

DC Food Policy Council Meeting Notes

I. Welcome & Introductions – by Director Cidlowski

- a. **DCFPC Members in Attendance:** Chris Bradshaw, Caesar Layton, Jeremiah Lowery, Alex Moore, Paula Reichel, Joelle Robinson, Tambda Stevenson, Eric Kessler
- b. **DCFPC Ex-Officio Members in Attendance:** Jeff Jennings, DGS; Kristen Rowe, DCPS; Dan Guilbeault DOEE; Donna Anthony OSSE; Vincent Parker DCRA; Pia Brown DMPED; Amelia Peterson-Kosecki DOH

II. Background on the Food Policy Council, Legislative Updates Director Cidlowski

General Announcements

- a. The Comprehensive Plan amendment process is open now until May 26th. Find out more about upcoming workshops and how to make an amendment at <http://plandc.dc.gov/.Handouts> provided explain what the Comprehensive Plan is, and what the process for making amendments will be. The upcoming working group meetings will highlight all the elements of the plan that relate to food issues now specific to those working groups.
- b. Our new member of the DCPFC, Philip Sambol has been nominated and is going through the approval, hearing and voting process now. We're very excited to have Phil join us once his appointment is voted on and approved by the DC Council.
- c. The Mayor's budget came out earlier this week and it includes an additional position to work on food policy in the Office of Planning. OP's budget hearing will be Monday the 10th at 10am in Room 412 of the Wilson Building.

Local Legislative Updates

- d. Councilmember Cheh introduced a bill this morning entitled the Save Good Food Amendment Act of 2017 (<http://lims.dccouncil.us/Download/37273/B22-0072-Introduction.pdf>). The Health Committee and the Finance Committee held a hearing on the bill on 4/28. The hearing was well attended by community members and groups with more than 15 witnesses testifying, and support for the law was generally positive with some comments about how to improve the bill.
- e. Councilmember Vincent Gray introduced the three interconnected acts on March 21st to support grocery retail east of the river. (<http://lims.dccouncil.us/SearchResults/?Category=0&Keyword=east%20end>). The Acts will work together to invest in the East End of the District of Columbia by bringing a new community hospital and grocery and retail anchor stores to Wards 7 and 8. The purpose of the legislation is to create a funding mechanism for a new community hospital, and identify and fund construction of at least five sites in Wards 7 and 8 for large anchor stores that include affordably priced groceries and retail goods. A hearing has been scheduled for April 26th on the bill (April 26th, 10am, Room 123 of the Wilson Building). A special session will be held before the working group meetings to discuss the legislation and produce an advocacy guide.

III. Presentation from DC Food Policy Director, Laine Cidlowski, on the DC Food System Assessment & Food Economy Study

- a. The presentation covered the outline of the draft DC food system assessment and more details DC food economy study. The food system assessment will be a broad look at DC's current food system. It will cover agriculture, processing and distribution, consumption, wasted food, and economic results and outcomes for our local food system. The study will be presented to the FPC, Mayor and Council, and include a series of recommendations about how to improve our local food system. For the assessment some data has been gathered already but the study has not yet been drafted.
- b. Agricultural content for the study so far includes an assessment of local food (within the surrounding 7 states) supply and demand, current local farms and community gardens and key opportunities and barriers (high land costs).
- c. Food production and distribution data for the study shows info about local businesses and jobs; restaurants are the main economic driver of local food businesses in DC. Employee compensation and number of restaurant employees has gone up over time, even if the overall number of restaurants in the city has not expanded greatly.
- d. Wholesalers are scant within in DC proper, but there are many in a drivable radius in MD and VA. DC has a number of local producers and makers making value-added food products in DC, with 88 listed on the Made in DC initiative.
- e. Data on local food consumption, eating habits and health comes primarily from the Department of Health. Wasted food will also be included in the analysis, but data is sorely lacking here.
- f. The food economy study will have consultant assistance to do a deeper dive into the local food economy, jobs, and businesses. The study will local at past and current trends, better define and understand our local food businesses and identify gaps and opportunities to create a strategy to better support and grow our local food economy.

Questions & Answers

- g. We want to ensure that the food economy study also includes interviews for individuals who face barriers to getting into the food industry, so we can better understand their needs and how to improve job opportunities in the food business.
- h. We need to take into consideration [in the food economy study] the healthcare portion of the food economy. Hospitals and healthcare and other large institutions are a big sector of food purchases, as well as nutritionists, dieticians etc.
- i. We should also include food trucks in the analysis.
- j. We need to make a connection between transportation and local food as well, and get a better understanding of the social determinants of the food system (what are the other factors like demographics, and displacement that impact populations working in our food system).
- k. *How will we understand the hidden aspects of the food system? (People who are operating small food businesses without licenses or on the gray market).* This will impact the implementation of the Cottage Food Act. We need to make sure we're looking at both qualitative and quantitative data. Maybe need to do on-the street interviews of people to get a more diverse response.

