



**Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC)  
Meeting Minutes**

**September 13, 2023; 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**In-Person at the Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center (4135 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor, MI 48108), Meeting Room Michigan & Via Zoom**

**ATTENDEES**

**Council Members:**

**Present**

1. Anna Taylor-McCants
2. Jae Gerhart
3. Keesa V. Johnson
4. Maya Grant
5. Mary Balog
6. Lauren Marquardt
7. Julius Buzzard
8. Ann Hubbard
9. Ava HaberkornHalm
10. Markell Miller
11. Marissa Prizgint
12. Caroline Sanders (Commissioner)

**Absent**

1. Alex Canepa
2. Sandy Pernecky
3. Aubrey Lopatin

**WFPC Support Staff:**

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

**Other Attendees:**

1. Jim Mogensen: Food Access & Nutrition Policy Action Team (PAT) member
2. Katje Armentrout: with MSU Extension
3. Bob Bennett: Community member; chef at Zingerman's Roadhouse
4. Hillary Watson: Strategic planning meeting facilitator; with NEW (Nonprofit Enterprise at Work)
5. Terri Barker: Economic & Community Development Analyst with Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
6. Jenn Mattison: Food Service Director for Dexter Community Schools and Washtenaw ISD
7. Cassandra Kelly: Community member

**MEETING NOTES**

1. **Gathering** 7:45 - 8:05 am
2. **Remote Council Members Roll Call** 8:05 - 8:11 am
  - a) **Council Members attending remotely, please share the location (municipality, county, state)**

Council members attending remotely shared from where they are attending remotely (municipality, county, state).  
Council members in remote attendance:

- Ann Hubbard attending remotely from Rock Island, Rock Island County, Illinois
- Anna Taylor-McCants attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
  - Attended remotely prior to joining the meeting in person
- Ava HaberkornHalm attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Keesa V. Johnson attending remotely from Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
  - Attended remotely prior to joining the meeting in person
- Markell Miller attending remotely from Washington D.C.

### **3. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval**

**8:11 – 8:12 am**

#### **b) Previous Meeting Minutes (July)**

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

1. **Motion: Jae, Seconded: Marissa**

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

#### **c) Meeting Agenda (September)**

I. Motion: To approve September 13, 2023 meeting agenda

1. **Motion: Jae, Seconded: Marissa**

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

### **4. Public Comment**

**8:12 - 8:12 am**

- None

### **Strategic Planning Meeting**

- Here is the [link](#) to the strategic planning meeting slides

### **5. Welcome, Introductions, Warm Up**

**8:12 - 8:30 am**

### **6. The Prouds & the WHYs: Pre-Work Review**

**8:30 - 9:16 am**

- What do you want to highlight from the discussion?:
  - Issue awareness/education (less projects)
  - It is hard to know what others are working on
    - How do we support each other?
  - Easy to be proud of concrete things, harder to name/recognize the intangible benefits of the WFPC (ex: relationship building, racial equity, etc.)
  - How do we measure success?
  - How council members participate matters: as part of their employment vs. outside of their employment
- Garden:
  - What is the relationship between racial/disability justice AND volunteer work at WFPC?
  - What is the relationship between WFPC composition and people of culture in Washtenaw County (People of Global Majority communities)?
  - Shared language is important. Language is typically tied to white supremacy and is pervasive
- Why does the WFPC exist?
  - The three reasons for WFPC to exist (taken from pre-survey):
    - Advance policy change
    - Engage the community
    - Promote equity
  - From discussion:
    - To channel volunteer and community energy
      - To not blame the community for not engaging
    - To advise and make recommendations to the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners (BOC)
      - Does this require the WFPC to connect to paid staff (ex: staff whose job is waste

- management)?
- This has been done with limited information flow
  - BOC does not make specific asks about policy (in past three years)
    - This relationship has been different in the past:
      - Collaboration most effective with staff support from County, involvement from Commissioner in planning, and WFPC time

## 7. BREAK

9:16 - 9:28 am

## 8. Visioning

9:28 - 10:10 am & 10:17 – 11:06 am

### Reflection on Needs

- What are the community needs you see in your daily life and work that WFPC has the ability to respond to?
  - Food pantries that have transit accessibility issues
    - Dignity and choice in food
  - Preparation/education for people receiving food
  - Need for ready to eat meals where people have agency and options
  - No breakfast in Ypsilanti
  - People do not know about available services (lack of communication/education)
  - Resources for groups, but not a canopy/umbrella to connect interest groups to each other
    - Washtenaw is uniquely positioned to do this
  - Way finding
  - New language/messaging that promote healthy relationships to body, self-esteem, history, and dignity; food sovereignty
  - Education about food, nutrition, and body size
  - Undoing cultural messages about “good” and “bad” food, especially in marginalized communities with reduced access
  - Food and maternal/infant health, incarceration, homelessness
  - Leaving a better place for the future
  - Small farmers need land!
    - Financing (budgeting with county, mini grants, grants)
    - Market access
    - Mid-level processing infrastructure (ex: meat processing)
    - Urban, rural, and peri-urban
    - Wages!
  - Affordable housing
  - Funding/money
  - Communicating about who farms in Washtenaw County and their situations/demographics
    - The public does not know
  - Local fruits and vegetables in schools
  - Bring state funding/tap into availability of resources
    - Intermediary
  - Mitigating methane through composting
    - Access and cost
  - Compost in manufacturing/restaurants
  - School meals
  - Connecting chefs to underserved communities recovering food
  - Who is able to create solutions?

