

**Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council Minutes**  
**Wednesday, February 11, 2015**  
**University of Saint Thomas – 3009 27th Ave S Minneapolis**  
**Meeting 5:30-7:30pm**

**Attendance:** Aaron Reser, Andrew Dahl, Kristine Igo, Hashep Seka, Patty Bowler, Russ Henry, Zoe Hollomon, Beth Dooley, Gayle Prest, Rhys Williams, Cam Gordon, Pakou Hang, Omari Chatman, Bob Lind, Erick Garcia Luna, Sammie Ardito Rivera, Jillia Pessenda Bovino

**Others in Attendance:** Tamara Downs Schwei (Homegrown Minneapolis Coordinator), Karl Hakanson, Robin Garwood, Karlie Cole, Magdalena Kaluza, Ted Corling, Laurelyn Sandkamp, Julie Ristau, Helen Schnoes, Chip Small, Adam Kay

**Absent:** DeVon Nolen, Katie Lampi, Alison Rotel, Jesus Perez

**Pre-meeting presentation:** Dr. Adam Kay and Dr. Chip Small from St. Thomas University presented on their faculty-student-community collaborative research. Their projects are based on ecological science applied to urban agriculture, with the goal of growing food and other plants effectively in urban environments while lowering environmental impacts and providing community benefits. Their major outcomes are to generate data and create meaningful experiences for students in research and learning. They provided highlights of six projects. Adam and Chip agreed to share an electronic copy of their presentation. More information is also available on their Stewardship Science webpage.

<http://ust-stewardship-science.com/>

**1. Meeting called to order.** Omari Chatman, Co-Chair, called the meeting to order. Introduction of guests were made. January 2015 meeting minutes and February 2015 agenda were approved unanimously (Andrew Dahl moved to approve, Gayle Prest seconded).

**2. Presentation from the University of St. Thomas.** Dr. Adam Kay and Dr. Chip Small, biology professors at the University of St. Thomas (UST), shared ideas for possible partnership opportunities to address food justice and other food system issues. University classes in the humanities, social work, business school, and law school are interested in partnering with the community on local projects to enrich students' academic experiences and support the community. There are short-term and long-term opportunities. Short term projects can be embedded into a semester-long class, which requires a 6-month lead time for planning. Longer-term projects would build lasting partnerships with faculty members. If anyone is interested in partnering, they can reach out to Chip or Adam as an initial contact.

**3. Presentation of farmers market project findings.** Julie Ristau and Beth Dooley presented their findings on the Minneapolis Farmers Markets. In 2014, Julie and Beth were asked by former mayor R.T. Rybak to create recommendations for revisioning the two municipal Minneapolis Farmers Markets. The study is currently contracted under the Property Services Department.

- **Opportunity:** Julie shared that there is an opportunity to rethink the vision of the Minneapolis Farmers Markets (Lyndale Ave and Nicollet Ave markets), considering the proposed Southwest light rail transit stop near the Lyndale market that would open in 2019 and the planned Nicollet Mall redesign.
- **Background:** The Lyndale Farmers Market is among the top ten farmers markets in the nation. The two markets tend to serve two different audiences – The Lyndale Market provides access to fresh food often at market or below-market prices, including some from resellers (“global sellers”) and the Nicollet Market has a niche in artisan/specialty foods.
- **Current conditions:** Lyndale Market is facing competition from proliferating farmers markets and has estimated/reported a 10% sales drop on weekends. Vendor burnout is increasing because of decreased economic viability, lack of accessible farmland, and licensing/regulatory barriers. The proposed LRT stop provides a big opportunity to revitalize the market, opening new possibilities such as an indoor year-round market. The City has a potential role in providing support for viability of markets in terms of governance since the City owns the land. The governance structure (managed by the Central Valley Growers Association) has a less diverse stakeholder base than those of other cities.
- **Proposed vision for Nicollet Mall** –Construction is expected to begin in 2015, with a grand opening in 2017. Talks are underway as to where to move the Nicollet Market during construction. An option under current consideration is to move the market to Marquette Avenue starting in April.

The group discussed these findings and their support for helping to move recommendations forward.

