



Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC)
Meeting Minutes
May 8, 2024; 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Via Zoom

ATTENDEES

Council Members:

Present

1. Ava HaberkornHalm
2. Keesa V. Johnson
3. June Hollie
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
13. Justin Hodge (Commissioner)

Absent

1. Ann Hubbard
2. Thomas Hutchinson

WFPC Support Staff:

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

Other Attendees:

1. Georgia Frost (Rep. Dingell's Office)
2. Jeff Tritten
3. Katje Armentrout (MSU Extension)
4. Lisa Perschke (Teaches Master Composting program and teaches youth how to grow food)
5. Mitchell Seymour

MEETING NOTES

1. Opening/Introductions

9:03-9:15 am

a) Welcome

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
- Anna Taylor-McCants attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Ava HaberkornHalm attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Chrissy Taylor attending remotely from Canton, Wayne 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 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
- Keesa V. Johnson attending remotely from Pittsfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Lauren Marquardt attending remotely from Farmington, Oakland 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 or tell us about some recent action you have taken since being on the WFPC

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 or some recent action they have taken since being on the WFPC.

2. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval

9:15-9:16 am

a) Previous Meeting Minutes (March)

- I. Motion: To approve March 13, 2024 meeting minutes
 1. **Motion: Jae, Seconded: Lauren**
 2. **Approved: Yes-13, No-0** (13 council members present at time of vote)

b) Meeting Agenda (May)

- I. Motion: To approve May 8, 2024 meeting agenda
 1. **Motion: Jae, Seconded: Lauren**
 2. **Approved: Yes-13, No-0** (13 council members present at time of vote)

3. Public Comment

9:16-9:21 am

- Ariane: You might have heard/seen some of the information about “bird flu” or H5N1 infecting dairy cattle. The state health officials have shared some flyers about raw milk consumption. I will email these flyers to the Council members and to the Policy Action Teams (PAT).
- Noelle: Lisa, I am the co-chair of the Food Waste Packaging PAT. We are focusing on composting and what we can do. I’d be interested in chatting with you about that and feel free to come to the PAT meeting.
 - o Lisa: I am interested in joining this PAT’s meeting.
 - o Noelle will get Lisa’s email address from Ariane.
- Mitchell: I am interested in the Pollinators PAT and liaising with people who are interested in pollinators.
 - o Lisa: I am also a master gardener and have taken pollinators classes. I can help with this.
 - o Keesa: we can connect to get this PAT revamped.

4. Executive Committee (EC) Report

9:21-9:42 am

a) Updating Bylaws – Lauren

- Lauren: No updates; there is still more backend work to do.
- Justin:
 - o The WFPC can amend the bylaws; do not think any of the changes you want to make will be an issue. The bylaws would go before the Board of Commissioners (BOC) for approval.
 - o Regarding roll call votes, they are needed for new order of business. Voice votes (ex: all in favor say “yea”, all opposed say “nay”) can be used when approving the agenda and minutes.

b) Working Group Meeting

- Had first working meeting in April (quorum not present).
 - I. **Policy Agenda – Anna**
 - o Planned updates to the policy agenda:
 - o Will combine some policy agenda items (about 5 or 6).
 - o Will group things differently (based on themes). Ex of themes: zero waste, procurement, etc.
 - o Distinction between achievable vs ongoing items.

- o There are four actionable resolutions that we will be able to write this year.
- o If anyone is interested in helping update the policy agenda, please reach out to Anna.
- o Updated draft policy agenda will be shared with the WFPC for approval.
- o Justin: I am reaching out to purchasing, as there are several agenda items about purchasing changes. Will have a small group meet with purchasing, and I'll attend if possible.

II. Community Food Assessments – Keesa

- o A community food assessment helps us understand what is going on in our local food shed (Ex: what is happening with school food, our veterans, etc.). Helps us come together as a council and with our community members. We will have an activity today for us to get to know each other a little better.

c) Annual Report Update - Jae

- Jae and Keesa will be presenting to the BOC on Wed, 5/15 at 5:30pm. Lauren will also be in attendance. The presentation will include the WFPC's 2023 annual report and the WFPC's next steps (including a community needs assessment).
- Jae will email Ariane:
 - o The annual report to be added to the WFPC's website.
 - o Ariane will tell the EC when the annual report is up on the WFPC's website (so can link to it).
 - o The presentation slides (to be completed on Friday) to share with WCHD's Health Officer.
- Lauren will create a social media post.
- If anyone has ideas for social media posts, please share with Lauren.
 - o Suggestion for a social media post: The bill to license dietitians to practice medical nutrition therapy has passed the Senate, and the Governor signed it!

d) Racial Equity Report – Keesa

- Keesa [presented](#) on the racial equity audit, which was started in July 2023. Keesa is now synthesizing the information collected during the audit (including feedback from Ava from a disability lens) into a report which will be finished in June and then shared with the EC.
- The racial equity report will be presented to the WFPC at a future meeting.

e) 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). Council members and PAT members can fill out the form.
 - I. [Tracking Our Work](#)**
 - o 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.

