

Minutes

St. Paul/Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission

November 1, 2010, 5:30-7:30

Ramsey County Library

2180 North Hamline, Roseville

Members attending : Becky Meyer, Bernie Hesse, Colleen Schlieper, Diane Dodge, Hai Truong, Helene Murray, Leonard Russo, Linda Littrell, Lynne Rosetto Kasper, Metric Giles, Nadja Berneche, Robert Schuneman, and Seth Kuhl-Stennes.

Others attending: Julie Seiber (staff), Margaret (Maggi) Adamek (consultant), Allison Dostal, Anne Hunt, Jaya Ginter, Margaret Humphrey, Mark Granlund, Nicole Eikenberry, and Vanne Owens-Hayes.

Greetings and Introductions conducted by Julie Seiber.

Food Environments in Our Community: Julie explained the results of the food assessment surveys and focus groups conducted by CDC, MN Project, Afro Eco, MN Food Association, and St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health Department. Handouts were provided on summary points from the surveys (Commission members will be emailed an electronic copy as well). Comments of Commission members relating to the information presented:

- Would be interesting to look at the data about food selection satisfaction by age group to see if younger aged respondents were more satisfied due to their limited/lack of cooking skills and potential purchasing of more packaged, ready-to-eat meals.
- Question of youth rebellion towards eating of traditional foods in some cultural groups
- Would be interesting to have asked the question- "do you have family meals?"
- There is a need to find out who the community leaders/builders are (especially if any were attendees at the focus groups) and build trust to work together with them- a strategy for engaging the community at large and establishing a connection with those leaders.
- Wondering if those who shop more frequently at convenient stores are more or less likely to have a car? Recognizing the transportation issue is one to be concerned about.
- Believed affordability was a major issue from the results; remember the surveys were conducted during spring/summer time when transportation may not have seemed as such an issue as it will be in the winter.
- Questioned why price was an issue- any more details about this answer?
- Questioned if one looked at prices in different stores in the area to compare?
- Questioned how healthy food was defined?

Maggi reminded the Commission how this data can influence their work and how data can be examined through different cross-tabulations to find out more information. The Commission can use the food assessment information to justify their focus and work in the future.

Maggi led the group in discussion of how these results from the food assessment are related to the work of the Commission. Comments of Commission members to the question *what's coming clear about the food environment in our community?*-

- Transportation issues (often an issue addressed by a Commission such as this)
 - Discussion of potential for bus/circulator which takes seniors to grocery stores
 - Example of Mayor's office circulator in the past taking youth to and from after-school activities & Austin, TX creating a bus line to a grocery store for the public.
- Recognizing the large interest and energy of the public on these food issues.
- Low-income issues – 51% below 20,000 dollars- people can't afford to eat
- Addressed the state and nation issues of minimum wage and food stamp monies
 - Inflation issues, food price changes, transportation costs, and supporting farmers
- Distribution of wealth = injustice

Maggi summarized the group's comments that income and hunger impacts are a large issue evident through the food assessment information. Systemic issues must be addressed and the Commission can respond through a local level policy approach. Maggi walked the group through the Priorities identified as the focus areas of the Commission's work (handout provided).

Comments of Commission members to the question *"in what ways do these findings and recommendations correspond with our initial thoughts about priority areas?"*

- Recognized the issue of no money at the end of the month can resonate with economic development (priority area) and infrastructure to buy food and food access issues, etc.
- The food literacy priority is addressed through the food assessment information. People need other options for getting food, must recognize food literacy varies by culture.

Maggi pointed out how the focus in these priorities areas does have support from the food assessment information and can inform future work. This information can be an evidence-base to form the work of the Commission.

Maggi advised the Commission to keep in mind the things they need to know to make decisions and where additional information is needed to assist with decision making. The Commission members would like:

- ✓ Income and food store location maps of the city (Mark Granlund can provide)
- ✓ A resource list developed
- ✓ Ethnic breakdown of neighborhoods throughout the city and county (similar to Chicago & NYC)

Maggi provided a recap of *fall meetings: what have we accomplished so far, how do we transition from prioritizing to planning and implementation, what are the ways we need to build leadership and engagement of others to move priorities and activities forward, what type of skill-sets does the*

Commission need from this leadership to move this work forward, and what decisions do we need to make at the December/January meetings? (See PowerPoint handouts for detailed answers.)

Maggi asked the group to recap on any take home messages from Brandon Born at the meeting last month. Commission members believed having an academic (“crazy person”) who could be an advocate, while the Commission could be the “voice of reason” and get the work done was one take home message to remember. Another was to recognize the potential need for a public face to help draw attention to the work of the Commission. The Commission recognized the importance of effective tactics and negotiating strategies necessary to work in the field of policy. The importance of coming to a group consensus about a “hot topic” area such as the ban on *trans* fat could be a good strategy for the Commission. The Commission believed deciding who will talk publicly about their work/issues must be done. Remembering to invite all the people to the table to practice inclusiveness and be connected with all was a take home message resonating with the group. The Commission should recognize their allies and their champions in the community. **The Commission would like to hear more about what Seattle failed to do to be inclusive in their initial invitation to people for the working/task groups (as Dr. Born pointed out) in order to not repeat these things within their own work.**

Maggi reviewed the to do list and things to keep in mind PowerPoint slides, along with the Commission model of where the commission, task forces, and community at large all fit together in a circle. Maggi led the group through some discussion of how the Commission will work as they transition to planning and implementation stages. Comments by Commission members:

- Need to define what we believe and how we view issues, for example, sustainability of local food systems.
- Must recognize most outside groups do not think of food as the number one public agenda item, must educate policy makers who don’t focus on food issues.
- Search for organizations and community groups that have current projects needing assistance.
- Recognize the major issues, for example, the Farm Bill, and stay on top of what’s going on.
- Realize the cost/expense of food is a major issue and working through education, community leaders, using new strategies to build community support and improve nutrition may be ways to address such a daunting issue.
- Must be action focused and operational and define what success looks like.
- Should focus on the good things that are happening in the neighborhoods already, for example, the community gardens by the Community Design Center (CDC).
- Need to find the experts and champions in the community to bring them in and be involved in working groups.
- Find people who are experts, but also who are change makers.
- Remember when conducting task forces/working groups must have them at different times of the day to accommodate child care issues and varying work shifts.
- Should have that one person who doesn’t know something about these issues asking why to keep the group on task and focused.

- Have city and county representatives at the table, potentially in co-chair positions.
- Recognize there are already task forces, working groups, leaders doing things in the community right now, need to honor what they are already doing and should support their work.

Maggi reviewed the timeline with the Commission and a few items were added to the task list: contact existing groups to see what's needed in the community before focusing work, should create a website to communicate messages from Commission to the public, develop how else to keep communication open, get on the agenda of local community councils, understand the funding resources available, and need to create a list of organizations/resources currently working on these same issues within the county.

Commission members will receive an email survey to capture their skill sets and connections in order to better understand everyone's areas of strengths that they bring to the group. A suggestion to have each Commission member bring someone to one of the upcoming meetings to get others involved was proposed but was left open for more discussion. Others can be brought in as members of the task forces when they are formed. Next meeting an overview of the SHIP proposal for the Commission will be shared.

Next meeting:

December 6, 2010, 5:30-7:30

Ramsey County Library- Roseville, 2180 North Hamline

Minutes by Jaya Ginter.