



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

ATTENDEES

Council Members:

Present

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

Absent

1. Ann Hubbard
2. Thomas Hutchinson
3. Justin Hodge (Commissioner)
4. Andrew Paniagua

WFPC Support Staff:

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

Other Attendees:

1. Mitchell Seymour (Pollinators Policy Action Team Chair)
2. Azella Markgraf (City of Ann Arbor)
3. Amanda Edmonds (WFPC founder and former council member)
4. Katherine (Kate) Dewitt Holcomb (MSW student; intern with FedUp Ministries)
5. LisaP

MEETING NOTES

1. Opening/Introductions

9:04-9:08 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:

- 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

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
- June Hollie 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 Wyandotte, Wayne 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

Not discussed.

2. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval - Jae

9:08-9:10 am

a) Previous Meeting Minutes (September)

- I. Motion: To approve September 11, 2024 meeting minutes

1. Motion: Nick, Seconded: Jae

2. Approved: Yes-11, No-0 (11 council members present at time of vote)

b) Meeting Agenda (November)

- I. Motion: To approve November 13, 2024 meeting agenda

1. Motion: Nick, Seconded: Jae

2. Approved: Yes-11, No-0 (11 council members present at time of vote)

3. Public Comment

9:10-9:15 am

- Mitch: Current chair of the Pollinators PAT. I have been reviewing policy initiatives from the prior version of this PAT and am revising them. Have met with Project Grow and want to meet with current leaders with Bee City USA and Bee Campus USA to find out what their interests are as they are leaders of their own cohorts.
 - Jae: Does anyone know about Lodi Township's pollinators proposal?
 - Mitch: Unsure but can find out.
- Ariane: Reminder that anything added to the meeting chat will go in the meeting minutes.
- Amanda: Founding member of the WFPC and served on it as a council member for many years. I have been overseas for several years, and I recently applied to be on the WFPC again. I have been active at the state level regarding food policy. There is a meeting tomorrow regarding advocacy for the Cottage Food Law. Will send the registration information to Ariane so Ariane can email it out to the council member listserv. Additionally, codifying school meals for all would be a huge thing to move forward.
- From chat:
 - Julius: For the notes, this is the information about the cottage food workshop that @Amanda Edmonds shared about earlier:
Cottage Food Advocacy Workshop (virtual) – Thurs. 11/14 at 9:00 am
 The Michigan Good Food Charter calls for targeted investment and policies that ensure the long-term financial viability of Michigan farm and food business entrepreneurs. Since 2010, the Cottage Food Law in Michigan has allowed producers to make non-potentially hazardous food items in their home kitchen, not licensed by the State of Michigan, and sell them directly to consumers. Co-Hosted by the Michigan Good Food Charter Council Policy Committee & the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA), this workshop will highlight advocacy strategies in action, showcasing how the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) engages in efforts to advocate for this important policy. Please [register here](#).

4. Executive Committee (EC) Report

9:15-9:37 am

a) Importance of Tracking Our Work – 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.

- There are 19 responses on the form so far. If you have items to add, please enter them now as I will start writing the annual report over the holiday season. Plan: present the annual report to the Board of Commissioners (BOC) in the first quarter of 2025.
- 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) **Working Group Meetings – Should We Continue Them? – Keesa**
 - We started implementing optional working meetings this year on the even months. They are open to the public; only a few attendees per meeting. Are they working for people?
 - Discussion:
 - Evening meetings are difficult to attend for some.
 - Confusion over the exact location of the meetings.
 - Like the idea of them; they have been helpful for projects.
 - Think it is important to set the calendar in advance.
 - Like the idea of council meetings being over Zoom and working meetings being in person, with an option to attend virtually. Allowing for virtual attendance for all meetings is the most accessible, especially for those who are still masking and weather-related transportation issues.
 - Had wanted to increase the number of council meetings from 6 (every other month) to 12 (every month), but there is a concern that this might not be possible. In order to do this, the budget needs to be increased. And the budget should be increased in general to offset time WCHD spends working for the WFPC that is not currently being supported by the existing budget.
 - Anna will follow-up with Commissioner Hodge to see if the budget can be increased/if the number of council meetings can increase from 6 to 12.
 - 2025 plan: WFPC council meetings will be the second Wednesday of the odd months from 9am-11am over Zoom. Working meetings will be the second Wednesday of the even months from 9am-11am in-person at the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and over Zoom.
 - Ariane will prepare the public notices and will book the LRC.
 - From chat:
 - Nick: Wednesday's from 9-11a work for me
 - Keesa: thumbs up'd
- c) **Food Policy Councils and Climate Change – Keesa**
 - Food policy councils are working on climate change.
 - From chat:
 - Keesa: Climate Change with Food Policy Networks: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://foodpolicynetworks.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/shaping-policy-for-a-shifting-climate.pdf
 - Keesa: <https://youtu.be/39QPG-69Z4U?si=GbuVPS-OVp19KDbJ>
- d) **New Member Applications for 2025 – Keesa/Ariane**
 - Ariane: The application deadline was November 8, 2024, and the BOC will make appointments at their December 4, 2024 meeting. There are more applicants than there are spots available. Ariane should receive the application packet next week and will share it with the EC and Chrissy to review to make recommendations. Note: the turnaround for making recommendations might be very quick.
 - Jae: Reminder that EC members are voted on at the January meeting. You can nominate yourself or have someone else nominate you to be on the EC.

5. Reviewing Our Policy Agenda as a Food Policy Council

9:37-10:45 am

Policy Liaison – Anna

- We have been working on adjusting our policy agenda all year, from a lens of what is attainable, what do we have control over, talking with legislators versus doing what we are empowered to do (like talk with our County officials), etc.

- We did not lose any policy agenda items; we gained some (thanks, Mitch!).
- Please review the policy agenda now in small groups (via Zoom breakout rooms), and then we will come back as a whole group to discuss.
- Questions/discussions:
 - Nick: I am not sure about what the County is currently doing to work on policies. Does anyone know?
 - Mary: The Community Health Needs Assessment comes to mind.
 - Jae: Implementation plan will be shared (at least on Trinity's website) soon. I will email the WFPC when it is published.
 - Confirmed policies are in the right space/assigned to the right place.
 - Discussion about adding a column for existing policies, but concern that it will take a lot of time to find the existing policies.
 - Nick: Can we ask BOC to fill it out?
 - Amanda: This is what we call a policy scan. It is a big project, but probably valuable. There is probably a framework for a food policy scan.
 - Jae: We have had interns in the past. If know of interns that need to be placed, this could be a great placement.
 - Noelle: Met with Commissioner Hodge, Keesa, and Heather (Food Waste & Packaging PAT co-chair) in October. Commissioner Hodge mentioned that he had access to all the policies, but that we do not have access. It is information we need to carry out the work.
 - Noelle will follow-up with Commissioner Hodge about getting access to all the policies so we can better do our work.
 - Anna: I think this should be an action item. Please add me to that email.
 - Anna: How can we use the policy agenda and incorporate going back to it (ex: standing agenda item)?
 - Jae: The WFPC has taken a more passive approach previously. How can we take a more active approach?
 - Nick: Think the policy agenda should be a standing agenda item for WFPC meetings and for PAT meetings. PATs could assign steps to certain people in a spreadsheet.
 - Anna: I wonder if we could build this into a spreadsheet for each PAT.
 - Kate: We can.
 - Mary: How do we prioritize urgent policies, existing policies, and ideas that are not policies yet (organizing policy ideas; capturing short term vs. long term goals; etc.)?
 - Amanda shared some historical knowledge about the WFPC: Bodies grow, change, and evolve. Think it is helpful to be grounded with institutional memory, but do not have to repeat it. The WFPC is one of Michigan's earlier food policy councils. Some councils intentionally leave out "policy" from their name. The amount of work on policies changes. We chose very consciously to ask the BOC to charter this Council, to move County level policy forward. County level made sense as opposed to city level. Municipal policy, school board policies, etc. are all relevant and fair game.
 - Anna: We are not tracking or celebrating what has been done.
 - Anna: The WFPC is named in Resilient Washtenaw's action plan. The WFPC is charged with doing great things, but no one has talked with us about this. Who wants to get involved?
 - Mitch: Happy to be involved with this! There is a lot of the plan that we could be involved with.
 - Anna: Thanks, Mitch, for volunteering to be our official liaison!
 - Anna: This could also be a perfect job for a staff person (which we are still hoping to get).
 - Discussion about a staff person and what County department/office they could be housed in. Hoping for the County to fund the position. Need to submit a request for funding.
 - Jae: Curious who wrote this document. Want to know background of why this was put in. It is weird that the WFPC is in there, but no one knew about it. The WFPC was created from the Food System Economic Partnership (FSEP).
 - Noelle: Does the BOC need to approve this policy agenda?
 - Jae: Technically no, but think should still put before the BOC.