- Russ expressed that the Food Council is willing to collaborate as farmers market developments move forward.
- Aaron asked if there could be a governance structure for all of the Minneapolis markets. Julie responded that they have opened the door to that option. Beth responded that there has been a lot of work generated on that topic and Julie added that this is a huge opportunity, and how it will happen remains to be seen.
- Pakou mentioned that food trucks have been pitted against farmers in the past and asked how those constituencies are working together. Beth responded that Milwaukee’s public market is a great example – food trucks pay a lease and are scattered throughout the third ward. Farmers located around the perimeter get to use their space for free. Milwaukee’s market is a public-private partnership.
- Patty asked about the decision process. Cam responded that the Mayors Office and Property Services has been involved. Julie responded that the farmers market needs a strong champion in the city, but needs community involvement as well, and there’s been a lot of thinking about civic engagement. Openness has increased in recent years regarding talking about governance structure because there is a realization that things need to change. Beth added that in Kansas City, the City health department plays a big role in the public-private partnership – the farmers market hosts health fairs, outreach, and community education which all contributes to the community space.

- Zoe mentioned the Seattle public market along the waterfront, which is a tourist attraction that the Minneapolis Public Market could strive to emulate. Beth added that the Madison Public Market has that same tourist attraction quality and there is a lot of potential for the Minneapolis Public Market to better attract visitors.
- Omari asked what the timespan would be for inserting Food Council in the process. Julie responded that she doesn't know the complete answer. Julie pushed hard on the light rail aspect because that piece is moving quickly. The governance piece is less clear, but the time is now to move on it because the need for change is so evident. Leadership changes are on the horizon, and growers are on board, so it's all about organizing.
- Robin commented that the City needs to have more of an economic development approach to the farmers market. Beth added that every other city she and Julie talked to had a champion within the City looking out for the farmers market.
- Cam asked what Minneapolis should do based on the study. Beth responded that the City of Minneapolis should continue to own the land where the farmers market operates if it can be an active owner and recognize the market as an economic driver. Julie added that the city with a structure closest to that of Minneapolis is Kansas City. There is a 20 member market committee including city council members and economic development staff. The land is owned by the City but subcontracted to a leasing company. The market is a public-private partnership with diverse stakeholders. The next discussion that needs to happen is about these governance questions.
- Beth commented that Minneapolis doesn't have to recreate the wheel because there are lots of different models we can look to.

#### **4. Recommendation to add representative from Minneapolis Public Schools and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to Food Council**

Russ Henry and Tamara Downs Schwei presented a potential opportunity to add four new members to the Food Council: one staff member from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), one staff member from Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), one community member recommended by MPRB, and one community member recommended by MPS. This potential change, if recommended by the Food Council, is timely because of the Food Council's upcoming annual presentation to the City's Health, Environment, and Community Engagement (HECE) Committee on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. At this presentation the Food Council summarizes their progress over the past year and makes recommendations for the upcoming year; it would be great to make a definitive ask at this presentation for the new members.

- **Background:** Ginger Cannon of MPRB attended the most recent Executive Committee meeting to discuss how the City and MPRB could work together now that the MPRB Urban Agriculture Activity Plan has been approved. How might the two parties create a structure to help move the plan and food system forward together? Ginger brought 3 different options to the Food Council's Executive Committee: (1) MPRB forms an implementation committee which includes a member of the Food Council, (2) Food Council adds a member representing the MPRB, and (3) a combination of Options 1 and 2. Ginger is in the process of having conversations at MPRB about Option 1 and will report back to the Food Council with progress. In the meantime the Executive Committee felt that the Food Council can explore Option 2 occurring in addition to Option 1 (not

instead of). Many one-off meetings have occurred related to collaborations and issues individuals and organizations are facing with local food projects, and having formal representation from MPRB would improve efficiency and communication. Ginger would likely be the MPRB representative. Minneapolis Public Schools are interested in participating as well and could assign Andrea Northup (Farm to School Coordinator). The Executive Committee felt strongly that the addition of a staff from MPRB to the Food Council should complement and not supplant the formation of an MPRB implementation team, and Ginger was confident that this would not happen.

