



Sustainable Food Policy Board

MEETING MINUTES Monday, November 10, 2014

The Sustainable Food Policy Board (SFPB) convened on Monday, November 10, 2014, at The Street Jones Building, 1000 East 11th Street, 4th Floor, Rm 400A, Austin, Texas 78702

Board Members in Attendance:

Hildreth England, Kathy Green, Alexandra Evans, Ronda Rutledge, Alexis Simon, Carla Jenkins, Mindy Cooper, Dominique Bowman, Brandon Reed, Lisa Blackwell.

Absent Board Members:

Erin Flynn
Selena Booth

Staff in Attendance:

Edwin Marty, OoS
Lydia Jarjoura, OoS

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hildreth England called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

1. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

- None

2. STAFF BRIEFING

- Texas Legislative Update (Judith McGeary) **Farm & Ranch Freedom Alliance Bills**
 - *Raw Milk Bill*- allows licensed farmers to sell raw milk at farmers markets; representative Flynn has filed bill.
 - *Permit Fees Bill*- Judith doesn't know who will file the bill but it will be filed.
 - *Property Tax Bill*- There is an issue of agricultural evaluation for the farmers and taxes: under the Texas Constitution and Statutory Law open spaced land is subject to lower property taxes and is through agricultural use. The statute should cover all types of producers but there are ample problems. The statute says that you're entitled valuation if the principal use of your property is for agricultural use and is generally accepted in your area. If you have 20 acres of one vegetable, it's okay, but 5 acres of mixed vegetables (truck farming) is being denied agricultural valuation. The majority of counties do not recognize truck farming. The bill last year would have addressed these issues and set an included provision that you can't be denied on sole basis of acreage if you have at least 1.5 acres but the bill was killed and is coming back.
 - *Home Processing(?) Bill*: Judith mentioned the Cottage law and that over 1,000 new businesses have been established. But that law didn't cover canned vegetables, acidified items, and baked goods that need to be refrigerated, because of a botulism risk. Looking at home processing laws that allow foods to be sold as wholesale under some regulation. It allows slightly higher risk activities but you don't have to build a commercial kitchen. The idea was pitched to legislatures and they are still discussing with potential sponsors. This bill has NOT been filed yet but is expected to be.

- Ombudsman (?) position- They have asked legislatures to create this position, within the Texas Dept. of Agriculture, to walk folks through all the steps of compliance.
- A bill was filed today (11/10) called the Right to Farm Laws (the Texas version of this law says that if you are an agricultural producer and someone is next to you and doesn't like what you're doing, and you've been producing for at least 1 year, they are barred from filing a lawsuit). This is an existing law but there is a push for industry agriculture groups to adopt stricter laws. *The bill filed today prohibits local government from interfering with a person's right to engage in the production of agriculture.* **Question:** is it primarily to protect industrial agriculture? **Answer:** Yes, it's true across the country.
- **Question:** How can we find information if we want go see the language associated with each bill? **Answer:** The only two filed are the Raw Milk Bill and the Right to Farm but our website has fact sheets. House Bill 132 is the Right to Farm bill and you can go to capital.state.tx.us to track the bills.
- **Question:** Does the Travis. County website have guidelines for those that have under 10 acres? **Answer:** to get an agricultural valuation, you must have at least 10 acres.

- Austin's Food System Annual Report preview (Edwin Marty)
 - Unmet demand means those who want to buy food that is locally produced that can't get it.
 - The food system report will be sent out annually.
 - Board agreed that it's critical that there be an offline component to the web/food portal.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF Oct. 13th 2014 MEETING

- Member Ronda Rutledge moved to approve minutes.
- Member Alexandra Evans seconded the motion.
- Motion to approve. All in favor.
- Minutes approved 13-0-0.

