



Policy Task Force Meeting Notes

Fairfax Food Council

September 17, 2024

10:00 – 11:00 am

Welcome:

Policy Task Force Co-Chairs welcomed attendees.

Policy Subgroup Merger

Matt and Diane

At the last Policy Task Force meeting, the Institutional Procurement/Business/Labor subgroup joined the Agriculture/Food Production & Waste subgroup in the discussion about operating a food business out of a home. Since then, the subgroups have talked and agreed that the Institutional Procurement/Business/Labor subgroup should join the Ag/Food Production/Waste subgroup permanently.

With such a small group, the Institutional Procurement/Business/Labor subgroup felt that they were not bringing a diverse perspective to issues. A small group also means that there are fewer people to do research and work. Additionally, since there is overlap in the subgroups' interests, merging the groups simply made sense.

Review of Food System Policy Issues

Kerri

Kerri reviewed where the groups left off.

Food Access

The access group is interested in a SNAP Navigator program in which DFS could train navigators. A navigator is someone who helps people enroll in SNAP. This is a more involved, hands-on role than a SNAP ambassador who knows about SNAP and eligibility requirements and encourages people to enroll.

A potential barrier:

Many people who are eligible for SNAP are discouraged by online enrollment because of technical barriers. If a navigator were to help them with the online enrollment process, it could

be challenging to maintain the client’s privacy. For example, the first step of the enrollment process is setting up password and security questions.

Next steps:

- Form a list of potential community partners.
- Gather data on areas not receiving SNAP enrollment outreach

The group also discussed two other policy ideas:

1. Supplement SNAP benefits with a monetary amount that is dedicated to purchasing produce.
2. Using county funds, expand Fresh Match to all sites that accept EBT. That expansion would include grocery stores and farmers markets.

Agriculture/Food Production & Waste and Institutional Procurement/ Business/Labor

These two groups combined and heard from Casandra Lawson, a Co-Chair of the FFC’s Urban Agriculture work group. Casandra shared her experience from 2021 attempting to obtain permits to grow produce at her home for sale. Selling changes the garden from personal use to a home business.

Can zoning laws be changed to allow small production in residential or other zones?

Policy Criteria

Kerri

Kerri shared the policy criteria that each group should consider as they narrow down which policy issue they would like to address. The goal is to have reviewed policy criteria and set timeline goals/deadlines by January 2025.

Setting Food Policy Agenda Criteria

Five-point scale

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To mission of the food council• To the grant• To short term goals of the food council• To long term goals of the food council• Feasibility and ease• Resource requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On community health• On economic development• On development of community• On resilience• On environment• On equity• On ability to make long term change
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- Who are/ might be allies?
- Who are/might be opponents?
- Who are the beneficiaries?

Discussion

Breakout Rooms—*Food Access and Agriculture/Food Production & Waste*

Attendees joined breakout rooms to discuss their policy issue(s) and criteria.

Report Out

Large Group Discussion

Groups reported on what they discussed in the breakout rooms.

Food Access:

- Mary Porter updated the subgroup on the progress being made on Real Food for Kids' SNAP Ambassador program. Therefore, while they work on the ambassador program, the Food Access subgroup wants to pursue the following policies:
 - “Short-term” goal is to advocate for SNAP enrollment signage to be displayed at retailers that accept SNAP
 - “Long-term” goal is to advocate for an assistance program application process that is more streamlined than CommonHelp
- Some other topics raised that the subgroup may want to consider down the line include:
 - Addressing barriers that prevent FCPA farmers markets from accepting SNAP
 - Advocating for a produce matching program at retailers
 - Advocating for more staffing at NCS and DFS to improve food access programs
 - Advocating for a more hands-on SNAP Enrollment program (i.e., SNAP Navigator)
 - SNAP Ambassadors focus on outreach and eligibility, while SNAP Navigators focus on enrollment.

Agriculture/Food Production & Waste:

- Watched a video that discussed zoning rules in Fairfax County
- Subgroup plans to meet again before the October Policy Task Force meeting

Closing Remarks

Kerri

Kerri reminded the group as the Policy Task Force continues to engage in the research process, a Google Doc has been created. This document allows Task Force members to review and contribute to a list of resources and links. The document can be accessed using the following link: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1r0XHZzjj90ovhymwYEC6oWrkoiaIJqnJCRO-sABTsMI/edit?usp=sharing>

Next Policy Task Force Meeting: October 15, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.