



Food System Committee

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

4:30-6:00 PM

Zoom and in-person

Minutes

Members Present:

Name	Sector	Present
Margaret Gerard	Local Sales Farming	X
Nikki Oleson	Processing/Distribution	X
Riley Sweeney	Food Access	X
Noelle Beecroft	Nutrition/ Public Health	X
Sean Hopps	Labor	X
Trevor Gearhart	Natural Resources	X
Rhys-Thorvald Hansen	Whatcom Food Network	X
Paul Burrill	Fishing	x
Rob Dhaliwal	Export Sales Farming	

Others Present: Ali Jensen, WCHD and FSC staff; Eileen Horn and Caroline Myran, New Venture Advisors; Chelsea McGlothan, WCHD; Von E. Ochoa, Hannah, Sue Roberts, Sam Norris, Public.

Call to order: Riley started the meeting at 4:32 pm.

Land Acknowledgement

Determination of Quorum

Quorum.

Approval of minutes

Nikki motioned, Margaret seconded. All approved.

Public Comment

Sue and Hannah introduced themselves as members of the public and shared their food system interests. Sam from Foothills Food Bank highlighted the growing demand for food bank resources in the face of pandemic SNAP benefits ending at the end of February and asked for support from the Committee.

New Members, New Roles

Trevor Gearhart is the Natural Resources rep and Noelle Beecroft is the Nutrition and Public Health sector rep. Rob Dhaliwal, who was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior commitment, is the export sales farming rep.

The group nominated and voted on a new chair, co-chair, and two co-secretaries. Riley Sweeney will remain chair for this one-year term. Margaret Gerard will remain co-chair for this one-year term, and Nikki Oleson and Noelle Beecroft will share the responsibilities of co-secretary.

Review of where we are and where we are going

Ali shared a slideshow and provided an overview of the history of the food system committee, hiring of New Venture Advisors (NVA), and development of the food system plan. Eileen shared NVA's involvement and leadership in the development of the plan. The plan is almost finished and the next step is to get it adopted by the County Council.

The next steps of the committee are:

- Committee approves plan
- Go to County Council with plan
- Develop an implementation plan and indicators of success
- Implement plan
- Update plan every 3 years

Review of community engagements since last meeting

Ali shared overviews of the Farm to Table Trade Meeting, Food System Committee Open House, two Virtual Open Houses, and the Northwest Ag and Business Center Lunch and Learn.

Community engagements served two purposes: 1- the plan is happening and 2- to get some feedback on the plan. For the Open House, members of the public used a dot survey to express support for specific actions in the plan. The dot survey resulted in a "top 12" actions to highlight that will serve as a quick guide to the food system plan.

Ali shared some of the suggestions from community groups/members. The committee discussed rewording a couple of actions in 1.1. Ali will make agreed-upon edits.

The group also discussed adding an action in 4.3.6 about supporting universal school meals, while also maintaining the integrity of the food, as outlined in the plan. The agreed-upon language is: "The county will support universal school meals, including summer meal programs, that are nutrient-dense, in line with the principles of this food system plan."

Margaret had received several questions about kitchens for producers and was specifically asked if the plan could include something about combining inspection fees for farmers using the same kitchen. Ali suggested this could be explored and supported in a kitchen project she is working on, related to some of the kitchen-related actions in the plan.

Noelle shared some of the policies recently adopted from the National Farm to School Network. Noelle shared the link to the article [here](#).

Adopt the plan

Riley entertained a motion to approve the plan goals, objectives, and actions as-is, with the following changes:

- Re-wording of actions 1.1.1 and 1.1.2
- Including 4.3.6 about universal school meals

Riley moved motion to submit this plan to the County Council. Sean Seconded. All approved, no one voted against. Motion passed.

Next Steps in getting the plan adopted

Ali shared the mock-up of the food system plan and final layout and content review. Next steps include:

- Finalize the design of the plan and share with committee.
- Draft a resolution to accompany the plan
- Committee to advocate for the plan, asking committee members to speak during the council meeting in favor of the plan.
- Riley and Ali to present to the County Council (likely public works and health committee April 11).
- Return to the Council as a whole, likely April 25.

Next meeting: March 28th from 4:30-6:00 pm

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm