



Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC)
Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2024; 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Via Zoom

ATTENDEES

Council Members:

Present

1. Katje Armentrout
2. Keesa V. Johnson
3. Ann Hubbard
4. Anna Taylor-McCants
5. Mary Balog
6. Lauren Marquardt
7. Jae Gerhart
8. Julius Buzzard
9. Justin Hodge (Commissioner)
10. Noelle Blasch
11. June Hollie
12. Thomas Hutchinson
13. Andrew Paniagua
14. Nicholas Pomante
15. Christine Taylor
16. Ava HaberkornHalm

Absent

N/A, all present

WFPC Support Staff:

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

Other Attendees:

1. Azella Markgraf (City of Ann Arbor)
2. Georgia Frost (Representative Dingell's Office)
3. Liz Poteat (Food Gatherers)
4. Madeline Tong
5. Heather Hutchins-Wiese (Professor at EMU; interested in food waste & composting)
6. Marissa Prizgint (former WFPC member, former WFPC Executive Committee member, and former co-chair of the Planning & Zoning Policy Action Team)

MEETING NOTES

1. Opening/Introductions

9:02-9:21 am & 9:36-9:36 am

a) Welcome new members!

b) Council members share name, affiliation, seat, Policy Action Team (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:

- Andrew Paniagua attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Ann Hubbard attending remotely from Ann Arbor Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Anna Taylor-McCants attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Ava HaberkornHalm attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Christine Taylor attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Jae Gerhart attending remotely from Superior Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Julius Buzzard attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Justin Hodge attending remotely from Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- June Hollie attending remotely from Brighton, Livingston County, Michigan
- Katje Armentrout attending remotely from Fenton, Genesee County, Michigan
- Keesa V. Johnson attending remotely from Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Lauren Marquardt attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Mary Balog attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Nicholas Pomante attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Noelle Blasch attending remotely from Plymouth, Wayne County, Michigan
- Thomas Hutchinson attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan

2. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval

9:21-9:23 am

a) Previous Meeting Minutes (November)

I. Motion: To approve November 8, 2023 meeting minutes

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

2. **Approved: Yes-15, No-0** (15 council members present at time of vote)

b) Meeting Agenda (January)

I. Motion: To approve January 10, 2024 meeting agenda

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

2. **Approved: Yes-15, No-0** (15 council members present at time of vote)

Approved with edit: conduct Executive Committee (EC) elections prior to the EC Report

3. Public Comment

9:23-9:27 am

- Georgia Frost: Representative Dingell's in district representative. Here to learn and excited to see what is next.
 - Georgia.frost@mail.house.gov
- Azella Markgraf: New food sustainable food coordinator with the City of Ann Arbor Office of Sustainability and Innovations
- Madeline Tong: University of Michigan MSW intern with FedUp Ministries

4. Executive Committee (EC) Report

9:33-9:36 am & 9:36-9:48 am

a) Strategic Plan Update - Jae

- 4 priority areas identified at strategic planning session (with a consultant from NEW) in September.
 - Priority #1: Invest in Relationships
 - Priority #2: Advocate
 - Priority #3: Refine Scope
 - Priority #4: Promote Racial Equity
- The EC will send the strategic plan report to the WFPC and will follow-up on the strategic plan.

b) Annual Report Update - Ann

- Ann has worked on the annual report, and Jae is finalizing it. Marissa Prizgint, who just finished a term on Council, will work on the report's layout and format.

- Report will be shared with the Board of Commissions (BOC), as well as be presented to the BOC (at a TBD date).
 - Have some articles for the report but need more articles and pictures. For example, it would be great to include an article about the Healthy School Meals Team. Articles do not have to be from a council member.
 - Jae will share the link to the annual report folder where the articles are being saved. If you are writing an article, please add it to this folder as soon as possible.
 - Jae wants to have the annual report completed by March.
 - Jae will reach out to Andrew, who supports the BOC, to schedule a time to present.
- c) **Tracking Our Work - Jae**
- Please use this form to track your work with the WFPC (ex: anytime you talk with representatives, participate in anything policy-related, anything you do as a representative of the WFPC, etc.). This tracking form allows us to keep track of everything the WFPC does throughout the year and is utilized to create the annual report.
- d) **In-person Meeting in May? - Jae**
- Discussion about holding May's meeting in person:
 - Face-to-face contact helps create community.
 - Attending the meeting virtually would still be an option.
 - Should more dates be added to the meeting schedule?
 - Justin is interested in speaking with the EC to see how the BOC can be supportive (i.e. if that means meeting more frequently, etc.)
 - The EC will talk about the meeting schedule.
 - If continuing with the current meeting schedule, there is support for May's meeting to be in person.
 - Suggestion made to postpone making the decision.
- e) **Pre-meeting Email Updates - Jae**
- Discussion about giving pre-meeting email updates. It would be a prompted email that people could respond with their update. Will try to pilot this before next meeting. Updates are important to help know how to support each other.