- Cam commented that the addition sounds like a fine idea. He also called out that the original makeup of the Food Council was 19 members (14 community and 5 city (Mayor's Representative, City Council representative, Health Department, CPED, Sustainability Office) and subsequently an amendment added a staff representative from Environmental Services and a community representative.
- Patty commented that she is all for the addition because the Food Council does so much work with those entities and the addition would make us more effective. Patty asked if the additions would be board members or representatives. Tamara responded that they would be Food Council members with designated positions and voting rights.
- Gayle mentioned that it could be harder to make a quorum with four additional members. Russ responded that the quorum would move from 11 to 13 members. Tamara added that the Food Council has always made quorum at the meetings she has attended since April 2014.
- Kris said that she would want to add the community members to balance out the proportions, and asked why the institutions would designate who the community members are. Robin added that on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission (BPAC), the MPRB has a member and also designates 3 community members. The community members help address the impact of BPAC work on the parks from a community perspective. Robin added that as a member of BPAC, he finds this method to be really effective. Russ added that having a community member would help get more things done.
- Pakou asked if the new community members would be chosen by MPRB and MPS rather than being chosen through the normal process. Cam responded that the Food Council could still use normal process except that the four new members would be chosen by the two agencies.
- Jillia said that because the MPRB owns so much land in the city of Minneapolis, it makes sense in her mind to collaborate. Jillia emphasized that it is important to clarify the process to make sure it's as transparent as possible (although the final responsibility falls on Park Board). Pakou agreed with Jillia, and added that this proposed new addition opens up the question of who else is missing from the table. Russ responded that the Food Council has considered this, and there are more potential members such as representatives from Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Council. Russ suggested it may be best to add new members incrementally and assess feasibility of expansion.
- Gayle said she is concerned because there are already members that don't speak up on a regular basis and she wants to make sure all voices are heard with a larger group.

- Beth commented that the Food Council would be inviting these new members in because they have a specific role, and asked about the possibility of the new members serving on a working group instead. Russ responded that these entities would likely be more committed if they were part of the Food Council.
- Andrew said that the Food Council's work is so aligned with MPRB and MPS that it would be useful to institutionalize by adding them as full members. Having the two new organizations at the table would give them a better idea of what's going on and allow them to be part of the convening space. Andrew also mentioned that he is in favor of adding the community members because these two organizations have people who are very tapped into the dynamics of those organizations but might not be as linked in to the City.
- Pakou asked what action is needed from the Food Council. Russ and Tamara responded that a motion to approve the invitation and addition of new members would be good, if desired by the Food Council.
- Karlie asked if only two members were to be added instead of four, who would be prioritized – the staff members or the community members? Russ responded that both groups are needed: staff to move decision making forward, and community members to back up.
- Magdalena asked if the new Food Council members would replace an MPRB implementation committee related to the Urban Agriculture Activity Plan. Russ and Tamara responded that it would not.
- Rhys asked if both members from each agency would vote together. Russ and Tamara responded that they would not necessarily vote together.
- Kris asked about the turnaround time – when the new members would be on board. Russ responded that the turnaround time would likely be within 6 months, depending on process.

Omari moved to approve this motion: “The Food Council recommends that because of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minneapolis Public Schools’ importance to the Minneapolis urban food system, that they each be invited to designate both a staff representative and a community representative to serve as a voting member of the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council.”

Pakou seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

## **5. Food Council annual elections.**

Russ Henry shared that it is time to elect a community member co-chair and three Executive Committee members. Omari Chatman expressed interest in continuing in his role as Co-Chair. Aaron Reser, DeVon Nolen and Patty Bowler expressed interest in remaining on the Executive Committee. Russ is in the second year of a 2-year Mayorally-appointed term as co-chair. There were no other nominations.

- Zoe Hollomon said that she would like to hear one thing from each interested member that they're excited about.
  - Patty said she would like to be more engaged in the discussion about building demand for healthier foods and beverages. She is glad to be focusing on economic development (supply side), but would like to refocus on building the demand side as well.

- Aaron said she wants to keep exploring what the Food Council's role is in complex issues like healthy food and food hubs. Learning how to focus power and influence we have, and thinking about how to channel it to create positive impact in the time we have.
- Omari shared he would like to see the Food Council put the North and South together in collaboration, and connect both of these areas with downtown. He said he would also like to see chickens, bees, and hoop houses implemented to create more sustainable individual lots and build Minneapolis as a strong leading example.

Russ Henry moved to nominate the current slate of candidates. Pakou Hang seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**6. Working group meeting time.** Community Outreach & Engagement (CO&E) and Hubs groups met. Animals group met with CO&E during first 15 minutes.

**7. Updates.** Russ Henry reminded the group that the Food Council will be giving its annual presentation to City Council Health Environment and Community Engagement Committee on February 23. People are invited to attend, watch live on the City's website or watch a taped version on the City's website.

**8. Meeting adjourned.** The meeting adjourned at 7:35. The next meeting is March 11 from 5:30-7:30pm at the Wedge Table, 2412 Nicollet Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404. There will be an optional presentation at 5:00pm about the Wedge Table and Co-op expansion.