



Food System Committee

Wednesday June 30th, 2021

3:30-5 PM

Go To Meeting

Minutes

Members Present:

Name	Sector	Present
	Export Sales Farming	
Margaret Gerard	Local Sales Farming	X
	Fishing	
Nikki Oleson	Processing/Distribution	X
Riley Sweeney	Food Access	X
Amber Noskoff	Nutrition/ Public Health	X
Austin Hengy	Labor	
Krista Rome	Natural Resources	X
	Whatcom Food Network	

Others Present: Ali Jensen, WCHD and FSC staff; Rhys Thorvald-Hansen, Whatcom Food Network; Mike Peroni, Northwest Ag Business Center.

Call to order: Riley started the meeting at 3:35

Land Acknowledgement

Determination of Quorum

Quorum

Approval of minutes

Amber moved to approve, Krista seconded, all approved.

Presentation on NABC's Regional Food System Partnership Grant

Mike Peroni shared information about the multi-county Regional Food Partnership Grant awarded to NABC. The Grant has four objectives:

- Objective #1 is to support formation of a steering committee to identify gaps in infrastructure They are hoping to identify pilot projects to develop government and management criteria. Poppy Davis is facilitating.
- Objective #2 is to create replicable network of interconnected food hubs. Cooperatively owned, shared logistics and inventory/management systems are the target. David Farrow is facilitating, comes from hospitality industry.
- Objective #3 is to develop replicable food access models. Production planning, staff and labor estimates, how do coordinators and organizations interact, and look into ordering platforms. This objective is primarily focused on Whatcom County. Cheryl Thornton (from Cloud Mountain Farm Center)

is facilitating, with support from the Whatcom Food Network and Max Morange from the Bellingham Food Bank.

-Objective 4 is to develop Farmer to Farmer distance training program. Alex Smith at Sustainable Connections and Rhys Thorvald Hansen are working on this to build on existing skills and help people scale up.

Ali suggested we stay abreast of the RFSP work and align our Food System Plan with it.

Public Comment

Ali announced that Rhys Thorvald Hansen and Ander Russell will be attending the FSC meetings on behalf of the WFN. While they will not serve in an official position, they will report back to WFN.

Nikki announced that the Non-GMO project made a formal comment to the USDA about regional food systems. [Our Vision for the Future: A Response to the USDA](#) would be good for the Food System Committee to read.

Discussion of Report and Letter to Council

Ali shared her response to the first recommendation to council about protecting farmworkers. She has assigned herself the Health Department point person for COVID response for the bigger agricultural providers in the County. She coordinated a centralized testing and vaccination site in Lynden and communicates with farms weekly about that opportunity. The Latinx/Hispanic community has a very low vaccination rate, so it is expected we will continue to see outbreaks among this population. Ali is interested in hearing of other strategies to support this population.

CFA Update

Several people have responded to the CFA. Ali asked how we rectify conflicting opinions. For the Food System Plan, we can include minority reports. The CFA itself should not have “opinions” since it is a factual snapshot of what is happening. Margaret said that some of the “opportunities” appeared to be opinion-based and should be examined.

The next step in the CFA process is for Ali to add all non-controversial or non-contradictory updates to the CFA and bring the contradictory ones to the next meeting.

For sharing with the public, Riley suggested we send a press release and give the public an opportunity to respond via a general blast. WFN and other community groups can support these efforts too. The CFA should look relatively finished before then.

Next Meeting is August 4th from 4:00-5:30pm. Meeting Adjourned at 4:53.