5. EC Elections

9:27-9:33 am & 10:30-10:33am

- Nominated for positions. Approved Keesa as Chairperson (13 votes), Jae as Vice-Chairperson (13 votes), Julius as Racial Equity Liaison (13 votes), Anna as Policy Liaison (12 votes; 1 vote for Lauren), and Lauren as Secretary (12 votes; 1 vote for Anna): 13 Council Members present at time of election. Appointments made. Congrats and thank you!

6. PAT/Workgroup Introductions

9:48-10:17 am

- Ariane can add/remove people to/from the PAT google groups. Let Ariane know if you (or someone else) want to be added (or removed) to any of the PAT google groups. An example of a function of the PAT google group: the Food Access & Nutrition PAT members email their google group regularly, including sending reminders about upcoming meetings.
- a) **Food Access & Nutrition (FAN) PAT - Julius**
- This PAT last met in December. There were 4 focus areas in 2023: Healthy School Meals, Food Sovereign Washtenaw Workgroup (first year: education focused on what food sovereignty is; second year: action items, such as working through what a food commons might look like and pathways to creating that and policy action items), transportation (getting people to food and vice versa), and farm bill advocacy around food assistance and for places like Food Gatherers.
 - Usually meet virtually via Zoom from 3:30-5pm on the fourth Monday of the month.
 - Ariane will update the PAT webpage with the current co-chairs (Mary and Dayna).
- b) **Michigan School Meals - Mary**
- Formed a small workgroup during the summer when they were gathering stories about what this passing would mean.
 - Now that it has passed, how to build relationships with parents/producers/school food directors and codify this into law?
 - a. [Senate Bill 500](#) is about making universal school meals in Michigan a law (so it is permanent).
 - b. Email Mary to get forwarded the updates/Mary can try to find a sign-up link.

- Seeing a three-fold increase in participation in the first semester. People are thrilled students are getting food that they may not have been receiving before.
- Jae:
 - a. Benefit: purchasing power leverage plus it eliminated school meal debt.
 - b. More work needs to be done to purchase food locally.
- The local Washtenaw School meals workgroup will next meet on Tuesday, January 16 at 11am on Zoom. If anyone is interested in joining, email Mary. This workgroup is informally managed by Seema Jolly who works with Groundworks.
- Action steps for the Michigan Coalition:
 - Continue to submit impact stories related to school meals:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfPmwObE-H1yJvXnPW0wVamqpjIWQyRfc_KBRRUrbS0uhJ8XQ/viewform
 - Contact Collin McDonough if you are interested in joining the MI School Meals Coalition or if you are interested in meeting with legislators or learning how to do that. They are also looking for volunteers to testify for upcoming hearings regarding Senate Bill 500. Collin's email is: Collin.McDonough@heart.org
 - Looking for more representation from unions
 - Visit the website (it includes talking points): <https://www.yourethecure.org/michiganschoolmeals>
 - Follow the American Heart Association on social media channels and share their posts to spread the word. Facebook: @AHA Michigan. Twitter/X: @MichiganAHA. Instagram: @ahamichigan
- c) Food Waste & Packaging WorkGroup**
 - Was spearheaded by two council members, one who has stepped down and one who is no longer able to work on this WorkGroup.
 - Heather is interested in this WorkGroup (interested in food waste; composting in Michigan is hard). Ariane will reach out to the two council members to see if they can provide details of what this WorkGroup had worked on and will then share that with Heather.
- d) Planning & Zoning PAT**
 - Marissa is a previous co-chair of this PAT. Prior PAT activities include:
 - Looking into chicken ordinances (previous council member Wendy Banka is getting closer to opening her own chicken processing facility!).
 - Working on creating a document for local municipalities to use in their master planning process.
- e) Farmers PAT**
 - Lauren, Katje, and former council member Alex met last year about this PAT.
 - It is great timing for anyone to join to bring their energy and passion. Last year's activities:
 - Brainstormed ideas to focus on (ex: what are hot topics; proposing budget line item for farmers; meat processing).
 - Katje surveyed producers in Washtenaw County.
 - Talked with some commissioners.
 - Katje: MSU Extension needs assessment has been completed; willing to share write up.
 - Coordinate with Katje if you are interested in this PAT. TBD if Katje will be this PAT's chair.

