

Food and Nutrition Commission Minutes

Monday, January 7, 2013, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Ramsey County Plato Office Building

90 W. Plato Blvd., Saint Paul, 55107

Members attending: Nadja Berneche, Diane Dodge, Linda Pope, Colleen Schlieper, Jo Ann Tesar, Becky Timm, Helene Murray, Bernie Hesse, Metric Giles, and Pat Trotter

Other attendees: Julie Seiber, Ben Johnson, Mary Marrow, Sarah Eichberger, Anne Hunt, Z Lou Alexander, John Parker and Rina McManus

Welcome and introductions by Nadja Berneche, Co-Chair

Announcements:

1. Bernie Hesse updated the status of the U.S. Farm Bill and a discussion with Al Juhnke, Senator Franken's agriculture staff member
2. Helene Murray discussed the MN Food Council Bill being sought in the 2013 Legislative Session
3. Julie Seiber briefly described the Slow Food Conference in Italy at the end of October
4. Mary Marrow discussed the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act rules that are open for comment since their issue on January 4, 2013. She mentioned the Commission's potential to make public comments during the 120 day comment period. (See the FDA news release for details <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm334156.htm>)
5. Sarah Eichberger update on Schoolyard Gardening Event on Feb. 22 at the Arboretum and other events posted at Healthy Eating Minnesota Network <http://www.healthyeatingmn.org/>
6. Minnesota Food Association's Small Farm Conference is February 2-3

Selection of Co-Chair: Linda Pope accepted 1 year co-chair position (motion by Diane and voted and passed)

Presentation: Public Health Law Center Resources

Mary Marrow, Staff Attorney, Public Health Law Center at William Mitchell discussed legal technical assistance available from PHLC regarding food policy and experience with best practices and resources from around the country.

1. Presentation slides are available on the Public Health Law Center web site <http://publichealthlawcenter.org/webinar/introduction-public-health-law-center>
2. She illustrated synergy and overlap of work of FNC and PHLC

3. Mary offered herself as a first contact and resource for navigating the PHLC website and other needs
4. She provided legal examples of resources to help FNC with Food Literacy/Food Access/Urban Ag/Food Infrastructure (see slides)

Strategic and Action Planning (Nadja Berneche)

1. Context – Group Work: What stands out as accomplishments of FNC? Examples include
 - a. Recommendations to city council and county commissioners
 - b. Task force members participation, solid attendance, community engagement
 - c. Influence to have growing food put into Lowertown Master plan
 - d. FNC commissioners strengthened their leadership and education: FNC used as a resource by public
 - e. Positive relationship with City and County staff and departments
2. Current Realities & Opportunities for FNC – Group work examples:
 - a. Payroll tax increase = less take home pay = food budgets decrease for low income
 - b. Food retail: small/medium size retailers risk going out of business...can lead to national retail brands coming in: what happens then about food issues FNC is concerned with?
 - c. High public interest in food system issues/challenge/systems
 - d. Successful models around the country can be used as models for Ramsey County (i.e. Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee) for CSA, Food Systems, etc.
 - e. Opportunity for FNC to reach residents that haven't been reached
 - f. MN Food Charter – opportunity for FNC to be a part of that process including hosting an input session in the community
 - g. Opportunity to use FNC 'weight' in public policy
 - h. Opportunity to strategically recruit new members to FNC
3. Key Actions & Priorities – Work Group (see FNC priority attachment)