



Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC)
Meeting Minutes
March 13, 2024; 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Via Zoom

ATTENDEES

Council Members:

Present

1. Ava HaberkornHalm
2. Keesa V. Johnson
3. Ann Hubbard
4. Anna Taylor-McCants
5. Mary Balog
6. Lauren Marquardt
7. Jae Gerhart
8. Julius Buzzard
9. Chrissy Taylor
10. Noelle Blasch
11. Nicholas Pomante
12. Andrew Paniagua

Absent

1. Katje Armentrout
2. June Hollie
3. Thomas Hutchinson
4. Justin Hodge (Commissioner)

WFPC Support Staff:

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

Other Attendees:

1. Azella Markgraf (City of Ann Arbor)
2. Mitchell Seymour
3. Jim Mogensen (Food Access & Nutrition Policy Action Team (PAT) member)
4. Kate Holcomb
5. Ki-Jana Malone (Aetna Medicaid)
6. Remy Long (Deputy Manager for City of Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation)
7. Maddie Tong (University of Michigan MSW intern with FedUp Ministries)
8. Lisa P.

MEETING NOTES

1. Opening/Introductions

9:02-9:12 am & 9:13-9:24 am

a) Welcome

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>

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 Ypsilanti Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Ava HaberkornHalm attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Chrissy Taylor attending remotely from Canton, Wayne County, Michigan
- Jae Gerhart attending remotely from Superior 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 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

c) Icebreaker - Share a moment in your life when you felt the spark to do this work or share a recent food justice story that inspired you

Some Council members shared a moment in their life when they felt the spark to do this work or a recent food justice story that inspired them.

2. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval

9:12-9:13 am

a) Previous Meeting Minutes (January)

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

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

2. **Approved: Yes-12, No-0** (12 council members present at time of vote)

b) Meeting Agenda (March)

I. Motion: To approve March 13, 2024 meeting agenda

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

2. **Approved: Yes-12, No-0** (12 council members present at time of vote)

3. Public Comment

9:24-9:34 am

- Jim Mogensen: Community activist, faith representative on the County's housing and homeless board, and member of the Food Access & Nutrition (FAN) PAT. United Way worked with Food Gatherers to develop a plan, which included working with faith communities to start gardens. There will be an environmental retreat in the fall at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, which will showcase how to cook and store food that comes from the faith and food gardens and food bank. One idea is to have a resource guide to give people.
 - Keesa: suggest reaching out to UM campus dining; can give contact to campus farm.
 - The "Participant Information" tab on washtenaw.org/prescriptionforhealth has a lot of information and resources (including recipes) which may be helpful.
- Mitchell: Holds a graduate degree in nutrition from MSU. Part of the graduate program was to take community nutrition, as well as clinical nutrition. Research was focused on health effects of fruits and vegetables on cardiovascular disease. Interested in the application because access to food is an issue. Interested in the FAN PAT and the Pollinators PAT. Would like to work on reviving and participating in the currently dormant Pollinators PAT.
 - Encouraged Mitchell to provide email so can be added to the PAT groups.
- Maddie Tong: University of Michigan MSW intern with FedUp Ministries. In the final semester of the program. Personal interest in food security and food justice.

4. Executive Committee (EC) Report

9:34-10:05 am

a) How We Are Moving Forward – Keesa

I. Meeting Structure – Keesa

I. Every other month for voting/working meeting schedule

- Want to add optional working meetings in the evenings on the even months for the rest of 2024. Meeting every month would help keep up momentum. These working meetings would be optional to attend for 2024.
 - Keesa will email out a poll for the working meeting times.
 - Will need to create a public meeting notice for the updated schedule.
- Want people to think about meeting structure for 2025.

II. Calendar for meetings

- See above.

III. Working meetings with breakout groups

- Did not discuss.

II. Updating Bylaws – Lauren

- Updating bylaws to make sure they are accurate and appropriate. There are things in our bylaws that we are not subject to.
- Commissioner Hodge will take a first glance at the bylaws. Then will bring ideas to the EC. Then will have a working group to see what updates we want to do.

III. Policy Agenda – Anna

- Resolutions are important. Commissioner Hodge cannot remember the last time the WFPC had a resolution.
- Resolutions could actually become things that can make community change.
- My job is to help us achieve items on the policy agenda.
- Policy Agenda items #1 and #4: Commissioner Hodge thinks these are achievable this year.
 - Will be writing resolutions on these this year.
- If other policy agenda items are re-written, they also might be achievable this year.
- And some policy agenda items will be re-written, because do not think the County has any real ability to act on them as written.

