

Minutes
Mayor's Initiative for Healthy and Sustainable Food Systems
March 15, 2013
City Hall, Room 209, 10:00-11:30 AM

1. Introductions of meeting attendees.

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves. In attendance: Mayor Michael Brennan, Christopher Tripp (COP Mayor's Office), Jeremy Bloom (Internet Farmer), Jackie Potter (Citizen), Jim Hanna (United Way), Jeff Tarling (COP Arborist), Nora Saks (Citizen), Jessica Sheahan (Citizen), Stephanie Pooler (Healthy Portland), Jonah Fertig (Local Sprouts Coop), Tim Fuller (Healthy Portland), Lisa Fernandes (Eat Local Foods Coalition, Resilience Hub), Ted Kelleher (Drummond Woodsum), Sam May (Slow Money Maine, MOFGA), Joe Fornier (Rosemont), John Naylor (Rosemont), Hazel Ongrud (Citizen), Adam Fredrick (Citizen), Kyle Molton (Rep. Pingree's Office), Ron Adams (PPS Food Services), Mike Dixon (Citizen).

2. Synopsis of identified recommendations and progress.

The recommendations listed are part of a working document. There are spaces that need to be filled in and updated as we move forward. Next steps in this process include setting benchmarks and goals, as well as creating a timeline for visioning and tracking our progress.

Please see the March 15 meeting materials for a listing of the recommendations.

3. Other Updates:

a. Letters of Support-State & Federal Legislation

State Legislation:

Senator Alford's Bill, L.D. 745 "An Act to Support Sustainable Food Policies" will allocate 1.1 Million to the Department of Agriculture to act as a grant making, pilot program to support local food efforts.

We as a group have an opportunity to influence this bill through proposals of amendments, revisions, and language. Some ideas included: the addition of fisheries and seafood, connections to economic development, emphasis on low carbon (connections between climate and food policy), creation of food policy council at state level (requiring annual reports and recommendations, and connections to local communities), offering financial and technical support, and encouraging local control over food practices.

Important to this issue is the language used. Sustainability is broad and has various meanings. Instead we should encourage the use of specific language including, but not limited to, food security, public health, economics, community, environment, and development.

When we know more about timing for the public hearing on this bill group members will be notified.

Federal Legislation:

Chellie Pingree's bill, the Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act will be reintroduced this session. We will be sending a letter to Rep. Pingree and other members of the congressional delegation to support this bill. It will be important to ensure that Sen. King is up on the issue, as he is the newest member of the delegation. This group was all in favor of supporting this legislation.

b. Fruit Trees

Jeff Tarling, Arborist for the City presented about fruit and nut tree expansion. 3-4 organizations have stepped forward to donate trees to the city.

We are getting six new varieties of American Chestnut trees that will be planted in early May (3rd) with possible sites including Payson Park, Western Cemetery, and the Deering High School area.

Other types of trees are looking to be planted. Apple trees are on the list. Jeff also discussed other projects that are going on or are in the works including an ongoing orchard project in the Reiche School area, the expansion of community gardens on the East End, Jake's Garden at Deering High, and the possibility of planting of trees at or near the community gardens on Peaks Island.

Jeff asked that this committee work to generate ideas about where fruit and nut trees can be planted in the city.

Also added to this conversation was the need for involving students in this process, utilizing existing community resources (such as Portland Permaculture's Skill Share/Tool Share), and the possibility of a larger planting area that could function as a multi-species food forest.

Other areas that need to be considered include the access and distribution of fruits and nuts from these sources. What will oversight look like?

It is important to celebrate these small successes! We are making progress in the right direction.

c. Food Pantries

The group should be presented with a proposal by the next meeting in April.

d. Community Gardens

The City oversees 4 community garden spaces including Valley Street, Clark Street, North Street, and Payson Park. Others are operated by neighborhood organizations including Riverton School, Brentwood Gardens, and Peaks Island. Currently there are 130 plots with a waiting list of over 100 people.

The city is looking to increase community garden space while streamlining the process and garden oversight. Part of this is hiring a new Community Garden Coordinator.

As the community gardens continue to grow we need to think about new ways of engaging in

the creation and management of new gardens. At this point it is important to utilize the waiting list for this.

We may also want to look at other models such as cooperative gardens (such as Winter Cache), and partnering with other sites around the city, such as housing sites, schools, etc. Another idea was the utilization of shared, rather than individual plots.

4. MOFGA GMO legislation.

Sam May presented on the GMO legislation that is currently in the Legislature. L.D. 718, "An act to Protect Maine Food Consumers' Right to Know about Genetically Engineered Food and Seed Stock" has been submitted to the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry committee for a hearing in April.

Sam asked for the groups' support. The group decided to support the legislation and a letter of support from the group will be drafted and submitted.

Sam also noted that support from beyond this room is needed as well from all sectors.

5. New Business

A need for another community forum was stated as a need for discussion.
Update on composting proposal by ecomaine was brought up.

6. Confirm date for next meeting: the next meeting is scheduled for April 12, 2013 at 10:00 AM

7. Adjourn