



Food Policy Council Meeting Notes December 12th, 2018

Members in Attendance: Ona Balkus; Chris Bradshaw; Val Dolcini; Caesar Layton; Alex Moore; Philip Sambol; Joelle Robinson; Lillie Rosen; Beverly Wheeler; Tandra Stevenson

Ex-Officio Members in Attendance: Marie Whitaker (DMPED); Dan Guilbeault (DOEE); Gizachew Andargeh (DDOT)

Introductions

- a. Director Balkus introduced the FPC members and the ex-officio government representatives.
- b. Because the FPC needed quorum of six voting members to vote and pass the 2019 Priorities and Bylaws and Membership document, the FPC members voted on those items first because one member needed to leave early.
 - a. 2019 Priorities – vote passed with all six voting members approving it.
 - b. Bylaws and Membership – vote passed with all six voting members approving it.

Policy & Legislative Updates

a. Working Group report outs

- a. **Urban Agriculture-** Group discussed opportunities for continued outreach for urban farming programs providing land available for lease ([link here](#)) and tax abatement for up to 90% of private property ([link here](#)). Group wants to further engage UDC to provide technical assistance. The group created its working group meeting schedule, and meetings will take place every month.
- b. **Sustainable Procurement-** Group discussed working with the DC Food Recovery Working Group to assist in implementation of the recently-passed Save Good Food Act of 2018, particularly the tax incentives for businesses and residents that donate healthy food. The group also discussed reaching out to FPCs in other jurisdictions and will circle back in the new year with those updates. Group talked about how to streamline buying food at the District level and how they can improve purchasing and continue to work on developing a Central Kitchen proposal.
- c. **Food Access & Equity-** Group discussed the 2019 strategic priorities, including supporting small footprint stores (doesn't have to be a grocery chain), and other avenues for food access within smaller markets; developing a toolkit for businesses that want to develop small food/grocers/markets etc.; promoting investment of healthcare dollars in healthy food access; establishing online grocery pilot for SNAP or WIC. Group decided to meet every other month, but are still working on the time.
- d. **Nutrition & Food System Education-** Group identified the need for two meetings; one to discuss what's being done at the government level and one to discuss what is happening with Nutrition Education on the ground level. Group also identified several inventories needs to be created on who's doing what. Group did not decide yet on when to meet.



e. **Labor & Business** – didn't meet.

b. Legislation (Information and bill language available at: lims.dccouncil.us)

a. Congrats to all of the advocates and FPC members who worked extremely hard to pass great food policy legislation this year!

b. Food Policy Tracker

i. We've created a new food policy tracker on our website, so you can track the stages of food policy legislation. Check it out [here](#).

c. Recently passed

i. B22-0313 Healthy Students Amendment Act

The bill increases funding for school breakfast; requires breakfast after the bell and allows schools to experiment with alternative breakfast serving models; requires that milk be unflavored and all grain products be whole-grain rich (at least 50% WG); requires OP to study on best practices for building and managing a central kitchen; requires schools to post menu, nutrition, and sourcing information on their websites; requires schools to provide a vegetarian entrée every day and are strongly encouraged to offer a plant-based option; and updates standards for physical education, 1st time standards for pre-K physical activity. As it relates to the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP), it requires baseline and follow up assessment, increase purchasing that meets these standards, schools are "strongly encouraged" to purchase food that aligns with these values

ii. B22-0666 WIC Expansion Act (passed 1st vote unanimously, should pass 2nd by end of December)

The bill prohibits restrictions on the square footage, number of cashiers, or organic products for WIC vendors beyond what is required by USDA; requires the Mayor to report on WIC spending over the past five years and challenges and recommendations for small stores to become authorized WIC vendors; requires DC Health to coordinate with the Department of Health Care Finance and the Department of Human Services to conduct targeted outreach to WIC eligible families not enrolled in WIC; requires DC Health to convene 4 community meetings annually to receive input regarding WIC. This bill language is subject to change before the Council's second vote on the legislation.

iii. B22-207 East End Food Justice Amendment Act of 2018 (passed 1st vote unanimously, should pass 2nd by end of December)

The bill establishes an East End Grocery Incentive Program where the DC government can pay for construction of grocery stores in Wards 7/8 (specific locations). These stores must primarily sell fresh food and accept SNAP and WIC and must be open at least 15 years to receive the full benefit. The fund will sunset after 10 years. This bill language is subject to change before the Council's second vote on the legislation.