IV. Pre-Meeting Email Updates – Jae

- We track our work throughout the year so that we can more easily write our annual report and know what the WFPC has done. You can add items yourself onto the electronic form (see link) or share now, and I'll record.
 - Noelle: there is a bill to license dietitians in the State of Michigan. It passed the House and is in the Senate. Might be going to full Senate vote this week or next. Then it would go to the Governor's desk. Nick and Noelle will be going to Lansing on Tuesday.
 - This bill would license dietitians to practice medical nutrition therapy (enabling dietitians to write diet orders, supplements, tube feeding, total parental nutrition; whereas now dietitians are making recommendations), which would make this reimbursable and, therefore, enable more people to access dietitians.
 - Michigan and Arizona are the only states that do not have licensure for their dietitians.
 - There is bipartisan support so far. Representative Jimmie Wilson, Jr. (House Representative for 48198) voted yes, and Senator Irwin indicated he would vote yes, too.
 - Jae recommends introducing yourselves as members of the WFPC when you go to Lansing.
 - Noelle will send Jae the letter so Jae can put it on WFPC letterhead, and Jae will send it to the WFPC for passive consent. Anna will connect with Corporation Counsel to see if the WFPC can submit the letter.

I. Tracking Our Work

- 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.

b) Strategic Plan - Jae

- “2024 Strategic Work Plan”. Taking what we did at September's strategic planning session and putting it into action. It is for 5 years (so do not need to do all this within this year).
 - Connection to Board of Commissioners (BOC), annual report, bylaws, policy agenda.

- Seeing the need for a community needs assessment. Grants are available.
- Racial equity audit: will have a report out.
- This is a document anyone can access on the WFPC.
- Contact Jae if interested in stewarding one of these priorities.

c) Annual Report Update - Jae

- Thanks to Marissa for her work on this report! Marissa is a former WFPC member, former WFPC Executive Committee member, and former co-chair of the Planning & Zoning Policy Action Team.
- Please review the annual report and share any edits with Jae.
- The annual report will be presented at the 4/3 BOC meeting.

5. Ann Arbor Greenbelt Presentation + Discussion – Remy Long

10:05-10:38 am

- Remy Long is the Deputy Manager for City of Ann Arbor Parks & Recreation and gave a [presentation](#) on land conservation & affordable farmland access.
- Questions/Discussion:
 - Jae: Do you know how much money we are talking about with an endowment (does it depend on the property's size and therefore the number of staff needed)?
 - Remy: I do not. Endowment may not be an absolute component depending on who owns the land. As soon as we accept the title, that is forever. Management needs versus programming needs.
 - Keesa: How does this program protect racial covenants and redlining? How do people of culture get access to land without facing the many tremendous barriers (specifically in Washtenaw County; barriers preventing black/brown people from purchasing land are embedded in the language-even though illegal, they are still perpetuated)?
 - Remy: In the hypothetical example, lease agreements would be executed between entity with those doing the programming (not the owner). Violation of fair housing. Has to be based on socioeconomic status. Entity running food access and land programming could develop criteria to have a process to identify land insecure/historically disadvantaged farmers.
 - Noelle: Regarding the proposed process that you went over at the end, are there other areas doing this/something similar?
 - Remy: We are not re-inventing the wheel. There are a lot of innovative land conservation groups in the country and a lot of different models. Buy-Protect-Sell is one of the innovative models that has come out. You can scale a bit easier when you take the approach we are proposing here (some land seekers are only looking for 1 acre; 5 acres, etc.). Ex: Property in Wisconsin and the Hmong community.
 - Remy: Only representing one of many conservation agencies that would be needed for this process.

6. PAT Updates

10:38-10:47 am

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

- Mary gave the update. Mary is co-chairing this PAT with Dayna Popkey from Growing Hope.
- Tentatively planning an in-person meeting at Growing Hope.
- In process of reviewing policy priorities (food sovereign policies that Food Sovereign Washtenaw reviewed). Meeting attendees will rank their top 3-5 priorities. Will discuss and choose a project to move forward with.
- Contact Mary if you are interested in being part of this PAT.

b) Michigan School Meals - Mary

- See "Call to Action for Council Members" section for this update.

c) Food Waste & Packaging - Noelle

- We had an introductory meeting which was well-attended and full of great conversations. Lot of discussion around composting. Trying to figure out what level this PAT wants to focus on. Aligning with goals of Washtenaw County and the policy agenda. Trying to discern where might find funding, if needed.
- Program for recyclable and compostable packaging:
 - There was a program for this in Ann Arbor, but it is no longer happening. There is a program in Detroit to recycle packaging, but it costs money.

- Will have another meeting next week. Hope to determine who will chair this PAT and to continue honing in on our focus.

d) Planning & Zoning PAT

- Not discussed.

e) Farmers PAT – Katje (MSUE)

- Not discussed.

f) Disability Justice - Ava

- Ava plans to launch a Disability Justice PAT. Ava would like to give a presentation on disability justice to the WFPC to highlight ways disability justice and food justice go together.
- Ava has been talking with the director of Disability Network Washtenaw Monroe Livingston. Hopes to reach more of the Disability Network this way.
- Contact Ava if you are interested in this PAT/presentation. Ava plans to present within the next month and then to start this PAT's meetings.
- Possibly can get an accessible meeting space. Do not have budget for room rental; unknown at this time.
- Ava will let Ariane know when to set up the logistics for this PAT (i.e. update the website to list this as a PAT with Ava's email address and name as the chair, etc.).

7. Call to Action for Council Members - Anna

10:47-10:58 am

a) Council Members share about one thing they are going to do between now and the next meeting to stay engaged with the work

- Nick: Will be in Lansing on Tuesday (regarding the bill to license dietitians in the State of Michigan) and the FAN PAT.
- Noelle: Will be in Lansing on Tuesday (regarding the bill to license dietitians in the State of Michigan) and the Food Waste & Packaging PAT.
- Lauren: Will attend the 4/3 BOC presentation and will follow-up with Commissioner Hodge on the bylaws.
- Mary: The School Meals group planned to meet with Chef Dan Giusti (founder of [Brigaid](#)) yesterday but had to cancel. Plan to schedule an informational meeting.
 - Anna: Would love to be part of this. There are so many policy agenda items related to school foods. Please keep me informed.
- Andrew: Food Waste & Packaging PAT. Cannot attend the FAN PAT meetings, but am a resource for the FAN PAT.
- Chrissy: FAN PAT. Would love to be involved in disability advocacy; Jewish Family Services is involved in the Food Is Medicine space. Will be learning about [God's Love We Deliver](#) and 1115 waivers for Medicaid.
- Julius: Will attend the 4/3 BOC presentation. Will follow-up with Remy about next steps. Would like to attend the Food Waste & Packaging PAT meeting (likely will not join on a regular basis but want to be present). Had conversations with those working on getting local food into school districts; would love to connect with Mary and Ann about this.
- Keesa: Working on completing racial equity audit with others. Will share dates for evening WFPC working meetings. Interested in starting conversations around community food assessments.
- Ann: Will attend the 4/3 BOC presentation, the FAN PAT meeting, and the Food Waste & Packaging PAT meetings. Will also be engaged with school meals and the Ann Arbor Township master plan related to food access/farming.
- Ava: FAN PAT and disability justice/food justice presentation. Regarding disability and accessibility of meetings: for in-person meetings to be accessible to everyone, it is important for masks to be required as members of our community are chronically ill and are afraid to attend places where masks are not required.
 - Anna: mask policy for working meetings.

8. Open Comment (Council Members and Public)

10:58-11:01 am

- Jim: For some perspective, the Greenbelt is 20 years old. Be reasonable, demand the impossible. Also working on gun safety; have been able to watch a statewide steering committee on ending gun violence.
- The Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) convenes a statewide network of produce prescription programs and is looking into 1115 waivers for Medicaid.

ACTION ITEMS

- Keesa will email out a poll for the optional working meeting times.
- Commissioner Hodge will take a first glance at the bylaws. Then will bring ideas to the EC. Then will have a working group to see what updates we want to do.
- Anna plans to help the WFPC achieve items on the policy agenda (this may involve rewriting some).
- Noelle will send Jae the letter (regarding licensing dietitians in the State of Michigan) so Jae can put it on WFPC letterhead, and Jae will send it to the WFPC for passive consent. Anna will connect with Corporation Counsel to see if the WFPC can submit the letter.
- Contact Jae if you are interested in stewarding one of the strategic planning priorities.
- Please review the annual report and share any edits with Jae. The annual report will be presented at the 4/3 BOC meeting.
- Contact Mary if you are interested in being part of the Food Access & Nutrition PAT.
- Contact Ava if you are interested in the Disability Justice PAT/Ava's presentation.
- Call to Action items listed in #7.

RECORDED VOTES

1. **Motion 1:** To approve January 10, 2024 meeting minutes
 - a. Approved: Yes-12, No-0
2. **Motion 2:** To approve March 13, 2024 meeting agenda
 - a. Approved: Yes-12, No-0