7. Understanding Our Reach

10:17-10:18 am

- [WFPC Liaison Assignments.xlsx - Google Sheets](#)
- Council members: please review this list. If you are already attending some of the meetings for groups listed in this document/already involved in work going on related to food in the community, please add your name next to the group. Can add more groups to this document, too.

8. Round Robin

10:18-10:30 am

a) Things on the horizon, important updates from council members

- Mary:
 - Argus Farm Stop is hosting the first Farm Stop Conference in Ann Arbor on March 1-3, 2024:
<https://www.farmstops.net>

- The University of Michigan School of Public Health is hosting their dietetics conference on January 19. I will be presenting, and dietetic interns will be presenting. Registration is technically closed, but the RSVP link is: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeCfAXpKkb8H257HVuYYT0j99YbT82SBqSzZQnvmymCQzBgXg/viewform>
- Keesa:
 - The Michigan Farmers Markets Conference will be held in East Lansing on February 26-27, 2024: <https://mifma.org/for-markets/michigan-farmers-markets-conference/>
 - Registration is now open for the 2024 market manager certificate program: <https://mifma.org/for-markets/mmcp/>
 - The Washtenaw County Conservation District Annual Meeting is in Ypsilanti on January 18: <https://www.washtenawcd.org/annual-meeting.html>
 - Has sat on a health equity committee for Washtenaw County that helps increase partner organizations' capacity for funding. One of the projections is a 12-week skilled trade program for middle schoolers, and it started yesterday.
- Jae: The Farm at Trinity Health Ann Arbor is hosting their annual liminary walk on February 3 from 5-8pm. There will be a glow DJ dance party, frisbee golf, juggler, food trucks, and the trails behind the hospital will be lit up: <https://www.facebook.com/thefarmattrinityhealthannarbor/posts/pfbid02JqPwPEzWDj7Q3ZziZQKd61bKX6dTURVBnJtNynz9xfjEvSkVKwi34ZcsVjLF1coBl>
- Andrew: Food Gatherers is keeping a close eye on the Farm Bill, which congressional leaders are seeking to finish in the first months of 2024. Feel free to get in touch with Andrew about it.
- Noelle: the Michigan Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Annual Legislative Day will be held in Lansing on March 19. Dietitians will be talking with our Senators about HB 4608, Licensure for Dietitians, and thanking our Representatives for passing the bill. Prior registration is required [here](#).
- Lauren: the annual Michigan Family Farms Conference will be held in Kalamazoo on March 9: <https://www.miffs.org/mffc2023> . There is usually a policy track.

9. Open Comment (Council Members and Public)

10:33-10:34 am

- None

10. Adjourn

10:34 am

ACTION ITEMS

- The EC will send the strategic plan report to the WFPC and will follow-up on the strategic plan.
- Annual report: Jae will share the link to the annual report folder where the articles are being saved. If you are writing an article, please add it to this folder as soon as possible. Jae wants to have the annual report completed by March. Jae will reach out to Andrew, who supports the BOC, to schedule a time to present.
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- May's meeting: TBD if May's meeting will be in person. Justin is interested in speaking with the EC to see how the BOC can be supportive (i.e. if that means meeting more frequently, etc.). The EC will talk about the meeting schedule.
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- Ariane can add/remove people to/from the PAT google groups. Let Ariane know if you (or someone else) want to be added (or removed) to any of the PAT google groups.
- Michigan School Meals: if interested, visit the links and/or contact Mary.
- Ariane will reach out to the two council members who had led the Food Waste & Packaging WorkGroup to see if they can provide details of what this WorkGroup had worked on and will then share that with Heather.

- Coordinate with Katje if you are interested in the Farmers PAT. TBD if Katje will be this PAT's chair.
- Council members: please review the liaison assignment list ([WFPC Liaison Assignments .xlsx - Google Sheets](#)). If you are already attending some of the meetings for groups listed in this document/already involved in work going on related to food in the community, please add your name next to the group. Can add more groups to this document, too.

RECORDED VOTES

1. **Motion 1:** To approve November 8, 2023 meeting minutes
 - a. Approved: Yes-15, No-0
2. **Motion 2:** To approve January 10, 2024 meeting agenda
 - a. Approved with edit: conduct Executive Committee (EC) elections prior to the EC Report: Yes-15, No-0
3. Approved Keesa as Chairperson (13 votes), Jae as Vice-Chairperson (13 votes), Julius as Racial Equity Liaison (13 votes), Anna as Policy Liaison (12 votes; 1 vote for Lauren), and Lauren as Secretary (12 votes; 1 vote for Anna): 13 Council Members present at time of election. Appointments made.