



**Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC)
Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2023; 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Via Zoom**

ATTENDEES

Council Members:

Present

1. Marissa Prizgint
2. Keesa V. Johnson
3. Ann Hubbard
4. Anna Taylor-McCants
5. Mary Balog
6. Maya Grant
7. Markell Miller
8. Julius Buzzard
9. Caroline Sanders (Commissioner)

Absent

1. Lauren Marquardt
2. Alex Canepa
3. Aubrey Lopatin
4. Jae Gerhart
5. Ava HaberkornHalm

WFPC Support Staff:

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

Other Attendees:

1. Katje Armentrout: with MSU Extension

MEETING NOTES

1. Opening/Introductions

9:04-9:10 am & 10:21-10:23 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:

- Ann Hubbard attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Anna Taylor-McCants attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Caroline Sanders attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Julius Buzzard attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Keesa V. Johnson attending remotely from Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Marissa Prizgint attending remotely from Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Markell Miller attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan

- Mary Balog attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Maya Grant attending remotely from Ferndale, Oakland County, Michigan

2. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval

9:10-9:11 am

a) Previous Meeting Minutes (September)

- I. Motion: To approve September 13, 2023 meeting minutes
 1. **Motion: Marissa, Seconded: Markell**
 2. **Approved: Yes-8, No-0** (8 council members present at time of vote)

b) Meeting Agenda (November)

- I. Motion: To approve November 8, 2023 meeting agenda
 1. **Motion: Marissa, Seconded: Markell**
 2. **Approved: Yes-8, No-0** (8 council members present at time of vote)

3. Public Comment

9:11-9:11 am

- None

4. Executive Committee (EC) Report

9:11-9:23 am

a) Tracking Our Work

- Reminder: fill out the tracking form. This form is utilized for the annual report, and work on the annual report will begin soon. Please fill it out prior to December.

b) Recruitment Update - Ann

- 11 open seats for the 2024 appointment (3 one-year appointments and 8 two-year appointments)
- 4 returning council members and 9 new applicants
- Workgroup met on Monday and have sent recommendations to the Clerk's Office
- The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners (BOC) will make appointments at their 12/6 meeting.

c) Annual Report - Looking Forward - Ann

- The WFPC creates an annual report to highlight work the WFPC has accomplished that year. This annual report is presented and given to the BOC. Marissa and Ann are leads for the 2023 report. Ann will be emailing people requests for submissions to the annual report (based on tracking form submissions).
- Current ideas for the annual report: strategic planning, racial equity audit, legislative education day, Washtenaw Commons for Growers, and Healthy School Meals for All. Please share any additional ideas with Ann.

d) Executive Committee 2024 - Marissa

- There is only one known person currently serving on the EC who is planning to continue serving on the EC in 2024. Would love to see the open seats on the EC filled by people currently on the WFPC. Please consider serving on the EC. Ariane will email council members the document that defines the EC roles. You can reach out to previous EC members to talk about being on the EC.
 - Anna is interested and will talk with Keesa.

e) 2024 Meeting Schedule - Ariane

- Second Wednesdays of the odd months from 9-11am: 1/10, 3/13, 5/8, 7/10, 9/11, and 11/13. Will plan to meet remotely, if possible.

5. PAT Updates

9:23-9:33 am

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

- Julius emailed documents (Conservation Programs + Land Access Memo and Food Sovereign Washtenaw Policy Recommendations) to the WFPC.
- Washtenaw Commons update:
 - Have been in conversation with the City of Ann Arbor's Greenbelt program about increasing land access for disadvantaged growers in our community/creating a growers commons.
 - The Greenbelt conserves land within their jurisdiction, which is mostly in Washtenaw County. Conservation example: a farmer approaches the Greenbelt to get their land conserved, and then the land can only be used as

agricultural land in perpetuity. Another conservation example: the Buy-Protect-Sell Initiative. The Greenbelt buys the land, puts the easement on it, and sells the land using an RFP process.

- Hope that Remy Long, the director of the Greenbelt program, can come to a WFPC meeting in early 2024 to give a presentation and answer questions.
- Food Sovereign Washtenaw Policy Recommendations update:
 - The second part of our project is to identify policies that support food sovereignty. Food sovereignty pillars: food for people, values food workers, communing food system, communing food resources, value food knowledge/skills, care of place/interbeing, and sacredness of food.
 - a. Reviewed the recommendations compared to the food sovereignty pillars, especially focusing on the recommendations that meet all seven food sovereignty pillars.
 - b. Policy agenda items that relate to food sovereignty: #2, #6, #9, #10, and #11.
 - c. Others who have been involved in this work include Louise Gorenflo and Jim Mogensen. Reach out to Mary and Julius if you would like to work on this.
 - a. Keesa is interested in helping with policy.
 - d. Thanks all for your work on this!
- Julius and Mary did not attend the most recent FAN PAT meeting. No other updates shared from this meeting.

b) Other PATs

- No other updates.

