Meeting
August 15, 2013
UC Cooperative Extension
Minutes

Attendees:
Suzanne Simpson – Locally Delicious
Ann Anderson – Locally Delicious
Eric Derden-Little – CAFF
Fawn Scheer – Greenway Partners
Joseph Ormond – Transition Humboldt
Danielle Stubblefield – self
Michelle Wyler – CAFF
Colleen Ogle – PHB

Linda Prescott – HCOE
Dorina Espinoza – UCCE
Barbara O’Neal – DHHS
Anne Holcomb – Food for People
Debbie Perticara – NCGC
Melanie Bettenhausen – NC Coop
Laura McEwen – CCRP
Kristina Bollmann – CCRP

Presentation on Food System Alliance by Ag Innovations by Fawn Scheer and Erin Derden-Little

The Food System Alliance is the same kind of idea as the Food Policy Council, only it is broader than just policy. The term Food System Alliance is used by the organization Ag Innovations Network (www.aginnovations.org) to describe their member groups that are part of a network of Alliances coordinated by Ag Innovations.

The ideas behind the FSA:
- Address complexities, put together thought out process, bring people together to address problems, identify as a group.
- No one stakeholder has the whole view; FSAs include stakeholders from the entire food system spectrum (from farmworkers to public health representatives) and are facilitated to include voices from across the spectrum.
- Issues addressed by FSAs are complex and the FSA model works to enable better understanding of those complexities by its participants.
- Need 30-40 committed members representing all areas of the food system.
- Deliberative process of stakeholder engagement (12-18 months of listening and learning before direct actions are taken as a group).
- The FSA process develops a strong shared understanding of the issues in food system.
- Create consensus recommendations to policy makers and community.
- Go thru 1 year process before starting active work.
- Ag Innovations currently has 8 FSAs across California. They have informational resources to share; they have funding to start 2 new FSAs.
- Change has been created by FSAs, look at Ag Innovations website for policy successes.
- This option requires funding. There is an 18 month to 2 year process with stakeholders. A staff person is assigned to FSA’s. Will work with local people to fundraise.
- AIN is currently developing a new model that would focus on capacity building for individual FSAs, expect locals to keep going after 2 years.
- Ag Innovations provides a facilitator for FSA.
- Convening partners part of process committee; provide leadership, credibility.
- Multiple interests/missions.
- Producers/distributors are among stakeholders represented across board of sectors.
• FSAs generally hold 10 3-hr meetings per year.
• Work to find common ground
• Members are expected to serve on 1 subcommittee and participate in a certain amount of meetings per year

This presentation of the Food Systems Alliance is not an offer on the part of Ag Innovations to bring a charter into this area. It is being presented as an organizational option/model to consider.

Question: What is the distinction between Food System Alliance & Food Policy Council?
Discussion:
• Mainly semantic. Appears that their intent to name so addresses full system of issues.
• Define what you want to do.

Question: How much focus of the FSA is on the bigger network, state policies vs. regional?
Discussion:
• FSA within region focuses on regional, but part of statewide group. Might be there if someone wanted to be involved. Might want to take action if state policy affects regional.
• Semantics are important for members who report to board. FSA sounds broader than FPC. Name feels freer. Like idea of having larger organization to use as resource.

Question:
Like FSA, but if we use term, have they trademarked it? Would we be required to join their org if we use name?
• To be determined

Question:
This FPC has been together several years; do we need outside structure to help us pull it together?

Review of draft charter based on the Sonoma FSA charter and revised by Sara Mosser

Redwood Empire Food Bank was part of a local FSA. The focus changed and the FSA was not looking at issues of hunger, so the REFB has not been involved with the FSA for awhile. Went to every meeting for 3 years and was frustrated. Questions raised about what is representation/member participation like in real life, not just on paper.

Sonoma FSA charter: very clear, concise, defines really well.

Focus conversation:

Group shared word or phrases they liked from the presentation:
• Principles of engagement
• Collaboration
• Impetus
• Facilitated process
• Membership consistent & define what involves
• Have we already been here?
- A lot was in place-sense of impatience, more process. Looking for shortcut because group has already been thru this... Efficiency
- Efficiency & focus, likes word Alliance.
- Criteria determining advocacy and action
- Rules/responsibilities, like food system
- Consensus/commitment
- Need to include all parts of food system, move to action, something needs to happen.
- All stakeholders.
- Group forming & meshing, has we visited this before?