- Thanks for all your work, Anna!
- From chat:
 - Anna: Policy agenda: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E-LTt_MSQr9auOY-X00tnzTEzK68fx2NjslljebYfmE/edit?usp=sharing
 - Nick: <https://www.washtenaw.org/230/Policies>
 - Mary: <https://www.healthforallwashtenaw.org/tiles/index/display?alias=cha> Washtenaw community health assessment page
 - Amanda: The county budget is how much of its policy in this area is put into practice— it happens through fund distribution— maybe an orientation to how to read the county and municipal budgets (which are big and complicated) could be helpful for this body.
 - Lauren and Mary and June: thumbs up'd
 - Ava: can ii have the link to the document again?
 - Anna: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E-LTt_MSQr9auOY-X00tnzTEzK68fx2NjslljebYfmE/edit?usp=sharing
 - Amanda: Example of food policy scan: <https://chicagolocalfoodstudy.com/policy-scan/>
 - Amanda: Another example re: food policy related scan of municipal ordinances in several communities: <https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/Summary-Guide-TOC-and-footnotes.pdf>
 - Jae: [Resilient-Washtenaw---Final](#)
 - Amanda: For government-supported food policy councils, public health departments are very common and have provided some of the longest and most consistent support.
 - Amanda: Report (2019) about Michigan FPC's and whether they are working on or changing policy: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/are-michigans-food-councils-changing-policy>
 - Mitch: thumbs up'd
 - Jae: Thanks Amanda!

6. [PAT](#) Updates

10:45-10:59 am

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

- We didn't meet last month. Next meeting: Monday, 11/25 at 3:30pm.
- Chrissy: The final policy for In Lieu of Services (ILOS) has been released. Some organizations are in talks with health care plans. So hopefully this will get Medicaid recipients reimbursable nutrition services.
 - Hope this is a jumping off point for Michigan to do an 1115 waiver.
 - Jae: This is very exciting!
- We had a local school meals group that was meeting consistently, but it was on pause during the summer. The next meeting is Tuesday, 11/19 at 2:30pm (virtually). If you are interested in attending the meeting, contact Mary so she can connect you with Seema.

I.) Michigan School Meals - *Mary*

- This is included in this year's state budget, but it is not codified yet. Nothing has happened since SB500. See the links to articles in chat about how great this program is.
 - Jae: Once codified, then can look at local food sourcing.
- Universal School Meals Act of 2023 is a national initiative. Also hasn't gone anywhere yet. But the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) has a nice website about this bill and other bills.
- From chat:
 - Jae: [Michigan In Lieu of Services](#)
 - Mary: National initiatives: FRAC Food Research and Action Center <https://frac.org/healthy-school-meals-for-all>
 - Mary: MDE Data: <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/food/michigan-school-meals/data>
October update from MSU Extension: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/michigan-continues-to-invest-in-kids-with-free-school-meals-for-all>

b) Food Waste & Packaging - *Noelle*

- Meeting monthly. Met with Commissioner Hodge to get a feel for policies and focus. He brought up that our PAT could work on preemption law at the state level, writing a resolution for the BOC to support changing the state law.

