

Annual Report 2012

Activities of the MA Food Policy Council

Background: Late in 2010, Chapter 277 of the Acts of 2010 amended Massachusetts General Law Chapter 20 by inserting Section 6C, creating a 17-member Food Policy Council (“FPC”).

The purpose of the council is to develop recommendations to advance the following food system goals for the Commonwealth including (A) increased production, sales and consumption of Massachusetts-grown foods; (B) the development and promotion of programs that deliver healthy Massachusetts-grown foods to Massachusetts residents, through programs such as: (i) targeted state subsidies; (ii) increased state purchasing of local products for school and summer meals and other child and adult care programs; (iii) double coupon initiatives; (iv) direct market subsidies to communities with identified needs; (v) increased institutional purchases of Massachusetts grown foods and other programs to make access to healthy Massachusetts products affordable, and (vi) increased access to healthy Massachusetts-grown foods in communities with disproportionate burdens of obesity and chronic diseases; (C) the protection of the land and water resources required for sustained local food production; and (D) the training, retention and recruitment of farmers and providing for the continued economic viability of local food production, processing and distribution in the Commonwealth.

STATE AGENCY MEMBERS

Commissioner Greg Watson, Chair MDAR

Secretary Gregory Bialecki, MEOHED represented by Undersecretary Michael Hunter

Commissioner John Auerbach, MDPH

Katie Millet, designee Commissioner Mitchel Chester, MESE

Deputy Commissioner Gary Moran, MDEP represented by Kerry Bowie

Commissioner , Daniel J Curley, MDTA

LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS

Representative Stephen Kulik, Vice Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Susan Fargo, Chairwomen of the Joint Committee on Public Health

Senator Michael Knapik, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Representative Kimberly Ferguson

PUBLIC MEMBERS (APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR)

Valerie Bassett, MA Public Health Association

Frank Carlson, Carlson Orchards

Jeff Cole, Executive Director, Mass Farmers Markets

Manuel Costa, President, Costa Fruit & Produce

Helen Caulton-Harris, Springfield Board of Health

John Lee, Allandale Farm

Four meetings were held in 2011. In 2012, the fifth meeting of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council (FPC) was held on March 9th, 2012 at the Brigham Community Farm in Grafton. Vice-Chair Representative Kulik introduced Brigham Hill Community Farm and Kristin Bafaro, the Executive Director of the Community Harvest Project, Inc. who discussed increasing access to produce. Representative Kulik shared news that Commissioner Soares will leave MDAR as of July 1, 2012. The nomination process for the FPC Advisory Committee was discussed and the slate of nominees was passed. Secretary Jeff Cole offered to head and organize a committee to coordinate FPC participation in Agriculture Day at the State House on April 3rd. It was agreed that FPC will pull together key points that the board would like to

make to legislators. Commissioner Curley discussed what food access means to residents in the state, emphasizing the connection between DAT/SNAP and local food and the impact on agriculture. Representative Kulik suggested that each agency have literature about its programs where relevant to FPC priorities in order to introduce legislators to the FPC. Commissioner Auerbach discussed WIC and its potential links to agriculture. The newly formed Advisory Committee was tasked with reviewing the MA Grocery Access Task Force Summary Recommendations. Members then shared updates on relevant projects.

The sixth meeting of the FPC was held on June 1st, 2012 at the Worcester Union Station. Commissioner Watson was elected as the new Chairperson. The MA FPC Alliance was added as a new position to the Advisory Committee; Christa Drew was accepted to the position. The Advisory Committee suggested a comprehensive strategic plan for the MA food system of which supermarket access will be one element. Issues raised included the 1974 Governor's Commission on Food Policy report, farm sustainability, regulatory issues, urban components, environmental planning, hunger, food security, economic impact, farm-to-school initiatives, processed food and the food industry. The Advisory Committee was tasked with developing a concept document to provide a framework for the strategic plan. Frank Martinez Nocito then gave an update on the Healthy Initiatives Pilot, and Cheryl Bartlett reported on Mass in Motion. The issue of letters of support from the MA FPC for a USDA grant application related to Farm to School was assigned to the Bylaws Committee. Vivian Orlowski of the Berkshire County Boards of Health Association presented on the collaborative efforts between farmers and health agents. Ronak Dave, an FPC intern, presented on food programs and cultural sensitivity. Members also discussed engaging minority youth through civic engagement projects. The Central MA Regional Planning Commission principal planners discussed their work.

