Humboldt Food Policy Council
Feb 27, 2012
Humboldt Area Foundation, 5:30 – 7:45 pm
NOTES

CCRP: Connie Stewart, Danielle Stubblefield, Melissa Jones, Alissa Leigh

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Recap of Humboldt Food Policy Council (Danielle Stubblefield)
   Briefly reviewed our history. 2010 contained three meetings of the Food Policy Task Force where we learned about other Food Policy Councils, discussed the value of coming together, and decided upon our operating structure for the first year of the Council. In 2010 we also participated in the mapping of Humboldt County’s food system ‘strengths’ and ‘needs’ and CCRP wrote/presented the Humboldt County Community Food Assessment report.
   In 2011 we kicked off our first official year as the Humboldt Food Policy Council and held five meetings. The first meeting began with brainstorming on ‘Opportunities’ and ‘Challenges’ associated with various food policy topics, as well as adding more topics to the list. At our April and June meetings we worked in small groups on Policy Action Plans – taking those brainstormed ideas and writing out the steps it would take to achieve them. In September various participants in the Council reported in-depth on the progress of work they’d been doing. In December we discussed the grants that are available for food systems work on an annual basis and how to work together to prepare for them, as well as some deeper questions about our overall group mission and goals.

3. Opportunities for 2012 (Connie Stewart and Donna Wheeler)
   The county’s Department of Health and Human Services has funds for CalFresh outreach. CalFresh, which used to be called Food Stamps, has changed many of its enrollment procedures and requirements in recent years and these funds are to help potential program participants learn about CalFresh and enroll. The Department also wants CalFresh participants to be educated about healthy choices, and have access to healthy choices. Every year $28.5 million worth of federal benefits that could be used in our county goes un-used because roughly 50% of people who are eligible for CalFresh are not enrolled.
   In December several groups submitted proposals to DHHS for creative ways to help connect food insecure populations with CalFresh and healthy food access. CCRP submitted a proposal that would allow the Food Policy Council to carry out many of the Policy Action Plans and other ideas that it has
discussed over the past two years. In 2012 the Food Council will be creating a Strategic Plan for carrying out the various projects and goals that were submitted. Final approval is still pending.

Food for People also has funding pending from DHHS that will allow them to create a mobile produce pantry, to increase the Market Match program at the NCGA farmers’ markets, and carry out other projects.

4. Review of Food Policy Council Structure (Connie and Danielle)
This discussion began with a review of decisions made in Oct 2010 for the FPC’s first year, which at the time it was agreed that we would re-visit them after a year of operations.

- **Government affiliation or not?** Discussion and decision: we will continue to be non-governmental, but will look to include greater participation of leaders from all levels of government in our FPC. We already have ‘clout’ with governmental entities, but want to strengthen that so they look to us for input or even recommendations on food policy issues (i.e., we aren’t the County’s or any city’s Food Policy Council, but any one of them can say, “hey, we’ll ask those knowledgeable folks at the Food Policy Council what they think”).

- **Representation made up of organizations, individuals, or both?** Discussion and decision: Currently the FPC is made up of both organizations (agencies, businesses, etc.) and individuals and it was decided to keep it this way.

- **Should membership be limited or open?** Discussion: Most FPC’s aim to have all sectors of the food system represented\(^1\), as well as a diversity of consumer groups (i.e. Tribes, Latinos, children, seniors, etc.). We currently (based on Oct 2010 decision) have open membership, meaning that anyone who wants to come and participate is welcome. All FPC’s are different, but some have a limited number of official Council members (for example 14 in Del Norte County) that specifically represent the diversity of the food system (i.e. 2 farmers, 2 food retailers, 1 senior advocate, 1 representative from each City government, and so on)

  Benefits of our current open membership are that anyone can participate, people can attend based on their interest in the topic at hand, and it doesn’t limit the involvement or decision making to only a selected number. Drawbacks discussed of our current membership are that we don’t have a diversity of food system sectors represented nor diversity of consumer groups, and that with inconsistent involvement we don’t establish a strong foundation of shared knowledge and experience on our selected food Policy Topics.

  It was also pointed out that networks can be controversial, people who don’t attend or feel left out can raise a ruckus in the media. How keep it welcoming, but clearly define membership? How address retention and sustainability?

