

District of Columbia Food Policy Council
April 3, 2019 6:00-7:30 pm
Meeting Notes

FPC Attendance: Caesar Layton, Emi Reyes, Joelle Robinson, Philip Sambol, Tambra Stevenson

Ex-Officio Attendance: Dan Guilbeault (DOEE), Lindsey Palmer (OSSE), Marie Whittaker (DMPED)

1. Introductions

- a. Director Ona Balkus is on maternity leave and will return in late May (ona.balkus@dc.gov)
 - i. Interim Contact: Food Policy Analyst Emily Johnson (emily.johnson@dc.gov)
- b. Food Policy Council Members
 - i. New member: **Emi Reyes** will be the new co-chair of the Sustainable Procurement working group.
 1. Emi is a Microfinance Loan Officer at the Latino Economic Development Center. She has years of involvement in the food system and restaurant industry. Prior to joining LEDC, she worked throughout Central America with farmers and organizations looking to establish an eco-tourism co-op. Most recently she worked for Chipotle Mexican Grill in various capacities both in the DMV area as well as in Albany, New York.
 - ii. Two FPC members resigned due to changes in residency:
 1. Alex Moore, co-chair of the Sustainable Procurement working group. We are so thankful for his work in developing the FPC as a force for community change and look forward to having him as a continued community partner.
 2. Val Dolcini, co-chair of the Urban Agriculture working group. We want to thank Val for his work and wish him well as he transitions to working in CA Governor Newsom's administration.

2. Working Group Updates

- a. Find more information on the working groups [here](#).
- b. Find more information on the 2019 DC Food Policy Priorities on the website [here](#).
- c. Urban Ag – working on strengthening a partnership with UDC; next working group meeting will include presentations from UDC; also working on understanding the land grant opportunities
- d. Sustainable Procurement – working to connect with regional groups, will provide an update on the Good Food Purchasing Program at the next working group meeting; highlighted that the central kitchen study from the HSAA was not funded in the proposed FY 2020 budget – you can testify on the central kitchen funding during the OSSE budget hearing on April 9th
- e. Nutrition & Food System Education – DC Health's SNAP-Ed presented at the working group meeting; working to continue to assess the current nutrition education landscape and the different stakeholders involved
- f. Food Equity & Access/ Business & Labor – did not meet before the meeting

3. Policy & Legislative Updates

- a. As we discussed at our FPC February meeting, we are in the middle of oversight and budget hearing season. Agencies have had their performance oversight hearings over the past two months and have now started to have budget hearings.
- b. FPC Performance Oversight and Director Confirmation Hearings
 - i. The FPC performance oversight & Director confirmation hearings went really well. Thanks so much to the advocates who came and provided testimony for both the oversight and confirmation.
 - ii. Ona was unanimously confirmed as the Food Policy Director on March 5, and this was made official in the DC register on the 29th of March!
- c. FY 2020 Budget Updates
 - i. Mayor’s Budget & Food Policy Additions
 - 1. Mayor Bowser submitted her proposed budget for FY 2020 to Council on March 20th, and now Council will spend the rest of April in budget oversight hearings. You can check out the FY20 budget materials [here](#). We wanted to highlight a few big items including relevant school meal funding, healthy retail development, and healthy food access programs.
 - 2. Healthy Students Amendment Act – **school breakfast or the central kitchen study** were not funded in the proposed budget. To be fully funded, there needs to be an increase of \$3.3 million for the school breakfast reimbursement called for in the HSAA. The budget also did not include the \$100 K needed for a central kitchen facility (called for in the HSAA) which would allow the Office of Planning (where the FPC is housed) to develop recommendations for building and managing a central kitchen.
 - 3. Other changes to local healthy food access programs run by DC Health

Program	FY20 Amount	FY19 Amount
Joyful Markets (decreased of 4%)	1,440,000	1,500,000
Mobile Markets (no change)	50,000	50,000
Produce Plus (decrease of 8% -- 100k)	1,100,000	1,200,000
Produce Rx (not funded)	-	500,000
Healthy Corners (decrease of 20%)	400,000	500,000

- 4. Other DC Health changes – one-time increase for the Health Regulation and Licensing Administration of \$560K for 5 FTE for enhanced customer service within the Food Safety and Hygiene Inspection Services Divisions
- 5. DMPED changes – one-time increase of \$1 million for the Neighborhood Prosperity Fund and Great Streets Initiatives

