



**Washtenaw County Food Policy Council (WFPC)
Meeting Minutes
March 8, 2023; 9:00 – 11:00 AM
Via Zoom**

ATTENDEES

Council Members:

Present

1. Anna Taylor-McCants
2. Aubrey Lopatin
3. Jae Gerhart
4. Julius Buzzard
5. Keesa V. Johnson
6. Lauren Marquardt
7. Marissa Prizgint
8. Markell Miller
9. Mary Balog
10. Maya Grant
11. Sandy Pernecky

Absent

1. Caroline Sanders (Commissioner)
2. Damian Rivera
3. Larrea Young
4. Alex Canepa
5. Ann Hubbard
6. Ava HaberkornHalm
7. Laura Wonch

WFPC Support Staff:

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

Other Attendees:

1. Mary Kucyk
2. Sasja
3. Katje Armentrout: with MSU Extension
4. Louise Gorenflo: Food Access & Nutrition Policy Action Team (PAT) member

MEETING NOTES

1. Opening/Introductions

9:03-9:13 am

a) Council members share name, affiliation, seat, 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 Ann Arbor, Washtenaw 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>

- Aubrey Lopatin attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Jae Gerhart attending remotely from Sharon 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
- Marissa Prizgint attending remotely from Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Markell Miller attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Mary Balog attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Maya Grant attending remotely from Ypsilanti, Washtenaw County, Michigan
- Sandy Pernecky attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, Michigan

2. Agenda, Minutes Additions/Deletions/Approval

9:13-9:15 am

a) Previous Meeting Minutes (January)

- I. Motion: To approve January 11, 2023 meeting minutes
 1. **Motion: Markell, Seconded: Marissa**
 2. **Approved: Yes-10, No-0** (10 council members present at time of vote)

b) Meeting Agenda (March)

- I. Motion: To approve March 8, 2023 meeting agenda
 1. **Motion: Markell, Seconded: Marissa**
 2. **Approved: Yes-10, No-0** (10 council members present at time of vote)

3. Public Comment

9:15-9:16 am

- None

4. Executive Committee (EC) Report

9:16-9:54 am

a) Grant Awarded from Michigan Local Food Council Network (MLFCN) for Strategic Planning Process 2023! - Julius

- The WFPC (with WCHD as the fiduciary) was awarded the MLFCN grant (\$5,000)!
- During the last strategic planning, which was led by Markell in 2017, the WFPC identified priority areas for the next 5 years that helped the WFPC connect with elected officials, outreach/public facing, focus on racial equity, etc.
- Working on this grant will be the EC plus any council member who wants to participate. Jae will prepare a draft RFP for the April EC meeting. Then will send the draft RFP to the entire WFPC for review/passive consent. Once approved, council members can distribute widely with their networks. Hope to have the strategic planning in August (in-person). Would be helpful to think of dates now. Stay tuned for more from the EC.
- Julius is acting as the Shared Gifting Liaison, which is a requirement for this grant. The Shared Gifting Team was comprised of someone from each of the councils who applied for funding. There were about 8-10 people participating, plus those who were leading/coordinating. Met for multiple several hour sessions. Think every council who applied received some money. It was a great experience to make connections with councils across Michigan. The WFPC was 1 of 2 councils that are more established (Saginaw being the other one). It was great to share resources and to learn from those councils just starting/reforming. Thanks to Julius for participating!

b) RE-AMP Grant for Climate Change: \$5K

- The RE-AMP grant (\$5,000) is the next grant on our radar, and the WFPC has permission to pursue it (with WCHD as the fiduciary).
- Aubrey and Ann attend the monthly meetings of the Washtenaw County Solid Waste Plan Policy Implementation Advisory Committee (PIAC) and asked PIAC about ideas for this grant. There is a potential project happening with Washtenaw County Parks, Michigan Folk School, and Jesse Raudenbush from Starr Valley Farms: showcase how to set up vermiculture (for household and farm use).
- The grant is due 3/21, and Aubrey can write the draft for the grant. The project itself must be completed in November.
- Aubrey wants to figure out details for the grant (like the budget) prior to requesting letters of support from the partners. Jae can draft the letter of support.

c) Presenting Annual Report to Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners (BOC) - Jae

- Jae will be presenting the WFPC's 2022 annual report to the BOC on March 15 at 5:30. Aubrey and Ann will also be at the meeting, and anyone can attend! The slides are in the google drive, housed in the "Presentations" folder of the "Communications and Marketing Materials" folder. Ariane will print 20 copies of the 2022 annual report.
- Presentation will include what the WFPC accomplished in 2022 and what the WFPC is looking forward to in 2023. Discussed topics to include in the presentation:
 - The RE-AMP grant
 - Strategic planning
 - Website transition
 - Farm Bill: explain what the Farm Bill is, get it on the BOC's radar as there will probably be opportunities to send a letter/request they send a letter, discuss Farm Bill planning happening in Washtenaw County: Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS) will be hosting listening sessions with farmers about the Farm Bill and their needs at Argus.
 - Explain all the ways things are connected to the food system, because the BOC might not be aware. There is a diagram in the Michigan Good Food Charter.
 - Request the BOC reach out to the WFPC for our opinion on policies that intersect with food. The WFPC is a resource for the BOC: happy to review and offer feedback. Would love to see the WFPC advise on more policies. This is a good thing to keep in mind as a liaison as well.
 - Question to ask: what is happening with the County's master plan? Washtenaw County and each municipality has a master plan, and it is a state requirement to update them every five years.
 - Land access within Washtenaw County is an issue. The Washtenaw County Black Farmers Fund is working on this.
 - Other discussion:
 - What does it mean to be a community advocate in a municipal space?
 - Those who show up help write history. We must show up: both to catch stuff and to be seen as partners/experts in work.
 - It is good to attend meetings, even if you cannot work on projects. Attending meetings is still being a community advocate.
 - This is a great topic to go over with the strategic planning consultant. Ex: guide for council members on how to engage (such as writing a letter/email to introduce yourself).
 - The WFPC is connected to community and connected to municipalities. If the WFPC is to be effective, the WFPC should be the champion.
 - This was behind the initiative of liaisons: our network is us and the work we do to keep track of things.

d) Website Transition - Ariane

- The WFPC website has moved to: <https://www.washtenaw.org/1469/Washtenaw-County-Food-Policy-Council>. The blog (WordPress site) is still accessible, and the WFPC website links to the blog.
- Having the WFPC website on a County webpage helps people access our agendas, meeting minutes, etc.

e) Tracking Our Work - Marissa

- Aubrey provided this update instead of Marissa, as Aubrey is the secretary now.
- Aubrey will share the direct link to the tracking form after the meeting. Please use this form to track your work with the WFPC (ex: anytime you attend a meeting, schedule a meeting, have a discussion, do anything as a representative of the WFPC, attend/host listening sessions for MIFFS/Argus-as you are still wearing your WFPC hat, etc.). Not all the fields on the form are required. Once you submit your entry, it uploads to a spreadsheet. This tracking form is utilized for the annual report. Moving forward, Aubrey will send out an email before the meeting to remind people to fill out the tracking form.

5. PAT Updates

9:54-10:19 am

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

- The FAN PAT meets on the last Monday of the month at 3:30pm.