d. Introduced (Will not pass this session; will need to be reintroduced)



1. B22-0903 Self-Operated School Food Service Act
2. B22-0955 Healthy Beverages for Kids Meals Act

Food Policy Council Business and Updates

a. 2019 Strategic Priorities

- i. Through many conversations with District agencies, FPC working groups, and community organizations, the FPC has created strategic priorities for food policy it would like the District to focus on in 2019. The FPC voted to make these goals official earlier in the meeting. The 2019 Strategic Priorities are not the goals of the FPC; rather, they are broader priorities and innovative ideas the FPC thinks would help move the needle on important food policy issues in the city.
- ii. The FPC approved the 2019 strategic priorities. You can find more about each strategic priority on our website, [link here](#).

b. Working Group Changes

- i. At the FPC retreat on December 7, the FPC members discussed how working groups could be more productive. Moving forward, the working groups are going to meet separately from the full meeting. The time/location of these meetings and how to join will still be made public. Each working group will invite 4-8 additional people to join as official working group members. The goal of these changes is to be able to meet in different parts of city, attract new audiences, focus on specific topics, and improve the output and progress on these goals.
- ii. *Note:* We've received questions about a working group for food waste and recovered food. While the FPC does not have a specific working group dedicated to food waste, we work closely with and amplify the great work of the DC Food Recovery Working Group, a robust existing group working in the District. Find out more about how to get involved with the DC Food Recovery Working Group [here](#).

c. Website updates

- iii. We've worked to make our website a better resource for those interested in food policy in the District. Check out our website [here](#). You can stay up to date on food legislation with our food policy tracker ([here](#)), check out the progress and current goals of the working groups ([here](#)), and view the meeting dates for 2019 ([here](#)).

Recaps & Updates:

a. Impact of the Proposed Public Charge Rule in the District (Beverley Wheeler)

- i. The proposed rule interprets a provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) pertaining to inadmissibility. The inadmissibility ground at issue says a person is inadmissible if they are likely to become a public charge, designated if they use specific government benefits. (INA § 212(a)(4)). This law only applies to individuals seeking admission into the United States or applying for adjustment of status. This is not a provision of the law that applies to all immigrants. You can learn more about the proposed rule [here](#) with information from Immigrant Legal Resource Center.



- ii. The proposed rule would include the following programs: TANF, cash assistance, SSI, government funded short and long-term care, SNAP, housing assistance, non-emergency Medicaid. The proposed rule would NOT include the following programs: Head Start, CBDG funds, public education services, home visiting, WIC, school breakfast and lunch, and energy assistance.
- iii. The proposed rule will not be retroactive if it becomes final. It will not punish past use of newly included programs, such as Medicaid, housing assistance and SNAP if they were used before the final rule goes into effect.
- iv. The goal was to send 100,000 comments to oppose the proposed rule; there were 230,000 comments. Next step: Department of Homeland Security will review and consider those comments. Final regulations will be published to the Federal Registrar. Groups could potentially sue the government if the proposed rule passes.

b. New FINI Healthy Corners SNAP Incentive Pilot (Alex Moore & Becca Roe)

- i. DCCK Healthy Corners program delivers fresh fruits and vegetables, marketing and technical assistance to participating corner stores. The Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) grant is administered by the USDA and is often used at farmers market with double dollars; this is the first FINI grant to exclusively on corner stores. The grant is for three years for \$500,000.
- ii. The specifics: if you buy \$5 of eligible food products with SNAP, you get \$5 towards purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. The eligible products for the \$5 matching are just fresh fruits and vegetables; canned, frozen, or prepackaged items aren't eligible. DCCK is working to train for clerks and making produce and the price more visible. 17 corner stores in DC will provide double dollars for the program, and folks can redeem their \$5 produce either immediately, in the future at the same store, or in the future at another participating store.
- iii. The program has already been rolled out to 10 stores this month, and the project has shown great initial success. They've already distributed 1,000 coupons; half of the coupons (\$3,000 redeemed already) have already been redeemed. There have been encouraging infrastructure changes already – stores are reporting that they are moving items to make space for more fruit and vegetables and they just ordered 4 new big refrigerators.
- iv. DDCK is currently doing outreach to promote the program and ensure folks know about it – if you or other organizations want to get involved, reach out to DCCK.

c. Community Dinner recap & Community Advocates update (Winnie Huston)

- i. The Community Dinner (held on December 7th) was a great opportunity for residents to be involved and meet the FPC. The planning committee worked with Community Advocates and focused the first dinner on the topic of healthy food and incorporating healthy foods in the diet.