- I. I recommend we narrow the scope of the study as much as possible to get detailed limited information, rather than trying to be the end all be all.
- m. *How will federal and national policy be approached by the DCFPC?* We work with local regional food policy organization through our local Council of Governments (COG) as a regional organizer and haven't yet been much involved in federal policy but might be more in the future.
- n. We need to disaggregate data by ward as much as possible, and the story varies widely from area to area.
- o. *Are you looking at resiliency and working with the resilient cities planning effort?* Yes!
- p. We should work with the Workforce Investment Council on workforce training for food professions.
- q. We should examine past and future trends and make sure to understand displacement and demographic changes and the effect these forces are having on the city, especially in the content of food systems.
- r. Make sure we include the stories and case studies of individuals in the food systems, not just the hard data.
- s. *This is my first time here, I'm a Ward 7 resident, and I'm trying to understand what it is you do here. What about getting grocery stores in our neighborhood? We only have three store choices east of the river.* This is a top priority for the food policy council, and what the proposed legislation from Councilmember Gray we'll talk about later focuses on. Our working group for Food Equity, Access, Health and Nutrition and our Business group from the grocer side is working on this as well.

IV. Food Policy Council Members Present on Working Groups:

- a. *Local Food Business & Labor Working Group:* The group met to talk the Food Economy Study and Cottage Food Act. The group also plotted out a detailed action strategy for the coming year for the working group.
- b. *Food Equity, Access, and Health and Nutrition Education Working Group:* The group met focused FEED-DC supermarket tax incentive and a detailed action strategy for the coming year for the working group.
- c. *Sustainable and Local Food Procurement Working Group:* The last meeting focused on the Save Good Food proposed Act, the Good Food Purchasing Program and creating a detailed action plan for achieving the outcomes in the strategic plan.
- d. *Urban Agriculture Working Group:* The focus from the last meeting was detailing an action strategy for implementing the urban agriculture act, the Cottage Food Act, and working with DGS to make land available for urban agriculture.

V. East End Grocery Legislation – Discussion

- a. Director Cidlowski shared information about the 3 pieces of legislation submitted last week by Councilmember Gray to support grocery store access in Wards 7 & 8. The first piece of legislation is the East End Health Care Desert, Retail Desert, and Food Desert Elimination Act of 2017. The purpose of this legislation is to eliminate the inequitable

situation that results in much of Wards 7 and 8 being labelled as deserts for health care, retail, and healthful groceries.

- b. Title I of the bill requires that a new East End Medical Center be constructed on the St. Elizabeths East Campus and the construction of an urgent care center and an ambulatory care clinic that will support the hospital. Title II of the legislation establishes the East End Grocery and Retail Incentive Program in the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development. The goal of this program is to bring large anchor stores to Wards 7 and 8 by doing everything possible to make it financially attractive for anchor retail to open on the East End of the city by having the District government pay for the construction of the stores. The legislation identifies five sites in Wards 7 and 8 that are excellent locations for construction of new anchor retail, including Skyland Town Center, Capitol Gateway, East River Park, St. Elizabeths East Campus, and the Current United Medical Center site.
- c. The second piece of legislation is the East End Grocery and Retail Incentive Program Tax Abatement Act of 2017. In addition to the District paying for the cost of store construction, this legislation provides further incentives through the D.C. tax code to make it attractive for anchor stores to locate in Wards 7 and 8. The legislation exempts new anchor stores constructed on the five sites from real property tax, personal property tax, deed recordation and transfer taxes, corporate franchise tax (combined reporting), and sales tax.
- d. The third and final piece of legislation is the East End Surplus Allocation Equitable Investment Act of 2017. This legislation establishes the funding mechanism for the first bill. After the District of Columbia reaches 60 days cash-on-hand, 50% of unassigned surplus funds at the close of the fiscal year are dedicated to pay-as-you-go capital. This legislation specifies that the pay-as-you-go capital funding shall be dedicated to funding the new hospital and anchor retail in the “East End Health Care Desert, Retail Desert, and Food Desert Elimination Act of 2017”.
- e. Discussion focused on the uncertainty about the effectiveness of the proposed Acts and the need for more in depth analysis of the bills as well as to hold a specific session just to discuss the proposed legislation. The DCFPC Director will organize this session before the hearing date.
- f. Some concerns were heard that the proposed bill is not connected to the FEED-DC Act. Would like to see some analysis about how the legislation relates to the existing incentives we have for grocery stores.

VI. Announcements & Next Steps

- a. Next DCFPC Public Meeting – June TBA
- b. Working Group Meetings – May dates now live
 - i. Sustainable Food Procurement – May 3rd
 - ii. Local Food Business & Labor Development – May 1th
 - iii. Food Equity, Access, and Health & Nutrition Education – May 10th
 - iv. Urban Agriculture & Food System Education – May 9th