6. DSBLD changes – one-time increases for entrepreneurial programming -- \$250K for Aspire to Entrepreneurship and \$200K for Dream Grant Funding; but reduction of Healthy Retail Program grants by \$37K (-30% from FY 19)
 7. DPW’s Office of Waste Diversion changes – one-time increase of \$270K for professional service costs and 2 FTEs which will be help with the District’s organics diversion goals
 8. OP changes – the FPC did not receive a renewal of operating funding; FY19 was \$25K
 9. Many institutional meal programs were funded at the same amount that they were in FY 19 including senior meals and commodity food programs, school meals, and home-delivered meals
- d. Other hearings
- i. **There are several upcoming opportunities to provide in person testimony or submit written testimony during the different agency budget hearings**
 1. Previously held: DOEE, DLSBD, DCPS, DPW, OP, and DGS
 2. Department of Parks and Recreation – April 5
 3. Office of the State Superintendent – April 9
 4. Department of Health – April 9
 5. Department of Human Services – April 10
 6. DC Housing Authority – April 11
 7. Department of Employment Services – April 22
 8. Workforce Investment Council – April 22
 9. Department of Housing and Community Development – April 23
 - ii. Find the full list of agency budget hearings [here](#).
 - iii. While in-person testimony can be the most impactful, you can also submit written testimony.
 - iv. Check out DC Fiscal Policy Institute’s Residents Guide to the DC Budget for more information about the budget process and how to get involved [here](#).
- e. After the agency budget hearings, we still aren’t done yet. The Council will hold a hearing on the Mayor’s budget proposal on April 26 and then Council committees will then hold budget markups in early May. They will vote on the budget twice – the first is scheduled on May 14 and the second is scheduled for May 28. **If all goes well and on time, we should be able to report on the budget in our next FPC meeting in June 5th.**
- f. Finally, the Trump Administration also submitted their proposed budget for FY 2020 earlier in March. While not a surprise, there was a proposed cut of \$220 billion from SNAP over the next decade with proposed reforms including mandatory work requirements and food box delivery services in lieu of current EBT cash benefits. Overall the budget proposes to cut the USDA by \$3.6 billion or 15% of the 2019 estimate and also proposes to cut \$845 billion from Medicare and \$241 billion from Medicaid over the next 10 years

- i. We will be monitoring whether any of these changes are incorporated into Congress's budget

g. New Food Policy Bills

- i. Our DC Food Policy Tracker is updated for recent food bills introduced thus far in 2019. Check it out [here](#).
- ii. B23-0131 Ward 7 & Ward 8 Restaurant Incentive Program Establishment Act of 2019
 - 1. Feb 5: Introduced by Councilmembers White and Gray and referred to Committee on Business and Economic Development
 - 2. It would establish the Ward 7 and Ward 8 Restaurant Incentive Program within the Department of Small and Local Business Development to provide funding, business development assistance, incubation services, and technical assistance to those seeking to open a new restaurant or food establishment in Ward 7 or Ward 8. The program would:
 - a. Attract sit down restaurants and other food businesses to underserved retail corridors in Ward 7 and 8
 - b. Provide start up grant and loan financing for those restaurants
 - c. Provide business training services to business owners seeking to open a restaurant or food establishment like training and technical assistance
 - d. Also calls for a study evaluating incentives for the development of new restaurants and food establishments in 7 and 8 out of DSLBD.
 - 3. Currently there are just a handful of restaurants (less than 10 full-service, sit-down restaurants) in Ward 7/8; Washington City Paper in December.
- iii. B23-0180 On Site Services Act
 - 1. March 5: Introduced by basically the whole council and referred to Committee on Human Services and Committee on Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization
 - 2. Would require qualifying housing providers (at least 20 separate dwelling units with at least 30% of dwelling units are leased to recipients of housing assistance) to provide on-site services including food and nutrition services but also includes other services like health services, legal services, childcare, education, employment, afterschool programs, social activities
 - 3. Would establish a program – the On-Site Services Program – that provides funding to qualifying housing provides for on-site services and establishes monitoring and evaluation and social work services
- iv. B23-0192 Cottage Food Expansion Act
 - 1. March 19: Introduced by Councilmembers Cheh and Gray and referred to Committee on Health; as you might remember, we had Brooke and Ellen from the Institute for Justice in February who presented on the cottage food act
 - 2. Would amend the Cottage Food Act of 2013 and would:

- a. Remove the \$25,000 ban
 - b. Expand the venue of where cottage food producers can sell their food, from farmer’s market or public event to “directly to consumers”
 - c. Eliminate the DC Health inspection before the business can sell their products
- v. B23-0231 Healthy Shelters Act of 2019
- 1. April 2: Introduced by Councilmembers Cheh and Silverman and referred to Committee on Human Services
 - 2. The legislation would essentially do what the Healthy Schools Act did for school meals, but for shelter meals and would:
 - a. Establish nutrition standards and requirements for meals served in shelters;
 - b. Ensure adequate meals in times of weather emergencies; encourages local foods to be served in shelters;
 - c. Require that Department of Human Services be directly responsible for all contracts, reporting, and compliance regarding homeless shelter food services;
 - d. Establish monitoring requirement for food services;
 - e. Permit the use of donated and recovered food at shelters;
 - f. Ensure nonprofit organizations are not competitively disadvantaged when bidding for homeless shelter food services;
 - g. Establish grants for nutrition education, gardens, and play structures at family shelters; and
 - h. Require shelters to provide employment services for residents experiencing homelessness
- vi. Two bills have been reintroduced from last session
- 1. B23-0122 Cashless Retailers Act of 2019
 - a. Reintroduced on February 5 by Councilmembers Grosso, Nadeau, Gray, Bonds, T. White, and Chairman Mendelson and referred to Committee of the Whole
 - b. Would prohibit retailers (defined as those with business licenses, not just food retailers) from refusing to accept cash as payment, posting that cash is not accepted, or charging different prices to customers based on their payment method
 - 2. B23-0190 Healthy Beverages for Kids Meals Act of 2019
 - a. Reintroduced March 13 by Councilmembers Nadeau and Grosso and referred to Committee on Business and Economic Development and Committee on Health

- b. We discussed this legislation in our December meeting, but the legislation would require food establishments that sell kids' meals with beverages to offer water, nonfat milk or non-dairy alternatives, or 100% water with no added sweeteners
- c. Would not prohibit ability to sell or buy a substitute or alternative if requested

h. You can also check out what bills from the 2017-2018 legislative season have yet to be funded [here](#).

4. Food Policy Council Updates

a. International Food Security Delegation

- i. The FPC hosted a delegation of international food security officials to discuss the District's food policy efforts and initiatives including urban agriculture and healthy food access programs. Beverley presented on behalf of the FPC with the Office of Planning Director Andrew Trueblood. We had 16 guests from countries around the world who got to hear about the efforts we are working on and challenges we are addressing in the city. Learn more [here](#).

b. Proposed SNAP Work Requirements Rule guide

- i. The USDA issued a proposed SNAP rule that would restrict the way that states, including the District, provide SNAP benefits to certain able-bodied adults without dependents. The federal rule is estimated to eliminate SNAP benefits for as many as 755,000 people across the country and reduce benefits by \$15 billion over ten years. If enacted, this rule will reduce SNAP participation, increase food insecurity and poverty among low-income populations, and harm local communities and their economies.
- ii. The District's Department of Human Services estimates that nearly 20,000 ABAWDS live in the District and could potentially be impacted by this rule.
- iii. We created a guide to spread the word about the proposed rule and how residents could get involved. Mayor Bowser submitted a rule on behalf of the District; the DC Council submitted a comment; and Attorney General Karl Racine submitted a comment with other AGs from around the country.
- iv. When we checked this morning, there were more than 36,000 comments from folks around the country who weighed in on the proposed rule.
- v. **Due to a technical issue, the USDA will reopen the comment period between April 8 and April 10. It's not too late to submit a comment against this proposed rule. Check out our updated guide here to learn more about the rule and how to get involved [here](#).**

c. Proposed Public Charge rule update

- i. We also wanted to provide an update on the proposed Public Charge rule. We covered the public charge rule back in December, but basically the rule would count receiving SNAP benefits as a potential reason for being denied a green card or visas.

1. The proposed rule would include the following programs: TANF, cash assistance, SSI, government funded short and long-term care, SNAP, housing assistance, nonemergency 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.
- ii. The latest from our friends over at FRAC: The USDA is reviewing the 260,000 comments submitted regarding the public charge rule. Advocates are monitoring the rule and analyzing comments as they become available online. The regulations have not gone into effect. If and when a final rule is published, there will be at least 60 days before it takes effect. You can learn more about the proposed public charge rule here from our friends at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center [here](#).

5. Local Spotlight Presentations

- a. We were so excited to highlight innovative food policy work happening in the city. We had originally scheduled having the urban land lease awardees present on their plans for their farms, but instead have them present at upcoming June meeting (June 5th).
- b. **Food & Friends Meal Delivery for Pregnant Women**
 - i. One of the 2019 DC Food Policy priorities is supporting “food as medicine” programs; check out the full list of 2019 priorities [here](#).
 - ii. Carrie Stoltzfus & Liz Sanders from Food & Friends and Rebecca Landucci of AmeriHealth Caritas DC presented on their program of providing tailored home-delivered meals and nutrition education to pregnant women in the Bright Start program and their families; meals continue for 56 days after birth
 - iii. Learn more about the program and check out their powerpoint presentation [here](#).
- c. District Grant Opportunities
 - i. **Robust Retail Grant – DSBLD**
 1. This grant will provide up to \$20,000 per business with working capital to help existing businesses adapt their business model and meet changing customer demand. Only accredited DC Main Streets program are eligible to apply for this grant on behalf of businesses within their corridor.
 2. There is a total of \$450,000 in grant funding available.
 3. Deadline is **April 11 at 12 pm**
 4. Find more information at the DSLBD website [here](#).
 - ii. **Upcoming OSSE Grants**
 1. Lindsey Palmer (lindsey.palmer@dc.gov) and Beth Hanna (Elizabeth.hanna@dc.gov) presented on a few upcoming grants for OSSE this spring.
 2. Several upcoming grant opportunities
 - a. You can see all of the grant opportunities at the OSSE FY 2019-20 Grant Forecast (note that there are non-food grants on here too, so look for the