Group shared what elements of FSA we like:
- Like name, clear, concise,
- Systems that are replicable
- Experience of AIN leading FSA development
- It’s done (the charter).
- Fully fleshed out charter
- Don’t have to reinvent everything
- Membership criteria (30-40 members, breadth of membership representation)
- Like criteria action/advocacy, don’t know how it works but nice framework
- Like steps in issue-action process from PowerPoint, curious how it actually plays out
- Stakeholder representation
- Inclusion. Like how they define. Breadth of inclusion, aspects of food system
- Having a facilitator is part of it.
- Had a solution for time sensitive decision making
- No comment is a support.
- Feeds up to national level, to be part of larger movement.

What concerns/turnoffs?
- 18 months! Too long for process to be desirable
- Amount of funding needed seems daunting
- Need to know what they’ve done, see how well it’s worked. Need anecdotal info (not just from AIN)
- Farmer participation? Redwood empire food bank said as well. Very important stakeholder.
- Acknowledge difficulty, intention to include farmers helps (i.e. when/where meeting), this reflected by the group’s mindfulness of farmer growing schedules when planning meetings.
- Outside facilitator – can catalyze group, but can also be challenging.
- Time period of 18 months then they’re gone... what’s the transition? Facilitator continues after the 18 months. Forever? Till the money runs out! But they are shifting to them leaving after 2 years. Transition/capacity building potentially challenging.
- Youth – no mention of intentionality of youth engagement.
- Requirement that member attends 90% of regular meetings doesn’t really work. Too many meetings. Or a different thing, like have to attend last few meetings to vote. Good framework but a lot of info/pieces missing. Issues that are going to come up.
- FSAs separate nonprofit, corporation, what is legal business structure? None—they are a collaborative.
- Representation – who are they? Agencies rather than individual, partnership doesn't have a say on who represents agency. Discuss what kind of say you want to have. Councils don't have to worry about this, collaboratives do.
- Wonder about impact that this type of Alliance has on things identified as important by our FPC, e.g. water, land use, etc.
- Retention may be a challenge if we go thru 18 month process

What are questions?
- How is stakeholder involvement dealt with in terms of who represents an agency or organization? How is the variance in who comes to meeting to represent an organization accounted for – do they represent an individual or organizational voice? Difference between a person assigned to a group, and someone who is really engaged. Membership issue goes deeper than what we see.
- Participation: would having a new facilitative process bring more people to the group, would it feel fresh and new enough to re-engage, and bring more or less people to the table?
- Should we poll the group?
- What have these groups succeeded in accomplishing?
- How/who to secure funding? How much influence do they have in the group?
- Does a different process or model have different costs?
- What would be involved in finding someone to play facilitator role for 18 month process?
- Could Ag Innovations be a resource? Access to systems they have already tried would be key, to reduce amount of work for facilitator.
- What do the HFPC archives say? Look at notes etc. from early FPC meetings. Worked really hard to get people there. Skipped process early on. Not really a facilitator to get from that work done.
- Rather have smaller group of really motivated people. Can fill the room, but not with the people who will really stick, they want to hear, but not to work necessarily.

What new perspective has this given you?
- A motivated group makes things happen.
- Wonder if we’re stuck because of who/where we are in agencies & age. Wondering if we’re stuck on physical presence at the meetings. Step outside of physical presence as a form of commitment.
- Current group motivation seems low. Committee work, very low motivation. Lucky if we get 30 people who will open FPC emails.
- Maybe people aren’t coming because they aren’t seeing things being done.
- Conversation has been leaning towards “what are we doing?”
- If we can give people reason to join, they will come. If we have an issue to rally around, it might increase participation.
- What is the plan, what are the issues? Sometimes people might not attend because not sure where group is going.
- Self-selection by individual passion may produce more opportunity for engagement.
- We need to create opportunities for people to contribute.
• Maybe the loss in participation occurred after (DHHS) grants were announced. Maybe people felt like they were left out. Big drop after that. Maybe should have been more reaching out to those who didn’t get grants, make them feel part of.
• Food system very complex, many stakeholders. Group not going to solve unless get all players at the table.
• Excited when talking about Ag Innovations. Over course of conversation, when it became clear not happening, excitement went down. Getting it going first, then involving people as it can, rather than starting with the stakeholders first.
• Participation may increase once we build something, once people can see that action is being taken.
• Had conversation with HAF, people come in with money and want to help with food system, nowhere for it to go.
• We could request Ag Innovations to come to Humboldt, but not a possibility at present.
• It would be good to get an update on Del Norte FPC to see how their program is working with childcare, etc. Actually they want to come see us. They are ok but having same concerns as us.
• Possibility of other organizations to help us.
• We need to look into other models or organizations.
• Need to see balance between vision, commitment, and process. Process is not everyone’s passion.