4. DISCUSS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION

A. Board Infrastructure and Protocol

1) Boards and Commissions Task Force Information Update

- There are very few joint city/county boards and commissions so they are considering having each city council and mayor elect/appoint a board member in addition to the current county/judge appointments. This will be voted on at 11/20 city council meeting and the board will have the opportunity to write a recommendation. There is an option to have 17 members or a one to one appointee. Another issue is that the name of the board will be changed. *It will no longer be a board; it will be a commission.* Board discussed confusion between SFC and SFPB. Kathy motions to discuss writing letter of recommendation to council on changing the name (Austin/ Travis County Food Policy Commission) and addressing appointments by each council member as representative of their district is a critical way to get representation. Dominique seconds. All in favor; none opposed. Recommend that council recommend appointees from their district so board would be 17 members. Board chair Hildreth England will send out the letter of recommendation after the close of business on Wednesday 11/19. Member Kathy Green will cover the introduction on industry and member

Brandon Reed will write about community representation.

2) Review SFPB “Member Roles and Responsibilities”

- Member Lisa Blackwell is vacating seat because she’s moving outside of Travis County. She will notify Judge Biscoe. Board Chair Hildreth England and Vice Chair Dominique will discuss moving forward with Lisa’s resignation. Edwin Marty will send out a list of previous applicants to Hildreth England.
- Members can sign up for working group meetings next month after the strategic plan is finalized.

B. Board Recommendations Follow up

- 1) Urban Farm Ordinance update
 - a. Staff member Edwin Marty updated: more farms are in compliance (Aquadulce, Hausbar, Boggy Creek and Rain Lily). Those are all farms on single family property. Still need to revise the way that market gardens can be considered within the urban farm ordinance.
- 2) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Outreach/Incentives updates
 - a. Board Member Kathy Green updated that from the money that the City allocated (\$112,000) part will go to Sustainable Food Center for the Double Dollars program (to train other markets outside of SFC to use double dollars). Another part of the money will go to the Capital Area Food Bank for an outreach position. \$10000 from the County will go to amend existing contracts to do SNAP outreach and enrollment within the county.
- 3) Healthy, Local, Sustainable Food in City/County Venues updates
 - a. Staff member Edwin Marty updated that he and Board Member Alexandra Evans met with grads about research and are putting something together detailing the research.
- 4) Healthy Corner Store Initiative update
 - a. Board Vice Chair Dominique Bowman has no updates.
- 5) Code Next updates
 - a. Staff Member Edwin Marty updated that the recommendation was sent out and they are going to vote at the next City Council meeting about which of the three strategies the City is planning on approaching. As soon as council votes, the Code NEXT team can dive deeper into what it will really mean.
 - b. Timeline: just waiting to hear from city council.
 - c. Board Member Alexis Simon plans to join this working group and will email Board member Selena Booth for an update.
 - d. Board Member Ronda Rutledge requests that backup be given at meetings regarding any changes to recommendations or documents, as a reference.
- 6) Farmland Preservation updates
 - a. Board member Mindy Cooper updated: There is still some fine-tuning of language to be done and the group will meet again before the recommendations move forward to council. Group didn’t feel the need to push recommendation in front of old council. Board Chair Hildreth England asked: is recommendation (split in two) – the county recommendations are fine but the City document still needs work. No longer the rush to get it into council by 11/20. Board Member Mindy Cooper will schedule

a meeting and board member Ronda Rutledge will sign the recommendation. Board member Carla Jenkins wants to join the working group.

C. 2015 Strategic Planning

- The Board will review the previous Strategic Planning processes
 - Board Member Mindy Cooper motions to discuss strategic planning options and holding a potential special meeting. Board Vice Chair Dominique Bowman seconds. All in favor; none opposed. The strategic planning meeting will be on 12/2 from 4pm to 7:30pm and the regular meeting will be cancelled.
 - Review ‘Developing Advocacy Strategy’ document
 - Board members will review and fill out the planning strategies (these can be found on the Google drive).
 - Board Chair Hildreth England will help facilitate with “**Liberating Structures**”
 - Board members will reach out to any facilitators that they know that may be able to facilitate the meeting pro bono.
 - Board member Carla Jenkins will email Staff member Edwin Marty or Board Chair Hildreth England for background information on the board.

D. REVIEW OF BOARD MEMBER ASSIGNMENTS

E. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Next regular meeting will be cancelled for the Strategic Planning session on 12/2.

F. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned at 8:01PM.