5. The Importance of Community Food Assessments – Keesa

9:42-10:14 am

- Keesa [presented](#) on the importance of community food assessments.
- The WFPC is a well-established, mature council because we have been around for a while. We get an influx of new people all the time. We still need to get to know and understand each other. Because if we do not know each other, we cannot know our community. Relationship building takes time. The stronger the relationships we have with the community, the more social capital we have.
- Today's activity: map your community/your relationships. Goal: to see who has what connection.
 - o Starting with yourself in a circle in the middle, map out your community relationships.
 - o I want to see how you define your community.
- People created maps.
 - o Keesa: do you have relationships with like-minded people; with people who disagree with you; do you have people on the map that you want to make change with?
- Sharing out of map insights:
 - o Lisa: I have about 1/3 of the same agencies that Keesa works with on my map.
 - o Jae: mine ended up being a spoke and wheel shape. Noticed what organizations did not come to mind.
 - o Mary: emergence of different spheres (ex: personal, professional, geographical, etc.)

- Anna: I thought more broadly (ex: family, neighbors, work-related relationships; noticing a lot of connections in the homeless community). My community is all work, all the time.
- Jae: think if we combined our maps that we would hit every aspect of food in Washtenaw County.
 - Keesa: and it would be interesting to see the gaps.
- How do you reach out and build community?
 - Anna: would love to define community together, because not sure if we are all using the same definition of community. I build community intentionally around shared values, goals, and seeing a need. There is also a community I am part of that I do not get to choose, where there may be different values.
 - Mary: Agree with Anna; think about bridging connections (ex: I am the common person between different groups of people; how to you manage conflict and tensions). Seek out people with shared values but am also accountable to certain communities where we may not agree but I am still connected with them.
- How do you reach out and build community?
 - Chrissy: saying yes to things; consistently showing up so people can learn to count on you; if you are in an established community, your job is to reach out to those new to the community to shepherd them.
- If possible, email Keesa your map so Keesa can put it on a whiteboard to see what connections you have.

6. PAT Updates

10:14-10:29 am

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

- Mary co-chairs the FAN PAT with Dayna Popkey.
- Have identified top priorities for this PAT:
 - To support the WCHD Community Health Assessment project:
 - a. Dayna Brimley from WCHD attended our last meeting. Food access was identified as a top priority during the Community Health Assessment. Waiting to learn more. My understanding is that there will be community focus groups, as well as updates given that will be open to other community members.
 - Supporting Growing Hope with their new digital growing database. Looking for help from web designers.
 - Lots of interest around school meals (and have a different group meeting around this as well)
 - Transportation
 - Perhaps the In Lieu of Services opportunity for Medicaid reimbursement for food-based programs (like produce prescription programs, medically tailored meals)
 - a. [24301 MIHealthyLife---ILOS-Request-for-Information.pdf \(michigan.gov\)](#)
- If anyone (who is not yet part of this PAT) wants to work on any of these projects/teams, please reach out to Mary.
- Next meeting: May 20

b) Michigan School Meals - Mary

- See Agenda #7 for information.

c) Food Waste & Packaging - Noelle

- Noelle is co-chairing this PAT with Heather.
- This PAT is figuring out its direction:
 - Gathering information (from previous members of this PAT)
 - Planning to focus on composting
 - Trying to figure out systems-wide/county-wide efforts to participate in
 - Heather will be attending an upcoming webinar from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance about scaling up community composting
- The next meeting is next week.
 - Goal: to come up with focus areas for short- and long-term, so can hone in efforts and take action.
 - The first couple of meetings were well attended; last month's there were 4 attendees total. Hoping next week's meeting has a larger attendance.
- Lisa: have you been in touch with Nancy Stone? We'll be teaching an 8-week composting class.
 - Noelle will connect with Lisa.
- Mary: Argus uses City of Ann Arbor composting, as well as My Green Michigan so the compostable packaging not accepted by City of Ann Arbor can be collected instead of going to trash.

d) Planning & Zoning PAT

- Not discussed.
- e) **Farmers PAT – ?**
- Not discussed.
- f) **Inclusive Food Justice - Ava**
- This new PAT focuses on food system and food justice from a disability justice lens. I sent an email with a poll to find the best time for a first meeting. Hoping the first meeting will be in June. If you can fill out poll/share with any interested networks, that would be great! Hoping to get a good turnout. Already in contact with Disability Network Washtenaw Livingston Monroe. Just fill out the poll, and hopefully I'll see some of you in the first meeting.
 - o Keesa: we can put it on Facebook page, too!
 - o Ariane: if you want to write a blog post and have it posted, send it to me.

