

Food and Nutrition Commission Minutes
Monday, December 2, 2013
5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Ramsey County Plato Office Building

Members present: Bernie Hesse, Diane Dodge, Metric Giles, Pat Trotter

Others present: Anne Hunt, Jaya Ginter, Julie Seiber, Jamie Aussendorf, Eleonore Wesserle, Lindsey Dean

The meeting was chaired by Bernie Hesse.

Updates included:

- Homegrown Minneapolis Open House on Dec. 5 at the Walker Art Center
- Trotter's Cafe will receive a Green Plate Award from the Nature Conservancy Dec. 3
- Sustainable Saint Paul Award nominations will be opened in early 2014 and this group could nominate outstanding gardens

Bernie Hesse spoke on behalf of the Food and Nutrition Commission at the hearing on the urban agriculture zoning updates. The ordinance was passed by the City Council on Nov. 13. There was interest and discussion about getting the word out about the new Urban Ag. ordinances to the public via TV programs on SPNN network or City cable.

Bernie suggested supporting an Urban Agriculture related business workshop around the new urban agriculture ordinance. Discussed ideas to have various speakers on urban agricultural operational practices, step-by-step guidelines, potential funding sources, i.e. micro loans, grants, business planning, soil testing, small garden set-up, etc to be present at the workshop. It may also be beneficial to invite as guest speakers, those already doing urban agriculture work with replicable models to teach others at the workshop. Another suggestion was to invite the public who are interested in community gardens to a workshop potentially in partnership with Gardening Matters.

The group discussed the Commission supporting awards to recognize accomplishments of people in the community. Revisit this idea at January meeting to develop a formal recognition system. Metric suggested an ideal candidate to be recognized for such an award.

A suggestion was made to invite a speaker at each meeting describing their work around food access issues.

A need was identified through discussion on food access issues within Ramsey County: create a list of community gardens already in existence, those with waiting lists, land available (public and private land). Dianne reported Gardening Matters has a list of community garden sites available. It was also discussed that there are many gardens,

farmers markets, etc. who are operating off the radar and have their own informal networks. There was discussion about the work done so far through the East Side Food Hub in St. Paul involving both backyard and community gardeners. Rebecca Mino will be invited to talk more about this at a future meeting.

Members and observers reviewed a draft letter concerning the Farm Bill during the meeting. Letters from the FNC will be sent to Minnesota Congressional District members on the Conference Committee negotiating the Farm Bill. A suggestion was made to add congressional district specific SNAP data along with points about the negative consequences of the 40% SNAP-ed cuts to the University of MN Extension program. Revision to the letters will be completed over the next few days and Bernie will fax them to appropriate Congressional District members on behalf of the FNC.

Discussion on the need for a letter to be developed for the “lay person” which describes the Farm Bill and provides points of action and increase awareness for people of their connection to their food environment. Eleonore suggested creating video profiles (interviews) of people who had been past participants of SNAP program and may have suggestions for others on how to move beyond assistance programs. She also suggested that everyone watch the film “A Place at the Table.” See link: <http://www.takepart.com/place-at-the-table>.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

2014 MTG. DATES	MEETING DETAILS: 90 W. Plato Blvd., Saint Paul, 55107 , 5:30 – 7:30 pm
January 6, 2014	Plato Conference Center, 1st Floor
February 3, 2014	Plato Conference Center, 1st Floor
March 3, 2014	Plato Conference Center, 1st Floor
April 7, 2014	Star Room, 2nd Floor
May 5, 2014	Plato Conference Center, 1st Floor
June 2, 2014	Plato Conference Center, 1st Floor
July 7, 2014	Star Room, 2nd Floor
August 4, 2014	Plato Conference Center, 1st Floor
September 8, 2014	Plato Conference Center, 1st Floor
October 6, 2014	Star Room, 2nd Floor
November 3, 2014	Star Room, 2nd Floor
December 1, 2014	Star Room, 2nd Floor