- Ex: Banning plastic bags at the County level was passed, but then the State passed a law that prevented counties from banning plastic bags. If the state law was changed, this would go into effect at the County level as this law is on the books.

c) Inclusive Food Justice - Ava

- Nothing yet. Stay tuned.

d) Pollinators PAT - Mitch Seymour

- Shared some comments during the public comment period; refer to that section for more details.
- Please let me know if anyone is interested in the American Society for Nutrition policy updates, which are shared every two weeks. Some updates touch on things we are doing; some are coming down pike.
- I will be attending the December National Institutes of Health and Food & Drug Administration's Nutrition Regulatory Science Workshop.
- From chat: [American Society for Nutrition - Nutrition Research & Practice](#)

e) Planning & Zoning PAT - PAT not currently active; looking for new Chair

- Let us know if you are interested in being this PAT's Chair.

f) Farmers PAT - PAT not currently active; looking for new Chair

- Let us know if you are interested in being this PAT's Chair.

7. Call to Action for Council Members

10:59-11:01 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

- Combined with #8.
- Think about one thing you'll do.
- The 2024 Farm Stop Conference is scheduled, and registration is open.
- From chat:
 - Mary: March 2-4, 2025: <https://www.farmstops.net>

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

- Not discussed.

8. Open Comment (Council Members and Public)

10:59-11:01 am

- Combined with #7 (see #7).

9. Adjourn

11:01 am

ACTION ITEMS

- Amanda will send the registration information for tomorrow's meeting regarding advocacy for the Cottage Food Law to Ariane so Ariane can email it out to the council member listserv.
- Reminder: Fill out the tracking form for the work you do on the WFPC: [2024 Washtenaw County Food Policy Council Tracking Form \(google.com\)](#). If you have items to add, please enter them now as Jae will start writing the annual report over the holiday season. Plan: present the annual report to the BOC in the first quarter of 2025.
- Anna will follow-up with Commissioner Hodge to see if the budget can be increased/if the number of council meetings can increase from 6 to 12.
- Plan: WFPC council meetings will be the second Wednesday of the odd months from 9am-11am over Zoom. Working meetings will be the second Wednesday of the even months from 9am-11am in-person at the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and over Zoom.
 - Ariane will prepare the public notices and will book the LRC.
- Ariane should receive the application packet next week and will share it with the EC and Chrissy to review to make recommendations.
- Reminder that EC members are voted on at the January meeting. You can nominate yourself or have someone else nominate you to be on the EC.

- Jae: The Community Health Needs Assessment's implementation plan will be shared (at least on Trinity's website) soon. I will email the WFPC when it is published.
- Noelle will follow-up with Commissioner Hodge about getting access to all the policies so we can better do our work. Anna requested to be added onto that email.
- Mitch volunteered to be the WFPC's official liaison with Resilient Washtenaw's action plan.
- If you are interested in attending the upcoming local school meals group meeting, contact Mary so she can connect you with Seema.
- Let Mitch know if you are interested in the American Society for Nutrition policy updates.

RECORDED VOTES

1. **Motion 1:** To approve September 11, 2024 meeting minutes
 - a. Approved: Yes-11, No-0
2. **Motion 2:** To approve November 13, 2024 meeting agenda
 - a. Approved: Yes-11, No-0

CHAT TRANSCRIPT

09:16:59 From Amanda Edmonds to Ariane Donnelly(direct message):
donnellya@ewashtenaw.org is your email, yes?

09:17:24 From Ariane Donnelly to Amanda Edmonds(direct message):
donnellya@washtenaw.org (they dropped the "e")

09:17:57 From Amanda Edmonds to Ariane Donnelly(direct message):
Thanks!