7. Call to Action for Council Members

10:29-10:50 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 – Anna**

- Noelle: I'll continue working with the Food Waste & Packaging PAT. Liked the community food assessment exercise we did, because we do need to build these relationships (ex: who could be our composting partners to teach us or be part of the process). Hopefully it will come to some actionable items that we can work towards
- Justin: will continue to work on purchasing to get something scheduled and will be present at the BOC meeting next week
- Jae: will be delivering annual report to BOC in collaboration with Keesa
- Anna: will be making progress on the policy agenda. Hope to have a draft of the policy agenda at July's meeting
- Justin: the WFPC can add more meetings
 - o Ariane: as a reminder, the fixed amount that WCHD receives for the operations of the WFPC (stipends for Council members, WCHD staff time to support the WFPC) is for 6 meeting per year. So, if you want to increase the number of meetings, there will need to be a commensurate increase in the amount WCHD receives.
- Justin: there is a county policy that you can't buy food (unless the public is present). The WFPC falls under this policy. So, the only way for us to buy food is if the public is there, and you typically don't have many public present.
 - o Anna: there were 4 members of the public at the working meetings. Want to make sure to have flexible meeting times that are accessible for folks.
 - o Jae: working meetings are optional now. The EC should set the working meetings for the rest of the year. Starting in 2025, can get more meetings.
 - a. Justin: If you decide to add more meetings and that impacts stipends then can have a conversation about funding.
- June: will utilize community mapping for work. Will jot down ideas for the transportation team of the FAN PAT.
- Lauren: as the secretary, I'm responsible for social media posts. Will come up with a plan for keeping those pages active and exciting. Perhaps something to highlight the introduction of members. If you have ideas to share, send that out. Will be at the BOC presentation next week.
- Julius: Will follow-up with Mary and Dayna about the support for the garden map project that Growing Hope is doing. Earlier this month/last month, went to a fireside chat with Rep. Elissa Slotkin and Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack. Will be attending (and will share details when it gets scheduled) an upcoming event with the USDA and Rep Slotkin that is focused on urban farming in Detroit. On June 10 the Michigan Good Food Charter Policy Action Forum (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/michiganfood/Policy-Action-Forum/>) is happening in Lansing.
- Mary: the school meals group will be meeting on Tuesday, May 14 at 2:30 pm. Email Mary if interested in this group.
- Keesa: presenting annual report; finishing up racial equity report.

b) **Who do you want to hear from or what questions do you have that we could answer by inviting speakers – Keesa**

- Lauren:
 - o Would be interested in hearing from Azella (Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Ann Arbor) or someone else in their department about their goals/what aspects of their work could be County-wide/relate to community food assessment.

- o Have a full-time organizer who gives presentations. If interested, can have them present on the federal Farm Bill policy.
 - a. Jae would love that!
- Anna: funding/grants so I can support those doing direct actions (like offering meals/food pantry). Feels like there is something more we can do.
 - o Andrew: can look into this to see if can put something together; also in the loop regarding the Farm Bill.
 - o Chrissy: concurs with what Anna is saying. Food Gatherers is a big part of the safety net.
- Jae: when is the Farm Bill supposed to be reappropriated?
 - o Lauren: September 2023
 - o Andrew: There is still room for advocacy. Can put something together and give an update at the next council meeting.
 - a. Keesa: would be good for Andrew to share and for Lauren's full-time organizer present.

8. Open Comment (Council Members and Public)

10:50-10:52 am

- Mary: heading to Traverse City for the Michigan WIC conference.
- Keesa: attended a training from the Federation of Southern Cooperatives.
 - o Tending Repair, a historic report from the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund and [Brandeis University's Institute for Economic and Racial Equity](https://heller.brandeis.edu/iere/pdfs/racial-wealth-equity/racial-wealth-gap/tending-repair-final.pdf).
 - <https://heller.brandeis.edu/iere/pdfs/racial-wealth-equity/racial-wealth-gap/tending-repair-final.pdf>
 - Strategies to use to repair and restore relationships when working with Black farmers.
 - Working with them to develop some strategies for repair and restoration.

9. Adjourn

10:52 am

ACTION ITEMS

- Noelle will get Lisa's email address from Ariane.
- Make connections to revamp the Pollinators PAT.
- Jae and Keesa will be presenting to the BOC on Wed, 5/15 at 5:30pm. Lauren will also be in attendance.
- Jae will email Ariane:
 - o The annual report to be added to the WFPC's website.
 - Ariane will tell the EC when the annual report is up on the WFPC's website (so can link to it).
 - o The presentation slides (to be completed on Friday) to share with WCHD's Health Officer.
- Lauren will create a social media post.
- If anyone has ideas for social media posts, please share with Lauren.
- Keesa is creating a report from the racial equity audit. The report will be finished in June and then shared with the EC. The racial equity report will be presented to the WFPC at a future meeting.
- If possible, email Keesa your map so Keesa can put on a whiteboard to see what connections you have.
- If anyone (who is not yet part of the FAN PAT) wants to work on any of the projects/teams the FAN PAT has identified, please reach out to Mary.
- The fixed amount that WCHD receives for the operations of the WFPC (stipends for Council members, WCHD staff time to support the WFPC) is for 6 meetings per year. So, if you want to increase the number of meetings, there will need to be a commensurate increase in the amount WCHD receives.
- See Agenda #7 for Call to Action.

RECORDED VOTES

1. **Motion 1:** To approve March 13, 2024 meeting minutes
 - a. Approved: Yes-13, No-0
2. **Motion 2:** To approve May 8, 2024 meeting agenda
 - a. Approved: Yes-13, No-0