



## Food & Nutrition Coalition Meeting Minutes December 13, 2017 8:30am – 10:00am

### **Attendees**

Amy Klinkoski (No Kid Hungry), Brandy Arnold (Kids Food Basket), Cherie Elahl (North Kent Connect), Christina Flier (Baxter Community Center), Colene Johnson (DHHS), Dana Eardley (Local First of West MI), Eleanor Moreno (North Kent Connect), Heather Hughesian (United Way), Jeff Hoyh (CCWM), Jill Myer (Kent County), Julie VanGessel (Kids Food Basket), Kate Vanderwal (United Church Outreach Ministry), Kelly Hagmeyer (GR YMCA), Ken Ford (Flat River Outreach), Kristi Ayers (KCCA), Mark Lubberts (Spectrum Health), Michelle Meulendyk (Amway), Shawn Keener (United Church Outreach Ministry), Wende Randall (ENTF), Bree Butler (ENTF), Ingrid Aguayo (MSU), Nancy Oliver (Salvation Army), Stacey Brander, Jess Bitting, Brianna Marshall (Calvin College Center for Social Research), DeDe Esque (Systems Change), Connie Bellows (Systems Change), Emily Schichtel (United Way), Emma Garcia (Access), Erin Skidmore (Access), Kat Oblinger (Revive & Thrive Project), Audrey Marihugh-Bourk (Family Network of Wyoming), Colleen Kuehl (Coupons for Hunger & Food Economics)

### **I. Introductions: Emily Schichtel**

- Minutes November 8th

Motion to approve: Emma

Seconded: Eleanor

Motion Passed, No Amendments

### **II. Detroit/Washtenaw Visit: Attendees & Policy Council Updates: Policy Council Member**

Subcommittee members recently went on a site visit to Detroit and the Washtenaw area. The trip included four stops. One stop was the Washtenaw Food Policy Council. The council came together about 5 years ago and is made up of 15 members and 1 support staff member. They have designated seats for representatives from various sectors which include waste management, community leaders, growers, and more. They work to support a viable, economical, and sustainable local food system through the following strategies:

- Advocating for and advising on food system and food policy implementation
- Promoting and providing education on food system issues
- Strengthening the connections between food, health, natural resource protection, economic development and the agricultural community
- Researching, analyzing and reporting on information about the local food system

They host social events to build awareness around policy issues. This has led to inspiration for our own coalition to examine our own policies. For more information about the Washtenaw Food Policy Group follow this link: <https://washtenawfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com/about/>

Another stop was Eastern Market, started in the 1800s. It has 501(c)(3) status and consists of a large network of local shops around a farmer's market area. They have an infrastructure built in to maintain the food system. (250 Acres of space with wholesale, production, distribution, and retail) There is also an incubator kitchen with demos and classes available. There is a strategic plan in place that will help guide economic development in the district through 2025. They also do a wholesale market at night. They foster a brokerage that allows smaller farmers to work together to sell wholesale as well.



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Another stop was Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern MI. This food bank distributes and operates programming within soup kitchens, schools, parks, libraries, community groups, and mobile pantries. Their program committee includes former clients. They have a household impact model that is focused on stability. They also partner with academia, healthcare providers, and insurance companies. This was good example of some ways of developing programming with a wider distribution net. The group also stopped at the Detroit Food Policy Council which evolved out of the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network. They are very intentional about what they provide to the community. They work with the community to understand what is important, then turn those into action items. The focus is to become engaged through decision making but they avoid getting embroiled in programming. This leads to an opportunity to apply similar community engagement efforts to policy/advocacy.

### Policy Update:

During the Detroit/Washtenaw County trip, some issues were brought up that will be helpful if we identify. Washtenaw has a waste reduction and packaging policy. International examples include Chinese policies that look at the level of contamination by recycling. We can look at other nations' solutions to think about how we want to advocate for better soils, etc.

Broadband access (net neutrality) is an important current issue. Broadband access is especially important for institutions and schools. This issue can become a class divide as well, if you can't afford high speed internet you lose access to the same information. This committee wants to look at how this will impact small communities, especially small farmers who may not have internet access and need to grow their business.

At a statewide level the Policy Council Network is looking at healthy soil work. California has been working on this for a few years and this could be an issue we look at for our community, especially as Kent County works on land reclamation. NY times recently released an article regarding this topic. Calvin College has Detroit Dirt presentation scheduled for January 9<sup>th</sup>.

