

Minutes
April 11, 2013
CT Food Policy Council

Present

Members: John Frassinelli, DPH (Chair); Lucy Nolan - End Hunger CT, Linda Drake – UCONN, Willard Seedman – DSS-SNAP, Teri Dandeneau – CSDE, Stan Sorkin -- CT Food Association

Guests: Helena Hoover-Litty – CDA, Jean King - consultant, Martha Page - Hartford Food System, Peggy Zamore -- Danbury Farmers Market Coalition; Marcia Maillard – DPH Wise Woman Program; John Guskowski --CME Associates, Inc.

Minutes of the January 10, 2013 meeting were approved. There were no meetings in February or March.

Additions to the Agenda

Jean King reported on a New England meat conference organized by the Vermont Department of Agriculture, held at the end of March. Over 450 people attended 2 days of workshops in Concord, NH. Focus was on local meat production, processing, marketing and distribution. The social event, the Meat Ball, featured a presentation on butchering a pig. Jean was encouraged to see so many young people in attendance.

John Frassinelli brought up the issue of choosing someone to serve as Vice Chair of the FPC, as has been done in the past. He recommended someone outside of state government. Lucy Nolan was nominated by Stan Sorkin and Teri Dandeneau seconded. John will send out an e-mail ballot for members to send in additional nominations and to vote.

Discussion followed on conducting a strategic assessment of the CT FPC. John will investigate with the Commissioner of Agriculture to see if we can possibly hire someone to serve as a facilitator for a special meeting.

Community food security report

There has been quite a bit of media coverage on the release of the report “2012 Community Food Security in Connecticut: An Evaluation and Ranking of 169 Towns.” John will send a link to all of the articles in the press as well as radio interviews. We will provide a hard copy of the report to all legislators with a cover letter from the CFPC. A discussion of the data and findings followed.

Federal and State Budget and Legislative Issues

Federal -- The President’s budget allows for full funding for SNAP, continuing provisions from the economic stimulus such as continuing categorical eligibility, the “heat & eat” provision that maximizes the Standard Utility Allowance for people receiving fuel assistance and the 13.5% increase in benefits. WIC funding is maintained, and there are proposed cuts to farm subsidies for large and successful agribusinesses. Thoughts are that maybe this will help counter the fiscal effects of sequestration. Funding is also available for eliminating food deserts.

State – Funding for the healthy food certification reimbursement (10cents/meal) to schools is currently in the Community Investment Act but probably will be returned to the General Fund. This is helpful for other programs receiving CIA funds, but it may have a funding cap attached to it, which will limit funding that each school receives as more schools participate. Also, there will most likely be new national standards for competitive foods which might lessen CT’s motivation to provide this reimbursement.

S 651 – Nutrition Standards for Childcare Settings. No beverages with added sugars; no juice for children under 8 months, then only 100% juice with a 6 ounce limit per day; only 1% milk (there was a question if this would apply to children over 2, since whole milk is recommended for younger children.)

HB 6525 – Child obesity – addresses physical activity in schools and nutrition standards, procurement standards, recess before lunch, not using physical activity or recess as punishment, and a study regarding a sugar sweetened beverage tax. It also includes the development of a Childhood Obesity Task Force which will be advisory to the Governor. Members would include nutritionists, Departments of Education, Public Health, Children & Families, Social Services and two members from the Commission on Children. Currently it has been voted favorably by the Education Committee.

Another bill addresses regional delivery of human services, which would establish 8 regions to coordinate services from DMHAS, DSS and Public Health. Probably will not pass.

Legislation has also been proposed regarding price gouging during the release of SNAP benefits; prohibiting the use of cash assistance at liquor stores or for adult entertainment and increased funding for Meals on Wheels. Discussion followed on senior nutrition and farmland preservation issues.

Local Food Policy Council Capacity Building Training

An event will be held in October, based on availability of Mark Winne, who will be a speaker and facilitator. Location, content, structure and other presenters were discussed.

Announcements

Reminder of the screening of “A Place at the Table,” April 19-24 at Real Art Ways. Joel Berg from the NY City Coalition to End Hunger, will be speaking at the opening on April 19.

DSS -- Bill Seedman reported that DSS will have a walking team for the Walk Against Hunger on Sunday, May 5 and encouraged folks to support a team or join in the walk. He also reported that DSS will now have a document imaging center in Waterbury to help reduce the issue of lost documents for verifying SNAP eligibility.

SDE – Teri Dandeneau announced the School Breakfast Summit to be held on April 26 from 8-3. The focus is on reaching school administrators, but all who are interested may attend. Teri will send out invitations. She also reported on the successful press conference and event featuring USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, held at Wolcott Elementary School in West Hartford. He spoke about the importance of healthy children, and USDA programs addressing childhood obesity and food insecurity such as Summer Food programs. Remarks may be viewed on line here:

http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentid=2013/04/0063.xml&navid=NEWS_RELEASE&navtype=RT&parentnav=LATEST_RELEASES&deployment_action=retrievecontent

In attendance were Governor Malloy, Senator Blumenthal and Representatives DeLauro and Courtney.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 P.M.

Next meeting is Thursday, May 9, 1-3 PM.

Minutes submitted by Linda Drake