  Ideas: go forward with the strategic planning for the CalFresh outreach, which will further clarify our needs and goals; members can help with recruitment of new FPC participants; we can

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\(^{1}\) The Five Sectors of the Food System:
1) Food Production (such as agriculture, fisheries, community gardens)
2) Processing (both large scale and small)
3) Distribution (including such things as transportation and storage)
4) Food Retail & Consumption (this includes farmers’ markets, restaurants and grocers, but also includes all the various consumer groups and related programs/services such as food pantries, senior meals, school lunches, public health, etc.)
5) Food Waste and Recycling (includes landfills, composting, food scrap diversion)
recruit people for involvement in Workgroups to help them feel comfortable and work their way up to the Council.

There was need for longer discussion than we had time for, so this decision was tabled until the next meeting.

- **Shall CCRP continue to host the Humboldt Food Policy Council?** Discussion and decision: the group said, ‘yes’ CCRP should continue to host (thank you).
- **How often should we meet?** Discussion and decision: Start earlier (at 5:00pm); meet at Ag Center or somewhere else that has larger capacity; what works for farmers?; form subcommittees/workgroups; let the need and project determine frequency.

  With that in mind, the strategic planning needs to move forward quickly, so it was decided to meet monthly in April, May and June. Probably go to bi-monthly after that.

  Another idea is to set a date for once a month, that way everyone keeps it open, then cancel as soon as possible when it’s determined that it isn’t necessary to meet (this may help with smaller Workgroups, as they could still meet on that date). The details can be worked out before June.

  [Tangent: there was an idea that all of the groups working on CalFresh outreach meet together on a Saturday to meet each other and inform one another of the various ways they are working on this effort.]

As a second part of the FPC structure discussion, we planned to review some of the key feedback that came up in the last (Dec 2011) meeting.

- **Use Basecamp more for information sharing, coordination and ‘group memory’:** There was a lot of talk about this in December, but not much utilization by FPC participants. Some communicated confusion and/or difficulties. We planned to do a brief Basecamp tutorial to familiarize the group with using the site, but there wasn’t time for this. It is tabled until the next meeting.
- **Develop a clearer ‘big vision’ for the Food Policy Council, write a Mission Statement:** CCRP proposed to establish a committee to work with Danielle on drafting a Mission Statement before the next meeting. There wasn’t much interest; it was proposed she look up other FPC examples and bring them back to the group. This all needs to be further discussed – developing a committee didn’t seem a desirable way to deal with it!
- **Develop an ‘inventory’ of Food Council participants:** Last meeting there was a lot of excitement regarding a database that would capture information about all Food Policy Council participants. It could include items such as:
  - Skills and interests
  - Grants applied for and gotten
  - What they can offer to help others with / an expertise
  - What they need help with
  - Their organization’s Mission Statement

  People who are interested in helping Danielle develop the tool to gather this information should contact her. This will help with writing grants together as well as our general networking with one another.

5. **Announcements**

  * **Ann Anderson**, Locally Delicious: They have raised $7,150 to pay 8 farmers to grow produce for the Food Bank. They are raising funds through April 15 and for every donation of $50 you get a free Locally
Delicious book. Tell your friends! Donate directly on their website, or contact Locally Delicious at info@locally-delicious.com.

* Jared Zystro, Organic Seed Alliance: The Permaculture Seed and Plant Exchange will be held Saturday, Mar 31st at the Arcata Community Center 11 – 3:00. (Please see the flyer and further information Jared posted on Basecamp)

* Anne Holcomb, Food for People: on Friday March 2nd at the Arcata Theatre Lounge there will be the 2nd annual Pun Off as a fundraiser for the food bank. Lots of fun! Bring $15 and a can of food.
  Also, they are in need of more refrigerated storage space. Any leads? Please contact Food for People at 445-3166.

* (I think Deborah Giraud announced this?) Prosperity 2012 by Humboldt County Economic Development Dept. is meeting week of Feb 27. They are forming task forces. You can still join. See their website for more contacts and details, http://www.northcoastprosperity.com/content/prosperity-2012-launched.

6. Open Space, Networking, and Evaluation