Action ideas:
• Reviewing the past notes, see if these ideas, elements of the charter, have come up before.
• 18 month process could be shortened, already have done a lot of work and relationship building
• Want information about what other FSA’s have accomplished.
• Examples of achievable goals
• Creating own leadership within group, take own role of managing, have CCRP play more role of support. Distance from CCRP, push own agenda. Have executive committee
• See other models
• Food system goals: much broader than policy. Is this group broader than policy or dedicated to policy? Action oriented policy. Less focus on those things recently. Sense is that if freed from the policy label, would go into other directions.
• Funding needs, how much is current budget? Is it limited to CCRP staff?
• Beyond seeing what other FSA’s have accomplished, to get a real idea what their membership is. Their active membership & participation at different levels, not just on paper.
• Participation at neighborhood is at low level participation.
• Need for regional subcommittees rather than by topic only?
• Danielle: Once we have steps, take on a road trip to share.
• Is Sonoma model a model worth pursuing in depth, or should we look at others?
• Find out current CCRP budget for supporting HFPC – what funding has been used by CCRP - this can help us discern additional funding needs

Steps:
• What have these FSA’s accomplished? If others haven’t done something, would that be a barrier? Maybe it would work here.
• Why hasn’t FPC worked here? What about calling other FPC’s and finding out what they have done?
- If someone else has been successful, that makes you feel more confident to move forward. Don’t want to keep spinning wheels. Want something to grab on to.
- We’re not an “official” food policy council.
- Looking at what has already been done. Food policy goals, interests.
- When we were beginning and looking at orgs, hard to find out which are successful. Also they are different. Have to figure out how we work.
- People are tired of process. More examining, more research, will feel like wheels spinning.
- Membership. Variety of people. Are you going to commit to 8 meetings? Like idea of making decisions based on charter.
- Revisit overview of FPC structures.
- This structure is pretty good, just go with it. Stick with this one because it’s pretty good, make sure everyone agrees on it, then it becomes like the floor.
- When we first started, brainstorming about policies. One was for DHHS to partner with community orgs, and that happened. Want to go back and revisit these ideas.
- Been here so long and people are burned out on figuring out process, but we’ll end up here in 6 months again if we don’t come up with a good foundation.
- FSA charter – have to put work into it.
- Form a “Process committee” for those who want to work through some of the internal process issues
- Danielle: will go over past meetings and do a 2 page summary of what was agreed to.
- Have what people like about charter, just plug into model.
- Debbie, Danielle, Laura, Barbara O., Fawn will plug work already done into model charter.

Announcements:

- Harvest of the Month and Farmer to School collaborative fundraiser dinner on September 17, 2013 at Moonstone Grill at 6:00 PM. Seven chefs and seven courses for $100 per ticket.
- Food for People and other partners are presenting the movie A Place at the Table, panel discussion and a call to action on September 17, 2013 at HSU’s Kate Buchanan Room at 4:30 PM and on September 26, 2013 at Calvary Lutheran Church in Eureka at 4:30 PM. Free and refreshments will be available.
- CAFF Study of aggregate/distribution potential models is released. Proud of it, lay of the land, all players of local food system. Part of bigger CCRP strategic plan. Great recommendations.
- On September 18th, a chef & school food director from Santa Cruz will do training with public school salad bar equipment purchased with CalFresh grant money.
- Laura going to California Food Policy Council meeting in LA in September.
- On Thursday, August 30th will be the raffle for Backpacks for Kids. The grand prize is b$2500 travel voucher. There is a form on Food for Peoples website for purchasing tickets. On September 14th, the beer sales at Roller Derby will be for FFP.
- UC Cooperative Extension celebrating 100th year here. Dinner at the Arcata Community Center on Friday, September 13th. Sliding scale.