- ii. Thanks to the FPC members who attended, the Community Advocates who helped plan and coordinate the event, the residents who attended, THEARC for hosting the event, and Spike Mendelsohn and his team at Santa Rosa Taqueria for donating the food.
- iii. We plan to host two more dinners in 2019 and convene another group of attendees on a topic related to food policy.
- iv. Community Advocates are starting to prepare for Rooting DC and the Budget Cycle. They will be able to provide more updates at the next FPC meeting including presenting at Rooting DC, identifying barriers Advocates face in accessing healthy food, and ways their allies can be helpful in supporting them in their work for greater food access.
- v. Questions about the Community Advocates programs? Email Winnie@dcgreens.org

d. Martha's Table and Lyft Partnership

- i. On Tuesday, December 11, 2018 Martha's Table and Lyft announced a pilot program to provide local families with \$2.50 Lyft Shared rides to three grocery and market partners in Wards 7 and 8. During a six-month pilot period from January through June, families with children enrolled at six participating elementary schools and Martha's Table Early Childhood Education Center will receive fifty \$2.50 flat fare rides for traveling to and/or from Giant (1535 Alabama Ave SE), Safeway (2845 Alabama Ave SE), and the lobby market at Martha's Table (2375 Elvans Road SE).
- ii. Learn more about the program [here](#), and if you are eligible for the program, you can find the sign-up page [here](#).

e. Farm Bill

- i. We have a Farm Bill! The House and the Senate voted December 11 and December 12 to pass the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is a comprehensive piece of legislation that impacts federal nutrition programs (most notably SNAP) and agricultural programs. Some wins: SNAP was left largely untouched. FINI grant has mandatory funding, and there is new permanent funding for farmers markets and value-added produce grants, and a new office of agriculture and innovation
- ii. You can learn more about the bill's impact on federal nutrition programs [here](#) from the Food Research and Action Center and the impact on agriculture here from the National Sustainable Agricultural Coalition [here](#).

f. 2nd term priorities- public input

- i. The Mayor is looking for input into her 2nd term priorities. Mayor Bowser has challenged her team and the residents of DC to ask the question: "What would you do if you were not afraid to fail?" There are several opportunities for residents to provide input and share their vision for the future using the DC2ME website ([link here](#)) and #DC2ME on twitter. There are also several DC2ME engagement events planned throughout the District for the next few weeks; specific engagement locations can be found [here](#).
- ii. We'd love if you would elevate good food ideas that you care about to the Mayor through this platform. Stuck without an idea? Feel free to pick your favorite of the 2019 Strategic Priorities for Food Policy in the District.



g. Rooting DC 2019

- i. Save the Date for February 23rd for Rooting DC 2019 – a free full day conference on food justice and gardening in the city. This year, the event will be held at Ron Brown High School in Deanwood. Registration for the event will open in January. More info [here](#).

h. Common Threads

- i. Common Threads integrates nutrition education through Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program at schools in the District and are looking for facilitators to teach during the school day. Reach out to Patrick at Common Threads if you are interested; pmcdermott@commonthreads.org.

i. Public Charge Update

- i. Another update on the proposed rule for Public Charge – George Washington University is looking to put out a one-page to dispel some of the myths and some of the facts of the proposed rule if it becomes official.
- ii. Overall, families do seem to be aware of the public charge issue, but myths continue to circulate. Even over the last two years, families have been skeptical to use these services. DC Hunger Solutions and FRAC have been collecting stories and families have been taking less advantage.

j. National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference

- i. The annual National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference will be held on February 24-26, 2019 in the District. There are still scholarships available. More information about the conference is [here](#) and scholarships are [here](#).

Announcements

- a. Next DC FPC Public Meeting -- February 6th, 6-7:30pm
- b. You can find the full list of our 2019 FPC meetings on our website [here](#).