

**Massachusetts Food Policy Council Annual Report  
Prepared for the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources**

MASSACHUSETTS FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (MFPC)  
(M.G.L. CHAPTER 20 § 6C)

**CHAIRMAN**

Greg Watson, Commissioner, MDAR

**STAFF LIAISON**

Bonita Oehlke

[Bonita.Oehlke@state.ma.us](mailto:Bonita.Oehlke@state.ma.us)

(617) 626-1750

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, detailed minutes and reports are at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/boards-commissions/food-policy-council.html>

**STATE AGENCY MEMBERS**

Commissioner Cheryl Bartlett, MDPH

Kerry Bowie, designee for Deputy Commissioner Gary Moran, MDEP

Undersecretary Michael Hunter, designee for Secretary Gregory Bialecki, MEOHED

Katie Millet, designee Commissioner Mitchell Chester, MESE

Frank Martinez Nocito, designee for Commissioner Stacey Monahan MDTA

Commissioner Greg Watson, Chair MDAR

**LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS**

Senator (vacant)

Representative Kimberly Ferguson

Senator Robert Hedlund, Assistant Minority Leader

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

**PUBLIC MEMBERS (APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR)**

John Waite, Western MA Food Processing Center, Food processor and handler

Helen Caulton-Harris, Springfield Board of Health, Local health department representative

Jeff Cole, Executive Director, MA farmers markets, direct to consumer marketing

Manuel Costa, President, Costa Fruit and Produce, Food processor and distributor

Amanda Kinchla, M.S., Food Safety Extension Specialist, UMASS Amherst

John Lee, Allandale Farm, Farmer

Vivien Morris, MS, RD, MPH, LDN, Boston Public Health Commission, Community nutrition

**2014 Activities of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council (FPC)**

February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2014, Tower Hill Botanical Garden, Boylston

Commissioner Watson shared that the Boston Public Market Association had met its fundraising goals to match state funds. The RFR for Urban Agriculture Initiatives has drawn 29 responses, narrowed down to 9 by the review committee. The contract for the facilitating entity, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is ready to be signed. DAR will manage the contract for the MA Food Systems Planning on behalf of the MA Food Policy Council. The last effort, in 1974, resulted in the APR program and the shift to direct marketing, among other outcomes. MAPC presented on the process of creating a strategic food plan that incorporates consumption,

production, processing, distribution, retail, food access, the environment, and the workforce. FPC members agreed upon the need for a Food Systems Planning Advisory Group with member selection intended to provide expertise and address gaps in representation of the strategic plan's elements.

April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Tower Hill Botanical Garden, Boylston

FPC officers were elected as follows: Commissioner Watson, Chair; Representative Kulik, Vice Chair; and Jeff Cole, Secretary. Communications to the public about the Food Systems Planning includes a web portal and social media. The total MAPC contract is \$35,000 less than the proposed budget. Reducing funds for the food systems map and postponing the educational conference will balance the budget. The Department of Transitional Assistance presented on the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP); American Farmland Trust introduced the "New England Food Policy's Building a Sustainable Food System" project; and the MA Department of Public Health provided updates on the consolidation of food manufacturing, processing, and distribution regulations in MA.

June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University, N Grafton

Commissioner Watson discussed the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) as a common concern for farmers. He also provided an update on the Boston Public Market's vendor applications. MAPC completed its work plan draft as well as job descriptions, roles, and interaction expectations for its working groups. They requested a contract modification to include a funding stipend for working group advisors, which was approved by the FPC. For the MA Food Systems Planning, future areas of investigation were discussed and included farming infrastructure, ecological resilience, social justice, diversity in the MAPC working groups, and food system economics. There was an update on the Urban Agriculture Initiative and Healthcare without Harm was discussed in terms of sourcing local food for hospitals.

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Union Train Station, Worcester

Two presentations were given as background on regional food systems planning: Brian Donahue, PhD on NE Food Vision; and Rosa DeCosta and Sarah Kelley on the SE MA Food System Assessment. The MA Food Systems Planning initiative reported on an initial data analysis on food system trends and the completion of two regional listening sessions. The MA Food System Plan Executive Committees and Working Group Leaders were identified and approved unanimously. These seven Working Group areas of focus are production; processing; wholesale and retail distribution; urban agriculture; food access and hunger; inputs, waste and nutrients; and education and policy. Commissioner Watson mentioned UMASS dining's commitment to Buy Local and Representative Paul Schmid briefly discussed his interest to establish an agriculture caucus.

December 11, Framingham Public Main Library, Framingham

The meeting focus was on the Massachusetts Food Systems planning updated with a focus on increasing state production, consumption, profitability. On the food side, questions about food access and hunger are affected more by a larger food system. As this process moves along, the Working Groups will define where the context of their issues begins and stops. Outreach is needed to be sure specific groups and communities are at the table. The FPC can provide contacts and expertise to the Working Groups. Draft definitions were discussed, and the MAPC planning team was asked to summarize the information. The resulting document will be used on websites, for the Work and Advisor Groups and for stakeholder engagement. Commissioner Watson shared his appreciation for this meeting, an iterative process which will change over time

and evolve. "With the best faith effort, we are trying to find the best solutions worked on by the best people through an open and inclusive process."

### **FPC Advisory Committee**

December 9, Union Train Station, Worcester

Three issues were addressed: What slice of the food system is addressed in terms of local? Which descriptions can replace food system jargon for clarity? Would a context statement and rationale for the plan make sense to address relevant external forces? A document was drafted to present at the December FPC meeting for a shared vision of the MA Food Systems planning.