6. Discuss September Strategic Planning Retreat

9:33-10:21 am

a) Review WFPC Strategic Framework from NEW

- The pdf of this strategic framework was attached in the meeting packet email. Review the pdf for details.
- Background: last strategic planning was 5 years ago. The WFPC released an RFP for a strategic planning consultant, hired a consultant (Nonprofit Enterprise at Work ([NEW](#))), and had our strategic planning session in September.
- NEW provided this strategic planning framework with recommendations, and the EC edited slightly to meet the WFPC's needs.
- NEW identified the following priorities:
 - Priority #1: Invest in Relationships
 - Priority #2: Advocate
 - Priority #3: Refine Scope
 - a. Marissa: think it will be difficult to do anything else before refine scope. Should complete this priority first.
 - b. One of the goals for this priority includes: revising the policy agenda, including conducting a needs assessment before updating the policy agenda.
 - c. May be a need to review mission and values.
 - Priority #4: Promote Racial Equity
 - a. Good news, we are already working on this.
 - Recommends the WFPC does not work on community engagement at this time.
 - The priority list ordering is not indicative of the order the priorities should be addressed.

b) Open Discussion/Thoughts on Next Steps

- Anna: create a structure where organizations can connect with us. Have a network of organizations that we are in contact with.
- Mary: attended the Detroit Food Summit. Seemed like a great way to connect with different folks. We used to have the Local Food Summit in Washtenaw County. Who organized it?
 - The fiduciary was Slow Food Huron Valley.
 - Lots of people came together to make it happen.
 - Jae was involved (wearing work and WFPC hats; spoke at the Local Food Summit).
 - The WFPC was not an organizing partner, but the WFPC's logo was present and the WFPC tabled.
- Keesa: there needs to be more thought that goes into these recommendations. They need to be flushed out/developed more.

- Anna: agree need to refine scope first. How do we do this work without engaging community, because that is who we are advocating for?
 - Markell: interpreted that community engagement needs to be embedded in the priorities (not a standalone priority)
 - Markell: refining scope has always been talked about. Challenge between what can we work on now and what do we need to get in motion to do longer term (those are separate to-do lists).
 - Legislative priorities for 2024.
 - Emerging things that we feel need more resources/exploration/attention.
 - Marissa: With turnover, it is important to map out long-term priorities.
 - Markell: How do other food policy councils, including the Detroit Food Policy Council (note: they have a different staffing model) prioritize this work (i.e., now and future)?
 - Keesa: Really likes the DC Food Policy Council. It shows what is happening in the foodshed.
 - Ann: refining scope will help us deliberately recruit.
 - Mary: with our meeting schedule, work cannot get done unless 3-5 people volunteer to do it independently on their own time. That is a huge commitment that not a lot of people can volunteer for.
 - Commit to organizing community events or commit to information collection/research.
 - Marissa: there is no true accountability with volunteers. If something needs to be done, we need to pay someone to do it.
- Julius: increasing accessibility of our meetings. First thought: most potential to do this, how we structure meetings, how we have FAN PAT meetings, finding ways for those voices to get here.
 - Marissa: A lot of the work that we do does not happen during these formal WFPC meetings. It happens with the PATs, etc.
 - Mary: Where were previous PAT/WFPC meetings?
 - Markell: The FAN PAT has often met at the Washtenaw County Learning Resource Center. Used to have WFPC meetings at Food Gatherers. Farmers PAT has moved around to different locations.
 - Have tried to have meetings at locations on a bus line. In a previous year, the WFPC meetings moved around to different locations, but that was not successful (people were confused).
 - Marissa: If there is not a quorum of council members at PAT meetings, PATs are not bound by the same rules as WFPC meetings.
- If we want to change meetings times, need to do this before public posting is posted (i.e., in August/September).

c) **Determine Next Steps**

- Identifying champions and creating SMART goals is a good next step.
 - I. Champions for Priority Areas**
 - Marissa: champions can (with anyone else wanting to work on that priority area) come up with SMART goals (see link below) that support the priority area they are championing. Then the WFPC as a whole can determine which of those goals take priority.
 - Marissa: some items in the priority areas are already overlapping with what the EC does (and then could be assigned to EC members).
 - Julius: it might make sense to do a hybrid of those two things. EC position and co-champion could work together/distribute the work that way.
 - Markell: discussing the strategic plan and how to implement it is a very appropriate use of time for the WFPC meetings.
 - Proposes a standing meeting agenda item at every WFPC meeting to talk about priorities and progress.
 - Ex: maybe in January, have an overview and then focus on the priorities (could go through one at a time).
 - Encourages using the meeting time in a focused way.
 - Ann: agrees but is concerned about the length of time (2 months) between meetings. A workgroup and consultant (if receive funding for a consultant) could help us move the learning forward to see what best serves the WFPC.
 - Does anyone want to volunteer to champion a priority area or has a recommendation for where to head next?