Wolverine has been having an impact on local environment concerning contaminating well water in North Kent County due to PFAS used in scotch guarding shoes, until the 1970s the sludge was dumped in local landfills.

If anyone comes across a policy issue that they are passionate about, please let Wende know via email or Trello.

Book Club Update: The book will be Big Hunger by Andy Fisher. Once a month the group will meet at a local coffee shop to discuss the book and support local business owners. Hopefully this will lead to other books.

The ACCESS Hunger Walk name has been changed to the The ACCESS Walk for Good Food.

### **III. LOOPS (Workshop): Connie Bellows & DeDe Esque**

The discussion from last March almost a year ago, has really changed and developed into an informed and valuable discussion. A lot has been accomplished, benefits from the county and state has been learned about as well as food justice, and other important topics. Will continue using a systems practice Journey Map to keep working on the challenge question and gaining clarity about our food system. The



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next steps will be developing strategies.

### Overview of Loops work:

We have worked to uncover the system's stories.

An important process is telling those stories through feedback loops.

Members are encouraged to self-reflect between meeting about these loops and please contact Bree if you need access to Trello.

### Today's work:

Review the many loops within the system

discuss themes and review the loops created

Today teams will look at the loops they have created and take notes of what they feel are major themes. They will also look at: similarities, repeating issues, intersections, and what might be missing from each loop. After that each group will present on their loop and therefore match previous work with today's notes.

### Loops Presentations

#### Policy Loop:

Discussed a lot about how policy is related to setting a livable wage. Increased wage led to increased food which in turn increased to better health.

#### Corporate Interest Loop:

Discussed the negative loop within corporate interest. Corporate subsidized farms lead to less small/organic farms or "specialty crops" therefore making the foods we eat at a higher cost. Fresh fruits and veggies are no longer easily accessible, and this leads to poor health.

Comments: Really need to convey the issue of depending on funding from corporations who may be actively acting against the interests we try to protect.

#### Poverty Loop:

Discussed the positive loop of an adequate support system. An adequate support system will lead to resources and better resiliency to face the adversities of poverty and therefore better overall mental health. This all in turn leads to family and community stability which may lead to advocacy.

Comments: Many similarities between lack of education and poverty. Education here means school systems (k-8). There was a popular connection between increased education meaning better food choices, but that assumption shouldn't be made. Another comment was that corporate food interests should be taught to the public.

Time also plays a factor of not being able to make healthy food choices. Many people don't have time to prepare a full healthy meal, they must opt for processed food.

Providing education to broaden interest in different food choices and awareness to individuals about how to affect processes. It is very important to be careful assuming that poverty stricken individuals are not "educated". More than focusing on education, we should gauge cultural intelligence. Just because



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someone is in poverty does not mean they are not educated and poor food choices can be found across all groups of income. It is suggested that language be changed to get away from this idea of educating the poverty stricken. Comments regarding education included that education shouldn't be so focused on, instead mentoring and skill sharing can be very valuable tools.

### Racism Loop:

Discussed a negative loop regarding structural racism. "Othering" in consumption leads to oppression and poverty which in turn leads to poor health and inferior quality of life which will perpetuate stereotypes and lead to further structural racism.

Comments: There needs to be more information brought to the entire communication surrounding racism.

### Culture Loop:

Discussed a negative loop regarding the normalization of a processed food diet. This leads to crowding out cultural food preferences, which leads to less cultural food availability, less cultural awareness, and more subsidized farming, it also leads to poor health.

### General Comments about Loops:

Loops are missing a self-advocacy piece.

How does change happen? Does change happen with the people first or last? How are the organizations centered and how do we shift the focus to the people.

No loop works as a stand-alone, every aspect branches off into another area and is connected to a different loop. This loop building can show what causes need bolstering and can show us angles to making positive changes. This whole picture can make us better prepared to handle counter arguments. Solving the problems presented in these loops, will lead to positive results.

### Overview of Loops work:

We have worked to uncover the system's stories.

An important process is telling those stories through feedback loops.

Members are encouraged to self-reflect between meetings about these loops and please contact Bree if you need access to Trello.

Next Month: Solidify the core/center of map. We will be delving further into narrative surrounding the current system. Will be creating the food system narrative. In February we will discover opportunities for leverage.

The practice team is meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> and everyone is invited.

### **V. Next Meeting/Adjourn: Tiffany Page**

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 10, 8:30am – 10:30am.