



Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC)
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2023; 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Via Zoom

ATTENDEES

Council Members:

Present

1. Anna Taylor-McCants
2. Jae Gerhart
3. Keesa V. Johnson
4. Sandy Pernecky
5. Mary Balog
6. Lauren Marquardt
7. Julius Buzzard
8. Ann Hubbard
9. Alex Canepa
10. Markell Miller

Absent

1. Caroline Sanders (Commissioner)
2. Maya Grant
3. Aubrey Lopatin
4. Laura Wonch
5. Ava HaberkornHalm
6. Marissa Prizgint

WFPC Support Staff:

1. Ariane Donnelly – Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD)

Other Attendees:

1. Melissa Hauptman
2. Katje Armentrout: with MSU Extension
3. Louise Gorenflo: Food Access & Nutrition Policy Action Team (PAT) member

MEETING NOTES

1. Opening/Introductions

9:03-9:09 am

a) Council members share name, affiliation, seat, PAT/Committee, area of interest, and location of remote attendance (municipality, county, state).

Attendees shared their name, affiliation, seat, PAT/Committee, and area of interest. Council members also shared from where they are attending remotely (municipality, county, state). Council members in remote attendance:

- Alex Canepa attending remotely from Ann Arbor Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Ann Hubbard attending remotely from Ann Arbor Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Anna Taylor-McCants attending remotely from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan

c/o WCHD, 555 Towner St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198

E-Mail: washtenawfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com

Web: <https://www.washtenaw.org/1469/Washtenaw-County-Food-Policy-Council>

- Jae Gerhart attending remotely from Sharon Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Julius Buzzard attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Keesa V. Johnson attending remotely from Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Lauren Marquardt attending remotely from Arcadia, Benzie County, Michigan
- Markell Miller attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Mary Balog attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Sandy Pernecky attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan

2. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval

9:09-9:10 am

a) Previous Meeting Minutes (May)

I. Motion: To approve May 10, 2023 meeting minutes

1. Motion: Markell, Seconded: Ann

2. Approved: Yes-10, No-0 (10 council members present at time of vote)

b) Meeting Agenda (July)

I. Motion: To approve July 12, 2023 meeting agenda

1. Motion: Markell, Seconded: Ann

2. Approved: Yes-10, No-0 (10 council members present at time of vote)

3. Public Comment

9:10-9:11 am

- Melissa Hauptman: here to listen and learn.

4. Executive Committee (EC) Report

9:11-9:51 am & 10:22-10:24 am

a) Update on Strategic Planning Initiative 2023 - Jae

- The EC released the RFP for consultants to facilitate strategic planning. Jae has been contacted by 2 firms and expects their submissions this week. Both are very experienced in this kind of facilitation. Timeline: the EC plus Julius is meeting next Wednesday to review the applications and will decide by next Friday. The next Council Meeting (in September) will double as the strategic planning retreat at the Learning Resource Center (LRC). There will likely be pre-work required. Retreat time: 8am-noon. Jae will email this information.
 - Markell: will be out of town that day. Happy to participate in advance.

b) Update on New Member Onboarding Evaluation - Ann

- This group is looking at people's experience in joining the council. Received feedback that a lot of people felt overwhelmed and not fully equipped. Using this feedback, this group created a passport (optional) to help guide the onboarding process. Initial feedback of this passport is that it is very helpful. Please look at the passport, provide feedback (including is something is missing), and try to use it in the next couple of months.
 - Sandy is willing to review the passport. Anna also feedback to share.
 - Link to WFPC Onboarding Passport: [WFPC Onboarding Passport](#)
- The plan is to use this with new council members starting in January (and, of course, returning members can use it, too).
- Additionally, plan to review and update recruitment language.
 - Ariane will send the previous posting to Ann and Markell for review.

c) Update on Healthy School Meals Initiative – Ann

- Initiative to get universal meals into schools.
 - Organizations involved with the initiative: No Kid Hungry, American Heart Association, and School Association of Michigan.
- Alex has not yet heard back from corporation counsel. Jae will reach out to Commissioner Sanders.
- The Michigan legislature has included funding for Healthy School Meals for All in the budget! Just waiting on the Governor to sign!
- The Office of Health and Nutrition Services will hold a Town Hall on July 19th at 2pm. Mary will share the link.
- The National Farm to School Network will host a virtual event on July 20th at 3pm, which will highlight data and successful universal school meals campaigns from other states.