- Mary: Drawn to investing in relationships priority, but not sure if can be the champion.
 - Also interested in working on racial equity priority.
- Marissa: It might be too much to expect people to participate in a PAT and to champion a priority.
 - Markell: Believes that participating in workgroups/ad hoc projects count as participation. So, council members do not need to be on PAT and workgroups.
- Marissa: Bring this discussion up again at January's meeting. There are a lot of next steps. Think about which priority areas you may want to get involved with.
- Regarding improving relationship with the BOC:
 - Plan for someone to meet one-on-one with Commissioner Sanders to discuss.
 - Commissioner Sanders stated to feel free to reach out before December to meet.

II. SMART Goals

- Champions can (with anyone else wanting to work on that priority area) come up with SMART goals (see link above) that support the priority area they are championing.

7. Racial Equity Audit Workgroup Update - *Keesa*

10:23-10:26 am

- Keesa: Have numerous recommendations. Will vote on it. Collect data to share with EC and then WFPC so people can review. There are some gaps that need help with. Need to prioritize how we strategically move forward.
- Markell: Thinks this tool is helpful. Appreciate how you lay it out. Should be done at whatever frequency makes sense (i.e., every other year). The act of doing it was helpful. Perhaps have whole WFPC do parts of this together.

8. Updates from Area Councils/Committees and Round Robin

10:26-10:30 am

a) WFPC Liaison Assignments .xlsx - Google Sheets

- Marissa: Huron River Watershed Council
 - The Executive Committee has developed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee and is looking to diversify board composition. If you are part of the watershed and are interested, you can reach out to your local municipality or if you need direction, reach out to me.
- Markell: Reviewed the recent Board of Health minutes and did not see anything we need to follow up on.
- Keesa: Sits on a health equity committee for Washtenaw County and helps increase partner organizations' capacity for funding.
 - Examples of projects:
 - Black food sovereignty project with a local church
 - Skilled trade program for middle schoolers in Superior Township to learn skill building techniques at a Black-led church

b) Washtenaw Commons for Growers Update: *Julius & Mary*

- Shared update during the FAN PAT update.

9. Open Comment (Council Members and Public)

10:30-10:42 am

- Markell: Farm Bill update
 - Has continued to share the need for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Hoping to see more food from the federal government through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).
 - Waiting to see draft from Senate Agriculture committee. The Senate is occupied by an impending possible government shutdown and other appropriations bills that need to be passed.
 - Government shut down possibility: 11/18. Would not affect Nov/Dec SNAP benefits.
 - Food Gatherers will make sure that federal employees in our county know about food pantry resources.
 - Be in touch if you want to get involved with Farm Bill Advocacy.
- Mary: Argus Farm Stop raised \$10,000 so people who shop there with SNAP do not have a daily Double Up Food Bucks limit.
- Mary: Healthy School Meals for All update
 - Senate Bill 500 was introduced in September to codify universal school meals into law.
 - Reported favorably without amendment; referred to committees.

- Ann: Two democrat legislators were elected to be mayors and that takes the house from 56-54 democrat majority to 54-54. Does anyone know how this will impact things (like Healthy School Meals for All)?
 - Markell: thinks that the next Michigan Local Food Council Network (MLFCN) call on 11/16 will address this.
 - Ann plans to attend this call and can share any learned information.
 - Mary: Legislature may adjourn in November instead of December.
 - Commissioner Sanders: The governor will make appointments to fill these two vacant spots. Thinks will appoint as soon as possible.
- WCHD State of Our Health event is on Monday, 11/13 from 3-6pm; registration required.
 - Markell will be there.
 - Mary is considering attending.
 - Keesa is interested in attending.
- The Washtenaw Housing Alliance will host their State of Homelessness & Affordable Housing event on Thursday, 11/16 from 8-10:30am; registration required.
- Markell: was at the MLFCN Lobby Day. Met with some legislators and spoke about school meals, WFPC, emergency hunger relief, and SNAP policies.

10. Adjourn

10:42 am

ACTION ITEMS

- Reminder: fill out the tracking form ([Tracking Our Work](#))
- Annual report: Marissa and Ann are the leads for the 2023 report. Ann will be emailing people requests for submissions to the annual reports (based on tracking form submissions). Please share any ideas for the annual report with Ann.
- Please consider serving on the EC in 2024. Ariane will email council members the document that defines the EC roles.
- Reach out to Mary and Julius if you would like to work on Food Sovereign Washtenaw Policy Recommendations.
 - Keesa is interested in helping with policy.
- Strategic planning follow-up: bring this discussion up again at January's meeting. There are a lot of next steps. Think about which priority areas you may want to get involved with. Suggestion made to have a standing meeting agenda item at every WFPC meeting to talk about priorities and progress.
- Racial Equity Audit Workgroup update: Have numerous recommendations. Will vote on it. Collect data to share with EC and then WFPC so people can review. There are some gaps that need help with. Need to prioritize how we strategically move forward.
 - Markell: think this should be done at whatever frequency makes sense (i.e., every other year). The act of doing it was helpful. Perhaps have whole WFPC do parts of this together.

RECORDED VOTES

1. **Motion 1:** To approve September 13, 2023 meeting minutes
 - a. Approved: Yes-8, No-0
2. **Motion 2:** To approve November 8, 2023 meeting agenda
 - a. Approved: Yes-8, No-0