09:18:48 From Ariane Donnelly to Amanda Edmonds(direct message):
Reacted to "Thanks!" with 👍

09:25:31 From Nick Pomante to Everyone:
Wednesday's from 9-11a work for me

09:27:49 From Keesa V. Johnson, MDes to Everyone:
Reacted to "Wednesday's from 9-1..." with 👍

09:31:10 From Julius Buzzard, he/him to Everyone:
For the notes, this is the information about the cottage food workshop that @Amanda Edmonds shared about earlier:

Cottage Food Advocacy Workshop (virtual) – Thurs. 11/14 at 9:00 am

The Michigan Good Food Charter calls for targeted investment and policies that ensure the long-term financial viability of Michigan farm and food business entrepreneurs. Since 2010, the Cottage Food Law in Michigan has allowed producers to make non-potentially hazardous food items in their home kitchen, not licensed by the State of Michigan, and sell them directly to consumers. Co-Hosted by the Michigan Good Food Charter Council Policy Committee & the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA), this workshop will highlight advocacy strategies in action, showcasing how the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) engages in efforts to advocate for this important policy. Please register here.

09:32:24 From Keesa V. Johnson, MDes to Everyone:

Climate Change with Food Policy Networks: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://foodpolicynetworks.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/shaping-policy-for-a-shifting-climate.pdf

09:33:21 From Keesa V. Johnson, MDes to Everyone:

<https://youtu.be/39QPG-69Z4U?si=GbuVPS-OVp19KDbJ>

09:39:19 From Anna Taylor-McCants to Everyone:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E-LTt_MSQr9auOY-X00tnzTEzK68fx2NjsIljebYfmE/edit?usp=sharing

10:07:47 From Nick Pomante to Everyone:

<https://www.washtenaw.org/230/Policies>

10:08:20 From Mary Balog, RDN to Everyone:

<https://www.healthforallwashtenaw.org/tiles/index/display?alias=cha> Washtenaw community health assessment page

10:10:46 From Amanda Edmonds to Everyone:

The county budget is how much of its policy in this area is put into practice— it happens through fund distribution— maybe an orientation to how to read the county and municipal budgets (which are big and complicated) could be helpful for this body.

10:10:58 From Lauren Marquardt (she/her) to Everyone:

Reacted to "The county budget is..." with 

10:10:59 From Mary Balog, RDN to Everyone:

Reacted to "The county budget is..." with 

10:11:03 From Ava HaberkornHalm to Everyone:

can ii have the link to the document again?

10:11:21 From Anna Taylor-McCants to Everyone:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E-LTt_MSQr9auOY-X00tnzTEzK68fx2NjsIljebYfmE/edit?usp=sharing

10:16:33 From Amanda Edmonds to Everyone:

Example of food policy scan: <https://chicagolocalfoodstudy.com/policy-scan/>

10:17:13 From June Hollie to Everyone:

Reacted to "The county budget is..." with 

10:20:45 From Amanda Edmonds to Everyone:

Another example re: food policy related scan of municipal ordinances in several communities:

<https://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/sites/default/files/Summary-Guide-TOC-and-footnotes.pdf>

10:28:57 From Jae Gerhart, Trinity Health to Everyone:

Resilient-Washtenaw---Final

10:35:11 From Amanda Edmonds to Everyone:

For government-supported food policy councils, public health departments are very common and have provided some of the longest and most consistent support.

10:37:59 From Amanda Edmonds to Everyone:

Report (2019) about Michigan FPC's and whether they are working on or changing policy:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/are-michigans-food-councils-changing-policy>

10:39:39 From Mitchell Seymour to Everyone:

Reacted to "Report (2019) about ..." with 

10:42:03 From Jae Gerhart, Trinity Health to Everyone:

Replying to "Report (2019) about ..."

Thanks Amanda!

10:47:22 From Jae Gerhart, Trinity Health to Everyone:

Michigan In Lieu of Services

10:50:25 From Mary Balog, RDN to Everyone:

National initiatives: FRAC Food Research and Action Center

<https://frac.org/healthy-school-meals-for-all>

10:50:42 From Mary Balog, RDN to Everyone:

MDE Data: <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/food/michigan-school-meals/data>

October update from MSU Extension: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/michigan-continues-to-invest-in-kids-with-free-school-meals-for-all>

10:55:18 From Jae Gerhart, Trinity Health to Everyone:

American Society for Nutrition - Nutrition Research & Practice

11:00:07 From Mary Balog, RDN to Everyone:

March 2-4, 2025: <https://www.farmstops.net>