The seventh meeting was held on October 5th, 2012 at the Framingham Public Library. The Eos Foundation presented on combating childhood hunger, focusing on access to and quality of food. Christa Drew presented the MA FPC Advisory Committee's draft framework for a statewide comprehensive strategic food system plan that was assigned to the Committee at the previous meeting. She discussed background information on existing statewide food systems and noted drivers of current food system concepts. Members discussed the importance of inclusiveness and stakeholder representation. Stakeholders mentioned included current FPCs in the state, media, supply chains, growers, childcare and senior centers, environmental organizations, social justice and civic engagement groups, supermarkets, workforce development groups, faith communities, anchor institutions, farm labor groups, culinary groups, and aggregators for processing and distribution. Attendees then responded to the Advisory Committee's presentation. Engagement with a process specialist and funding for the engagement was discussed. Secretary Jeff Cole requested feedback on a draft policy related to letters of support from the MA FPC. It was concluded that multiple letters of support for the same grant are acceptable and beneficial to the FPC. Representative Kulik proposed a policy that was approved regarding letters of support for the same grant. Frank Mangan of UMASS discussed providing culturally-appropriate produce to urban areas, and FPC intern Ronak Dave proposed a research question regarding cultural receptivity of healthy food in MA as it relates to FPC objectives.

The eighth meeting was held on December 7th, 2012 in Leominster. Commissioner Watson noted budget cuts and hiring freezes. The Advisory, Bylaws, and Nominating Committees each presented their proposed annual reports, which passed. No action was required to re-elect Officers or Advisory Committee members. A motion was passed to continue with the existing Nominating and Bylaws committees. Christa Drew presented the Advisory Committee report regarding next steps on drafting a framework for a statewide comprehensive strategic food system plan focused on networking, a core team, and advisory team approach. A baseline of \$100,000 is expected from private philanthropy for early funding. Discussion and recommendations to the plan ensued, which focused on the local food system, private sector, produce councils, restaurant associations, large retailers, and community gardens. It was concluded that FPC members should help with outreach and that guidelines on communications between the FPC and the Advisory Committee are needed. Dave Bishop and Chris Lawton from Farm Credit East presented on Northeast Agriculture.

To review the minutes in detail as well as the presentations, go to <http://www.mass.gov/agr/boards-commissions/mfpc.htm>

FPC Nominating Committee Report 2012

December 6, 2012 The Special Rules of Order, including a structure for nominating individuals to the Advisory Committee, was passed. Commissioner Soares requested nominations for the Nominating Committee, of which Representative Kulik as Vice Chair of the FPC, is the chair. Frank Martinez Nocito, Cheryl Bartlett, Frank Carlson and Manny Costa were nominated as candidates and approved.

March 9, 2012 The Advisory Committee Slate was presented, and passed.

June 1, 2012 Commissioner Watson accepted the position as Chair, considering the departure of Scott Soares. The MA Food Policy Council Alliance was added as a new position to the FPC Advisory Committee. Christa Drew was nominated and accepted to the position. Amanda Kinchla was accepted by the Governor's office for the FPC Food Safety Position, so nominations will be solicited for her position on the Advisory Committee.

October 5, 2012 A motion to add a position to the Advisory Committee for former Commissioner John Auerbach was supported and will be further discussed by the Nominating Committee.

December 7, 2012 Nominations will be solicited for the Public Health position on the Council, considering that Valerie Bassett is moving on to other opportunities.

Food Policy Council Advisory Committee Report, 2012

At the March 9, 2012 meeting of the MA Food Policy Council meeting, the following people were

accepted as Advisory Committee Members: Farmland Protection, Cris Coffin of American Farmland Trust, New England Director; Farm Business, Urban & CSA, Community Gardening, Immigrant & Refugee Farming or Youth Education through Ag, Shemariah Blum-Evitts of Lutheran Social Services' New Lands Farm Program and John Wang of The Food Project; UMASS Extension, Amanda Kinchla of UMASS Extension, University of Massachusetts (Amanda was subsequently appointed to the MA Food Policy Council and the position on the FPC Advisory Committee needs to be filled); Food Distribution, Processing and Marketing, Phil Korman of Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture; School of Nutrition or Public Health, Christina Economos of Tufts University; Community-Based Coalition or Health Care Provider Addressing Obesity and Chronic Disease, Nancy Cohen, Department of Nutrition, University of Massachusetts; Transitional Assistance or Anti-Hunger Group, Ellen Parker of Project Bread; Active Farmers or Farmer Association Representatives, Brad Mitchell of Farm Bureau and Winton Pitcoff of NOFA/Mass and the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association. At the June 1 meeting of the FPC, the MA Food Policy Council Alliance was added to the FPC Advisory Committee. Christa Drew was accepted to the position.

May 3, 2012 The first meeting of the MA Food Policy Council Advisory Committee was held at the Charlton Public Library with a focus on the Massachusetts Grocery Access Task Force Summary Recommendations. Edits previously made by MDAR were endorsed to include other health food retail projects in underserved areas, not just limited to supermarkets. The group recommended an integrated and broad policy approach to address issues relating to healthy food access, affordability and education to create a demand for healthy food within supermarkets as well as farmers markets, bodegas, CSAs and new models for produce suppliers as well as broad state policies that go beyond the Supermarket Task Force Recommendations.