### Stop-Start-Continue

- STOP
  - Stop doing all of the work identified ourselves

- Ex: Meat processing policy work. Identify what work needs to be done, but do not do the work (recommend BOC pay a vendor to look into meat processing policy)
- Stop accepting silence/non-engagement from the BOC
- **START**
  - Communicate work across the food system. Occupy an umbrella role
  - Direct communication with BOC/elected officials
    - Advocacy
    - Figure out what our BOC liaison needs so can do better communication
    - Ask BOC to meet our needs
  - Experiment with different modes of community engagement
    - Partner with BOC to engage/find engagement activities/distribute funds for engagement activities
  - Start tapping into already funded/organized groups (A2Zero; Resilient Washtenaw)
  - Start examining structure of PATs
    - As part of the whole (under the WFPC)
    - Function of PATs
    - Leverage existing organizations (FedUp/Food Gatherers/Growing Hope)
  - Use collaborative resources (Slack, Canva, etc.)
  - Build relationships with Washtenaw County staff
    - And identify paid staff who can support
  - Create a structure for community engagement and communication
    - And ensure communication with community
  - Power analysis: build skills here
  - Advocate to BOC to build a more representative WFPC
  - Deliberate recruitment
  - Build relationships with People of Global Majority communities
- **CONTINUE**
  - Annual report to BOC
  - Composting advocacy, County-wide effort
    - Specifically: digester
    - Addressing limiting factors and/or funding
    - Finding creative, grass-roots solutions
  - Editing Policy Agenda (updating)
    - In a bigger way (funding)
    - And with community input/community engagement
    - Proper needs assessment
  - Paid FTE for the WFPC
  - Increase accessibility and reduce intimidation of meetings
  - Explore different formats/locations/structures for meetings
  - Determine what is next in racial equity work
- Next step: there are lots of items on the “start”. Identify what want to prioritize/keep in the “start” category

## **9. BREAK**

**10:10 - 10:17 am**

## **10. Racial Equity Audit Preview & Internal/External Forces**

**11:06 - 11:24 am**

- Who does not have access?
- Who holds the power?
- How to acknowledge power and what to do with the power?
- Who makes the decisions?
- Acknowledge white supremacy and its pervasive effect
- Need to draw attention to the WFPC’s mission every meeting. Need to know why we are here in order to do the work
- Should think about “continue”, “start”, and “stop” through the framework of racial equity

- Immediately use racial equity framework before doing anything else: to ensure there is racial equity in everything that we are doing
- Did not do Internal/External Forces activity

## 11. Discussion: Creating a Path Toward the Vision

11:24 am- 12:01 pm

- There is far more discussed than what the WFPC can do in the next five years. Need to prioritize what work to do
- Policy Agenda:
  - Pick 2-4 Policy Agenda items that you think are the most critical and that the WFPC is best positioned to achieve
  - Ann and Ava: 2, 10, 16, and 19; all related to food access
    - Not all food banks/food pantries are wheelchair-accessible
    - Discern who does not have a seat at the table and then ensure that they do have a seat at the table. This is really important
  - Keesa, Mary, Jim, and Bob: 2, 10, 11, 19
  - Marissa, Lauren, and Maya: 5, 8, 11, 14
  - Julius, Anna, and Jae: 5, 10, 16
    - Hard time with these questions when looking through the lens of what the WFPC has the ability to respond to. What are we doing, why, and what is our structure?
  - 2: 2 groups prioritized
  - 5: 2 groups prioritized
  - 8: 1 group prioritized
  - 10: 3 groups prioritized
  - 11: 2 groups prioritized
  - 14: 1 group prioritized
  - 16: 2 groups prioritized
  - 19: 2 groups prioritized
  - What are we doing?
  - Why?
  - What is our structure/how?
- Priority areas:
  - Build and rebuild critical relationships
  - Advance racial equity
  - Advocate for funding (focus on policy change?)
    - Paid employee?
  - Amplify/galvanize/represent/listen to/act on behalf of community
  - Determine your scope/role definition
    - With BOC
    - Paid employee
- Priority areas determined today are similar to those determined in previous strategic planning
- Do these priority areas allow us to make an impact?
- This work requires more resources

## 12. Wrap Up/Appreciations

12:01 - 12:05 pm

- Next steps:
  - Hillary will create a report summary and strategic framework for the WFPC to review
  - The executive committee will help further this work; perhaps leave space at future meetings to continue the discussion

## ACTION ITEMS

- There are lots of items on the “start”. Identify what want to prioritize/keep in the “start” category
- There is far more discussed than what the WFPC can do in the next five years. Need to prioritize what work to do

- Hillary will create a report summary and strategic framework for the WFPC to review
- The executive committee will help further this work; perhaps leave space at future meetings to continue the discussion

#### **RECORDED VOTES**

1. **Motion 1:** To approve July 12, 2023 meeting minutes
  - a. Approved: Yes-10, No-0
2. **Motion 2:** To approve September 13, 2023 meeting agenda
  - a. Approved: Yes-10, No-0