food and nutrition grants; you can search “health and wellness” in the search and find) [here](#).

- b. School Gardens Grant – anticipated release in May; 11 awards of up to \$35,000 per school
- c. Healthy Tots Grant – anticipated release of Summer 2019; 6 awards available for a total of \$100,000
- d. Farm Field Trips – released April 4; slight change from a grant to a contract. Since it is now a contract (as compared to a competitive grant), it will only be open until **Thursday, April 11th**
 - i. Check out the information at the Office of Contracting and Procurement by searching for Doc436403 at their website under the “open” tab [here](#).
 - ii. Questions can be directed to Paul Kiingi at paul.kiingi@dc.gov or **(202) 741-6416**

d. Community Advocates Update – Winnie Huston

- i. The Advocates have had an incredibly busy spring. They co-hosted a training on the budget (in partnership with Martha’s Table, DC Hunger Solutions, and DC Central Kitchen) last month and had lots of folks attend and learn how to prepare testimony for the upcoming budget hearings.
- ii. They are working with Martha’s Table and Lyft to create a pilot program for transporting seniors living in Wards 7 & 8 to the three grocery stores in those wards and Martha’s Table Market. Rides are subsidized at \$1.50 per ride, and seniors in the program can add another person on the ride for just \$1 more. The program will run from April to the end of June.
- iii. They also hosted an event at the Ward 8 Giant to introduce the community to the new Giant Nutritionist, Jillian Griffith
- iv. They are also planning the next Community Luncheon with the FPC; the event will be held on Saturday, May 4th in Ward 8
- v. Do you have questions about the Community Advocates or any of these initiatives? Reach out to Winnie at winnie@dcgreens.org.

6. Announcements (7:15/7:20-7:30 pm)

- a. Next meeting: Wednesday, June 5th 6-7:30 pm; location TBA
- b. Next working group meetings– check out the meeting dates and locations [here](#); we will update the meeting times and locations once they are finalized.
- c. **Other announcements**
- d. Community Family Life Services is providing a “Spring into Health” Wellness Fair on April 25th. If you are interested in tabling at the event, email hannahjstton@gmail.com

- e. Common Good City Farm has a large fridge if anyone is interested in a free fridge; hasn't been plugged in for a few weeks, since it blows the power at the farm. You must pick up the fridge. Contact Sam at sam@commongoodcityfarm.org if you are interested.
- f. DC Food Rescue Chapter will be hosting a celebration and fundraiser on May 6 (from 6:30-8:30 pm) to celebrate the 1 million pounds of healthy food diverted from the landfill with the Food Runner program. Find more information on their website [here](#).
- g. The District's Sustainability Awards will be held on April 17 (5:00-7:30 pm) at Eastern Market. Come by and celebrate different winners of sustainability in the District; there are going to be some food winners! Find out more information about the event [here](#).
- h. DC Central Kitchen and its partners are planning a Nutrition Educator Summit for this summer. They will be releasing a survey in the next week for potential attendees at the summit. Contact Patrick McDermott at Common Threads if you are interested in learning more: pmcdermott@commonthreads.org.
- i. The DC Metro Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics will have their Annual Meeting on April 12th at American University. The theme this year is "Creating Conscious Consumers" and all are welcome to attend. You can learn more about the meeting and how to register [here](#). They will also hold a panel called "Diversifying Dietetics Now and in the Future" on April 12th at 9:15 am. If you are interested in learning more, email Camille Range (the moderator of the panel) at diversity@eatright.org.
- j. UDC is hosting their 5th annual Food Justice Youth Summit on Friday, April 12th (9:30 am–3:00 pm). Find more information about the event [here](#).
- k. OSSE will host their annual Strawberries and Salad Greens Day on Wednesday, June 5th. They serve local strawberries and salad greens to the students and bring in farmers to talk about growing food. Email Lindsey Palmer if you are interested in volunteering or learning more about the event at lindsey.palmer@dc.gov.