



Regional Food Network Workgroup

Meeting Notes: March 2, 2010

Attendees: Weston Miller, Chair; Jennifer Hackett, Ron Paul, Kat West, Tammy VanderWoude, Anita Yap, Erica Stokes, Leslie Pohl-Kosbau, Mary Bedard, Nancy Stevens, Jill Kuehler, Jean Fike, Lisa Turpel, Dustin Kohls, Deb Lippoldt, Amber Baker, Eca-Etabo Wasongolo (Village Gardens)

Facilitator: Stephanie Hallock, Oregon Solutions

The meeting began shortly after 3 pm with round table introductions. Anita Yap from the City of Damascus and Dustin Kohls from Clackamas County described activities they are working on, including a grant application Anita has submitted in collaboration with OSU Extension and others that is focused on a sustainable food strategy for producers – will be about \$300,000 if received. Dustin talked about a 6-country strategy that addresses regional foods, waste management, and agri-tours with local producers that is modeled after efforts in Boston and California. The Clackamas County Commission will be considering it soon.

For the rest of the meeting, the group talked about the direction, purpose and reasons to continue to meet. They reviewed the notes from the first meeting, and revisited the goals to include the following:

- Maximize growing food in Portland (there is not agreement on geographic scope)
- Unified agreement on need for a clearinghouse; data and info sharing center
- Need for an entity to build the voice/constituency around food – Food Policy Council is not it
- Can support each other on doing actual projects/events (as opposed to policy) – be a “mutual benefit project group”
- An over-arching goal should be to promote growing and eating more local food
- Should not re-invent the wheel – build on the work done by the Multnomah Food Initiative and others, e.g. Sheila Martin at PSU
- Need a comprehensive network of NGO’s, business, government, academic
- Group could create the energy that gets Metro involved in food; define and build relationships – city to city, county to county – capitalize on relationships and projects that are working

- Start small and build out – focus on Portland/Multnomah County OR maybe form two groups – one Portland and one regional?
- Need to think about food in an inter-connected way
- Leverage national dollars as a large-scale coalition
- Take advantage of political winds – be “the seed”; time is ripe for food

The group talked about how to use this forum to help support local agriculture. Ron Paul suggested that we should be striving to help attain the “sweet spot” of local companies using local food. Tammy and others mentioned that there is a “continuum” of growers and a continuum of users. What is the collective mission that the group can agree on? Is it the “sweet spot” Ron described or something else?

Deb said that the discussion seems to be looking at a broader food system perspective than prior conversations about growing food in the city. She questioned whether a new group is needed to look at that broader picture, or if it would be more efficient to work within the structure of the Food Policy Council or the Multnomah Food Initiative for a regional discussion; this group could then focus specifically on growing food in an urban setting.

Kat gave an update on the Multnomah Food Initiative and the Food Summit now planned for May 1. She said that the MFI has done a lot of research and has a lot of information about “gaps” and what work the group might do that would be useful. Food Summit is intended to provide a focus for planning.

Nancy suggested that the group ask itself “What will be different as a result of this group?” Other questions the group agreed need to be addressed are: “How will coming together benefit the individual organizations that are part of the group?” and “Is the right group at the table?”

The group agreed to meet at least one more time and Weston agreed to chair. A committee formed to work on an agenda for the next meeting: Weston, Kat, Mary, Tammy, Anita and Jennifer – Jennifer will be providing staff support to the group, if it continues, since the Oregon Solutions role is winding down.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 6, from 3 to 5 pm at Multnomah County