



Policy Task Force Meeting Notes

Fairfax Food Council

May 21, 2024

10:00 am – 11:00 am

Introductions

Kerri LaCharite

Kerri opened the meeting with a welcome and introduced Shari Henry as a new Co-Chair of this FFC Policy Task Force. Shari is new to the Fairfax Food Council and is currently the Manager of the Burke Branch Library. She has a full career of library positions, including her last role with the Urban Libraries Council where she published: [ULC White Paper Food is a Right 2023 \(urbanlibraries.org\)](https://urbanlibraries.org). In previous roles at libraries, Shari started raised bed gardens at the libraries in which she served. Her library career has long intersected with food access issues.

Objective

Kerri LaCharite

Kerri reviewed the objective of the Fairfax Food Council Policy Task Force: Develop and promote policy recommendations that improve food production and access to nutritious, equitable, sustainable, and affordable food for Fairfax residents.

Policy

Kerri LaCharite

To build on last month's discussion, Kerri shared a definition of *policy*:

Policy:

A course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual (Source: Oxford Dictionary).

This includes laws and ordinances; the administration, funding, or implementation of policy at local, state, tribal, or federal levels of government; changes in policies and standards set by

institutions like schools, hospitals, and private companies; informal relationships with public officials. Policy work includes working directly to change these various policies, as well as educating or coordinating the actions of others to advocate for such policies.

Group Discussion

While together in one large group, each break-out group (1) Access 2) Agriculture/Food Production & Waste 3) Institutional Procurement/Business/Labor) gave a brief summary to remind everyone of their group's focus. Then, in break-out rooms, each break-out group discussed proposed policies and addressed these questions:

- What is the problem the policy addresses?
- How do you know it's a problem? What have you heard from stakeholders or data?
- What does the group need to learn?

Group Report-Outs

Access

- An issue was raised about which break-out group is best to 'house' access issues that may rely on small businesses to take particular steps. They agreed that these groups are internal to this Task Force, so there may come a time when it may be helpful to combine break-out groups for the purpose of moving forward with the specific policy in question. For now, seems fine to continue work in the Access group with the understanding that the two may come together in the future.
- The group discussed the intersectionality of the many components of SNAP. They plan to research policies, especially those that promote SNAP enrollment by improving information dissemination, addressing barriers to retailers, increasing the size & magnitude of benefits, and supplementing SNAP benefits.
- Resources and information: [Does SNAP Cover the Cost of a Meal in Your County? | Urban Institute](#); [The Positive Effect of SNAP Benefits on Participants and Communities - Food Research & Action Center \(frac.org\)](#); [SNAP Is Linked with Improved Nutritional Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(cbpp.org\)](#)

Agriculture/Food Production & Waste

- The group is still deciding which approach to take when it comes to urban agriculture. If the goal is to increase the supply of local fresh produce, then in a very urban area where there is not much locally grown food, should 'incentives' be explored to help increase the amount of fresh food grown in people's yards?

- Zoning continues to be a key topic – with tax incentives under discussion. Community zoning vs. resident incentives. Incentives for rooftop gardens? Food production is critical to addressing access & affordability.

Institutional Procurement/Business/Labor

- The group's focus is on small food business challenges and how to bring support or relief via policy change.
- What they need to learn
 - What challenges do small food system businesses have starting-up in Fairfax County?
 - What are permitting and licensing processes like for new food businesses?
- The group recognized a need for outreach and research
 - D.C. resource: [New Resource for Washington D.C. Food Entrepreneurs: District of Columbia Small Business Development Center and Food & Society at the Aspen Institute Launch Open Access DC - The Aspen Institute](#)
 - The group will seek feedback from Frontier Kitchen, a Fairfax-based small food business incubator.
 - Also, they will seek input from an FFC member who encountered barriers when trying to sell her own produce.

Conclusion

Kerri LaCharite

Kerri summarized that progress is being made in each area, and that this will be the 'easier' part of the process. We may start discussing criteria at our June meeting.

Next Policy Task Force Meeting: June 18, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.