy Forum. Whatcom County's Chris Elder participated as a Roundtable member. The State Conservation Commission staffed the Roundtable.

Chris walked the group through the process, which began with an overview of issues about small and direct-to-market farms. The larger group was divided into seven groups, based on area of interest. Each group explored opportunities and challenges of that sector and wrote an overview.

The groups made recommendations for state legislators to explore improving the seven sectors. All of the Roundtable members reviewed all of the recommendations. Every recommendation had to be unanimously approved by all members, which proved to be a challenge and some recommendations were rejected.

The Roundtable used a 100, 200, 300-level process, which proved to be effective for educating each sector on the other sectors.

Chris recommended the Food System Committee reference the State Food Policy Forum when drafting the food system plan to bolster proposals and cohesion between State and County.

There were some limitations to the Food Policy Forum, such as no tribal representation or racial diversity.

Chris staffs four County advisory committees (ag advisory, climate impact advisory, wildlife, and Purchase of Development Rights oversight Committees) and invited the FSC to join those meetings or request information/collaboration between groups.

Homework and Next Meeting

The next Food System Committee meeting will be on November 20th from 4-7pm. The group will be discussing interviews, gaps in subjects/sectors, and discuss themes.

The group is encouraged to attend one of the upcoming Food Summits in either the Foothills (October 10th) or the Birchwood Neighborhood of Bellingham (October 16th) to learn about those communities and the food action planning process.