

MINUTES
Mayor's Initiative for Healthy Sustainable Food Systems
July 13, 2012
City Hall, Room 209, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

1. Introductions of committee members and meeting attendees.

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves. Present: Mayor Michael Brennan, Joe Fournier (Rosemont Bakery), Craig Lapine (Cultivating Communities), Edward Kelleher (Drummond Woodsum), Jim Hanna (United Way), Erin McQuire (Representative Pringree's Office), Dawad Ummah (CAH), Mark Hews (Maine Association of Nonprofits), Ralph Carmona (Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Association), Daniel Wallace (Coastal Enterprises, Inc.), Lisa Fernandes (Eat Local Foods Coalition), Jonah Fertig (Local Sprouts Cooperative), Mike Dixon (Concerned Citizen), Jeremy Bloom (Portland Food Co-Op), Jackie Potter (Concerned Citizen), Jamel Torres (Cyon Business Solutions), Eli Cayer (Urban Farm Fermentory), Liza Warren Shriner (Cultivating Communities), Ron Adams (Portland Public Schools Food Services, Ian Houseal (City of Portland) Bethany Sanborn (COP), Tim Fuller (COP), Tracy Chalecki (COP).

2. Review and approval of the minutes from June 8, 2012.

The minutes from the June 8, 2012 meeting were approved by the group.

3. Workshop (Activity and Barriers)

Ron Adams, Director of the Portland Public Schools Food Services Program gave a presentation on current services.

Summer Feeding Sites: There are currently 4-6 new sites in the summer feeding program. This has doubled the number of kids serviced. New sites at the YMCA, Salvation Army, and City of Hope on Allen Ave were added, along with summer schools and special education classes. There are approximately 24 sites between Portland and South Portland. An estimated 75 % of elementary kids have access to a site, middle and high school kids have an estimated 50% access, but anecdotal evidence suggests they are less likely to come. Ron feels that there needs to be more sites to give kids more access to this program. He is working with Healthy Portland to do mapping to plan more sites for next spring. Mayor Brennan stated he would like to see 100% access to the program next summer. He asked if there is still a stigma for signing up for free & reduced lunch program. Ron feels that it's not a big issue; there are a low number of people who don't fill out the application. The guidance counselors and multilingual staff help parents do the paperwork.

Portland Public School Food Services: The program serves over 1 million meals per school year. Ron pursue local agriculture as a source of food: local foods has gone from 0 to 7 percent of the total food budget. Oakhurst Dairy supplies milk, bringing the total to 30%. One of the key barriers is affordability. The per meal food cost is \$1.30. The 2012 Healthy Hungry Free Kids Regulation states that meals must have 100 less calories per day. Grains are being reduced and vegetables are added. The program is currently trying to be a revenue neutral program with no funds coming from the general fund budget. Elimination of the general fund budget subsidy of \$500,000 annually would require creating over \$1.5 million in additional sales.

School Gardens: The school gardens are a school learning lab, not a production model. Students learn how to handle foods and proper sanitation. The barrier for this program is that curriculum is focused on reading and math, not health education. The School Health Coordinator has been cut from the budget. This was due to the legislature's cuts to the Fund for a Healthy Maine.

Discussion: The committee asked about the rationale to limit funding of the food program from the general fund. Student participation in the meal program is at 53% and the goal is to get it to 60%. Jim stated that this is the first time that over 50% of Portland's students qualified for free and reduced lunch, with a family income of under \$29,000. Mayor Brennan asked if the revenue neutral issues could be questioned. He would like to see all students have access to the healthiest food, instead of looking only at a per-cost meal. He would like to see an increase to at least 20% for local foods. Ron stated that there are not a lot of big farms in the area; we need to look at what is available regionally. There have been positive changes to the program with the CPPW funding. Staff has been retrained on how to handle fresh food. They were used to opening cans and boxes. Preparing fresh food is more time consuming. Salad bars were installed in every school. Sodium consumption was cut in half. In terms of increasing sales, Ron is looking at the quality of meals and at diversifying the menu. Jonah suggested the possibility of PPS using a food truck. It could be a marketing tool, and a way to get the food to students and adults, while reducing stigma. Mayor Brennan thanked Ron and called him a tremendous asset to the school program.

Troy Moon sent a memo for the group to review on the City's composting program. The City picks up leaf and yard waste. The City also offers a discount on bins for home composting.

Portland Schools: Ron stated that the school composting program has been a big success. It started with 3 pilot sites, one at a high school, one at a middle school and one at an elementary school, with guidance from a parent-led grassroots group. There are now 12 schools participating. The high school has gone from 14 bags of trash to 2 per lunch. King Middle School will be eliminating foam trays. These programs are now student led and have empowered the students.

ecomaine: ecomaine is currently doing a study to see if citywide composting is feasible. Jackie expressed concern that the study is taking a long time and the process should move forward. Jackie made the motion that the Mayor write a letter to ecomaine; Craig seconded. The letter will invite ecomaine to the group, will be supportive and ask what is needed from us to move the process forward. Jonah asked that a friendly amendment be added in support of zero food waste; Craig seconded. Writing a letter was approved by the committee. In terms of education, Lisa has done 60-90 minute education sessions on backyard composting that was successful. There is also the opportunity to educate at every neighborhood festival. Mayor Brennan suggested talking to Nicole Clegg to come up with a strategy on education.

4. Knowledge-base: What are other cities doing?

Bethany found some cities were changing their permitting and licensing policies, including reducing fees for selling healthier food. There were better locations given to people selling fruit and veggies and restrictions on less healthy food, i.e. they were not to be sold around schools. Cities have also put nutritional guidelines on their entities as well as the National Park Service.

Tim recommended the publication "Putting Local Food Policy to Work for our Commutes," by Harvard Law School. He will e-mail it to the committee. Ian reported that this committee is on the City's website on the City Council page. Meeting information will be available there as well as resource links and general information. Contact Ian if you would like something posted. Ian told the committee that the intent of the knowledge-base presented by Bethany was to initiate the addition of material by committee. Jim gave out a handout on food security for review. He reported that the pockets of poverty are moving in Portland and that 38% of Portland Students are of color.

5. Confirm date for next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for August 10, 2012 at 10:00 AM.

The next meeting is Friday, August 10th, Room 209, City Hall from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Agenda items include:

- Presentation by Jim Hanna on Food Security.
- Bethany will present further on what other cities are doing.
- Ron will give an update on the cost of going up to 50% of local, healthy food, including dairy.
- There will be a forum update.