- It is not helpful to criticize the food provided. That impacts those making the food and those eating the food.
- Ann and Mary have been meeting with Jordan Lindsey, a grassroots fellow with the Michigan Local Food Council Network (MLFCN) on next steps for building relationships, educating, and connecting our local school food service directors, parent teacher organizations (PTO), and school board members.
- Who has a relationship with school food directors?
 - Sandy: connected with preceptors who work with students in the food service area. Has loose connections.
 - Markell: Food Gatherers contracts with Ann Arbor Public Schools (work closely with Victoria) for summer food. LeRonica (from Food Gatherers) works with Victoria and has contacts in Ypsilanti, too.
 - Julius: Growing Hope's Youth and Schools Manager is chair of Farm to School Committee.
 - Katje: MSU Extension is building relationships with school food service directors for all of Washtenaw County and farmers.
 - Mary: Taste the Local Difference has a farm to school directory. I have a friend who was a dietitian with Chartwells and is now working as a fresh food consultant. We can connect with her, too.
 - For reference as needed, former council member Angie Smith had made some connections and documentation should be in the google drive.
- How to let people know we are working in this space?
 - Letter: draft a letter, put through passive consent, share with Jordan Lindsay (if desired), and then share widely (including to PTAs, PTOs, school board members, and elected officials)
 - The WFPC does not hold power but can help with relationships and connections.
 - Ann is willing to draft letter with Mary and Sandy (and/or with whomever wants to)
 - Thank you for moving this forward! This is exactly what the WFPC is positioned to do.
- d) **New EC Secretary Vote - Jae**
 - Aubrey needs to step down from the secretary role for the rest of the calendar year.
 - Will hold an election today for an interim secretary. Questions or nominations?
 - Marissa has offered to serve until end of the year.
 - Approved Marissa as Secretary (9 votes): 9 Council Members present at time of election. Appointment made. Congrats and thank you!
- e) **Tracking Our Work**
 - Reminder: fill out the tracking form. This form is utilized for the annual report.
 - Great examples for items to add to the form: the work Mary and Ann did with Jordan Lindsey and Anna's meeting with a Washtenaw County Commissioner.

5. PAT Updates

9:51-10:04 am

a) **Food Access & Nutrition (FAN) PAT – Julius**

I. Washtenaw Commons for Growers – Louise

- Will be meeting with the Greenbelt today.
 - FYI, the City of Ann Arbor's Greenbelt Program just released an [RFP](#) for farmers interested in land acquisition under the Greenbelt's Buy-Protect-Sell Initiative. The Greenbelt buys the land, puts the easement on it, and sells the land. This is for beginning farmers, marginalized farmers, and farmers who have a hard time accessing land. The goal is to connect land-insecure farmers with affordable farmland buying opportunities. The RFP is out for a protected farm in Northfield Township.
 - a. Jae will share the RFP with Louise and the council members. Feel free to share widely.
- Has update from Commissioner Sanders about the community land bank: this idea has been shelved.

b) **Food Waste & Packaging WorkGroup**

- Taking the summer off. Will regroup when team members have capacity.

c) **Planning & Zoning PAT**

- No update

d) **Farmers PAT**

- Met last week. Determined farm economic development as our focus. Specially, how can County government support farmers (ex. via a grant program)? Also focused on ongoing conversation about lack of meat processing facility in the County.

- Katje: we are continuing conversation around meat processing facilities.
 - Community members applied for some grants but are in the waiting period for where the facility will be. Also talked with Washtenaw County Conservation District.
- Alex: There is 2.9 million dollars in Michigan's budget for BIPOC farmers. The funding must be spent by 2028.

6. Presentation: Racial Equity Audit – Keesa

10:04-10:22 am

- Keesa gave a presentation and will share the presentation slides.
- We are all leaders in the food system. Washtenaw County is one of the richest counties in Michigan, but there are inequities.
- Discussion:
 - How are we collectively upholding our mission?
 - The WFPC is supported by the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners (BOC). So, our racial equity policy is supported by the BOC, and we should use this policy to focus all our work.
- Racial Equity Audit:
 - Would anyone like to participate in the racial equity audit (WFPC council members and PAT members are invited to participate)?
 - Project will start week of July 24th.
 - 2 meetings at 1.5 hours each
 - Purpose: create a report that will help with action planning.
 - This is a great thing to do prior to the September WFPC meeting.
 - Anna, Markell, Lauren, and Ann: want to participate.
 - Jae: will be 5th participant if need 5.