The Advisory Committee shared their interest to draft a document for the FPC for a strategic comprehensive food system planning outline that could have legislative policy implications and be based on the whole food system including production, processing, distribution, fulfillment, marketing, education and more.

June 1, 2012 At the MA Food Policy Council Meeting at the Worcester Train Station, the Advisory Committee reported on the Massachusetts Grocery Access Task Force Summary Recommendations. Support for previous MDAR edits which identify the issue of access to food is a part of a much larger issue related to the MA food system were supported. The Advisory Committee suggested a comprehensive strategic plan for the MA food system, of which supermarket access will be an element.

The FPC tasked the Advisory Committee with "the development of a concept document that would provide a potential framework for a statewide comprehensive strategic food system plan. The FPC envisions this concept document will lay out a potential process for stakeholder and agency involvement, an estimated timeline, the need for and potential availability of financial resources and a general framework for goals and objectives related to improving Massachusetts food and farm resiliency and nutritional health", with the general framework/outline due in the fall, 2012.

After the FPC meeting, a group including FPC Advisory Committee and FPC members met with potential funders to understand support for food systems, and discuss content for a MA Strategic Food Systems Plan including drivers, coordination, legislation, sustainability, public health, food security, data and benchmarks, challenges and questions.

The Advisory Committee will lead the drafting of this framework and plan to hire a specific “facilitating entity” to serve in a technology-savvy administrative capacity for the planning process. Christa Drew was recommended as the consultant to write the concept document for the Food Policy Council with input from the Advisory Committee for the autumn FPC meeting including outreach and stakeholder involvement.

July 13, 2012 The FPC Advisory Committee was advised that a funder gave preliminary verbal approval to fund a consultant that would take on a project management role. This would involve drafting the concept document for the MA strategic food system plan, documenting revisions, and drafting and disseminating the RFP for a facilitating entity. All of this would be done with careful research, conversations with planning predecessors in other states, input and review from the Advisory Committee and outreach to stakeholders (those previously engaged and those who will be engaged) to establish a culture of inclusion and anticipation for participation in the actual planning process, to roll ideally roll out in early 2013.

July 16, 2012 The FPC Advisory Committee met at the Old Sturbridge Village. The Advisory Committee again stated their support for the preplanning efforts and RFR development with Christa Drew as a project manager. The Committee asked Commissioner Watson if a date could be identified in October rather than September for the next FPC meeting, to allow more time for this phase of work by the Advisory Committee, which he approved. There was a discussion about processes based on VT and CT’s approach for specific systematic interviews for stakeholder engagement. Listening sessions with specific and general topics across the state that are framed to be able to help channel future discussions and process the information collected. Topics included trends in farming, food security, climate change, commercial fishing, nursery, nutrition, food safety, as well as short, medium and long term goals and benchmark data and measurable outcomes. A review of existing resources re: food system mapping and models is important, as well as work by current MA food policy councils across the state.

A draft of an outreach statement to share with stakeholders to note what is happening and the opportunity for future involvement in the actual planning process in 2013 will be developed and an email/distribution list/plan developed. Ways for people/sectors/groups to be involved, primarily after the pre-planning, through potentially at least 5 “listening sessions” across MA will also be developed.

September 7, 2012 The FPC Advisory committee met at the Worcester Union Train Station where a discussion of the concept document was held. The "Concept Document Options and Questions" is divided into 4 sections with 3-4 questions to consider. Two primary stakeholder engagement models were discussed.

October 5, 2012 A report to the MA Food Policy Council was made regarding the Concept Document for feedback at the Framingham Public Library regarding goals, objectives, timeline, potential cost, etc). The MA FPC passed a motion to support the continued efforts of the Advisory Committee to generate a process recommendation and additional details for presentation at the December meeting. The FPC also approved the Advisory Committee seeking to engage consultant(s) to help design the planning process.

November 20, 2012 The Advisory Committee met for process planning at the Massachusetts Farm Bureau office in Marlborough with two consultants from New Directions Collaborative to discuss visions and goals for them to incorporate into the design.

November 30, 2012 The Advisory Committee met to continue the discussion relating to process planning at the Solidago Foundation in Northampton. A slide presentation with a “strawman process proposal” was created by New Directions Collaborative and a dialogue ensued to prepare for the upcoming presentations.

December 2, 2012 A representative from the FPC Advisory Committee presented the draft planning proposal and background context to more than 30 potential funders at the Boston Foundation in Boston with hopes of stimulating interest and potential funding support.

December 7, 2012 The FPC Advisory Committee made a recommendation for a framework for a strategic plan for a statewide food systems plan including the process, stakeholder engagement, timeline and potential costs.