7. Updates from Area Councils/Committees

10:24-10:47 am

a) [WFPC Liaison Assignments .xlsx - Google Sheets](#)

- Combined with Round Robin & Open Comment.
- Markell will read the BOC meeting minutes.
- Markell: Food Gatherers hosted Senator Stabenow. Hoping to see the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) protected.
 - If you have any important priorities for the Farm Bill, the time is now to get them to Sen Stabenow.
 - As a constituent and/or as an organization.
 - If anyone knows anyone in a conservative area, educate them about the importance of SNAP, food, food pantries, so they can talk with their representatives. Markell will send Jae language to put in the follow-up email.
 - Are there any materials already developed that we as constituents can share?
 - Julius will share some materials he has used. Lauren suggested looking at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.
 - Food Gatherers will host a Farm Bill 101 training on Friday, August 4th at 11:30am.
- Ann: If anyone is interested in working with Mary, Sandy, and me about Healthy Meals, let us know!
- Melissa: I am interested in what is going on in schools. There are a lot of great efforts regarding school meals, but also still processed foods. I am on a PTO. Chartwells said they basically need to provide foods kids will eat. What exactly will you be doing?
 - Healthy School Meals for All: universal school meals and will pay off school meal debt.
 - 1 in 7 kids in Michigan faces hunger. So, this will help reduce food insecurity and is a huge win for kids struggling with food insecurity.
 - School infrastructure will need to be addressed because many schools do not have kitchens.
 - Ann and Mary's next step: reach out to Jordan Lindsey, a grassroots organizing fellow.
 - Melissa is interested in infrastructure, support, funding, and how to improve quality of food, and wants to be involved. Melissa will share email with Ann so can get connected.

- Ariane: WCHD is hosting Summer Health Days, events where WCHD and other local organizations are tabling to provide education, resources, and giveaways. There will be free food/beverages for the community (while supplies last). These events are family-friendly and include activities for kids. [Summer Health Days Flyer \(washtenaw.org\)](https://www.washtenaw.org/summer-health-days)
- Jae: [MiFarmLink](#) links vacant lands or farms to farm seekers. It was started by a grant in Ottawa County and is now statewide. They received \$100,000 in the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development's (MDARD) budget and have reached full funding through fiscal year 2025. They have a coordinator who is housed in the Washtenaw County Conservation District (works statewide).
 - Please share the City of Ann Arbor's Greenbelt Program's [RFP](#).
- Julius: was asked to join the Greenbelt commission. Also, Growing Hope is hosting Congresswoman Slotkin to showcase urban farming. If you know of any stories/people we should connect her to, please share.
- Send Jae links/blurbs to be included in the follow-up email that will be sent to council members.

8. Round Robin

10:24-10:47 am

a) Things on horizon, important updates from Council Members

- Combined with Updates from Area Councils/Committees & Open Comment

9. Open Comment (Council Members and Public)

10:24-10:47 am

- Combined with Updates from Area Councils/Committees & Round Robin

10. Adjourn

10:47 am

ACTION ITEMS

- Jae will email information about the strategic planning retreat/September's WFPC meeting.
- Please look at the passport, provide feedback (including if something is missing), and try to use it in the next couple of months. The plan is to use this with new council members starting in January (and, of course, returning members can use it, too). Sandy is willing to review the passport. Anna has also feedback to share.
 - Additionally, plan to review and update recruitment language. Ariane will send the previous posting to Ann and Markell for review.
- Alex has not yet heard back from corporation counsel regarding the Healthy School Meals initiative. Jae will reach out to Commissioner Sanders.
- Ann is willing to draft letter with Mary and Sandy (and/or with whomever wants to) about the Healthy School Meals initiative. Let Ann know if you want to join this group.
- Jae will share the Greenbelt's RFP with Louise and the council members. Feel free to share widely.
- Keesa gave a Racial Equity Audit presentation and will share the presentation slides.
- Markell will read the BOC meeting minutes.
- Markell will send Jae language about SNAP and TEFAP to put in the follow-up email.
- Are there any materials already developed about SNAP/TEFAP/Farm Bill that we as constituents can share?
 - Julius will share some materials he has used. Lauren suggested looking at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.
- If you know of any stories/people we should connect Congresswoman Slotkin to (regarding urban farming), please share with Julius.
- Send Jae links/blurbs to be included in the follow-up email that will be sent to council members.

RECORDED VOTES

1. Motion 1: To approve May 10, 2023 meeting minutes

a. Approved: Yes-10, No-0

2. Motion 2: To approve July 12, 2023 meeting agendas

a. Approved: Yes-10, No-0

3. Approved Marissa as Secretary (9 votes): 9 Council Members present at time of election. Appointment made.