- The FAN PAT has been very active in the past year with food sovereignty work. Now focusing/sharing work in the ways that we can support the community.
 - The Farm Bill: how we can support and educate.
 - The universal school breakfast and lunch program in Michigan: trying to figure out the best ways to support and be part of this movement.
 - Community gardening and growing space throughout the County. Julius will email information on this.
 - a. Grown out of food sovereignty work and based on its principles. Focuses on food providers. Want to create conditions within the larger community in which any person who wants to grow food has access to land to do that. There are a lot of landless people in our community, and especially people who have steep barriers to getting land. Working with existing community gardening programs throughout the County and drawing on their expertise. Perhaps will work toward a proposal for the WFPC that the WFPC can consider bringing before the BOC: people being able to be considered growers/farmers even though they may be focused on a 20x20 plot.
- Email Julius if you are interested in becoming involved.
- b) Food Waste & Packaging WorkGroup –Aubrey**
 - We have started having our monthly meetings at the beginning of this year. Big part of our discussions: the RE-AMP grant we spoke about earlier in today’s meeting. This would be a great opportunity to focus our energy, and then to use as a launching pad (or to redirect). Ann and Aubrey participate, as well as some community members.
 - Email Aubrey if you are interested in becoming involved.
- c) Planning & Zoning PAT - Marissa**
 - The Planning & Zoning PAT meets on the first Thursday of the month at 5pm. Marissa will reach out to Lauren to discuss meeting times, because would love to have more members. People can still participate even if unable to attend meetings.
 - Want to make a planning toolkit for municipalities when they are doing their master planning process. This relates to policy agenda item #5. In 2021, we mapped different food system ordinances (such as purchase of development rights and chicken keeping ordinances). Meant to be a tool for land seekers. Using initial mapping/priorities as the start of our focus. Would love to be consulted when master plans are being created. Thinking of a printed/electronic reference that can send out. Prefer a proactive delivery system (speaking at a meeting, looking at drafts of plans and thinking of how can include food systems, etc.).
 - Looking for people to help with the work, as well as experts.
 - Email Ariane to be added to this PAT’s google group.
 - Markell mentioned that there was a project 4-5 years ago where people spent a lot of time doing this; do not want you to start from scratch. Ariane will try to find these documents on the google drive. If Ariane cannot find items, Markell might reach out to Anikka.
 - Keesa will ask Megan Masson-Minock to present how government intersects with food at a WFPC meeting.
- d) Farmers PAT – Alex**
 - No meetings yet. Lauren is interested in being involved.
 - Argus worked with the Washtenaw Meats group to host a big meeting at Webster Township Hall. They had over 75 attendees! A lot of people expressed support and interest for Washtenaw County meat processing. Kathy (from Argus) is trying to figure out how best to go forward from this meeting.
 - Some background: we are lacking meat processing in our region (not just our county). Small meat processors have gone away. Have a ton of farmers that grow animals, and animals must be transported long distances for processing. There are experts in our community, but these facilities are extremely expensive to build. Planning and zoning also plays a role. The point of the meeting was to expose all of this and identify next steps (ex: other communities have created co-ops/businesses). The more people that know about it, the more people that can support it.

6. Updates from Area Councils/Committees - Marissa

10:19-11:03 am

a) [WFPC Liaison Assignments .xlsx - Google Sheets](#)

- If we are going to be advocates, we need to be involved/know what is happening. Please look at the list; you can add groups. Please sign up to be a liaison for one. Jae will email you before the meeting to see who has updates to share.

- Lauren:
 - MIFFS had to postpone its annual conference due to the ice storm. Hoping to reschedule; stay tuned. The conference is geared towards farmers/gardeners, and there is a Farm Bill track with Senator Stabenow's staff. The program (which might change with the rescheduling) is available at: www.miffs.org/mffc2023
 - Was in DC in January and met with Representative Dingell's staff. Julius, the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition is interested in talking with you more about Growing Hope as an urban agriculture organization (your name came up while in DC).
 - What has the WFPC's engagement with the federal government been?
 - Jae: the WFPC can reach out to any level of government. Most impact has seemed to be at the county and state level. The WFPC has called federal legislators and sent letters in the past.
- Julius: Growing Hope update
 - Taking care of some trees today from the recent storms.
 - Meeting with Wendy Banka and a few others over the past several weeks about meat processing. Wendy is interested in trying to find funding for people to grow their own meat/egg birds. And then in theory would process them for free.
 - Working with Jewish Family Services and UM Campus Farm on their new refugee agriculture program. 75 participants will have a portion of the UM campus farm and support from staff to grow their own food to sell at the farmers market, for their own consumption, etc.
 - Have some funding from the County to support food makers in existence prior to March 2020; they can receive up to \$7,500 in grant funding for their business. There are about 10 spots remaining; please connect anyone who is interested to Growing Hope. The application is on Growing Hope's website. If applicant would like help filling out the application, they can call 734-786-8401 or email me.
 - Working with the community about downtown space, how to use it, and how to support food related businesses more effectively. Plan to create an accelerator kitchen with green space for growing/being.
 - Launched solidarity shares: people can pay whatever they can/are willing to pay. Have 20 shares available and have had a great response. Excited to try it and hope to share as a larger model.
 - Has connected with Katje about connecting with food makers and happy to connect with Lauren, too.
- Keesa:
 - Sharing some history to increase understanding of food shed elements, how ideas start, and how ideas evolve and spread. Project Grow has been in existence for 50 years in Ann Arbor: 50 years of doing community gardening and acquiring plots across Ann Arbor. Amanda Edmonds, who started Growing Hope, was part of Project Grow.
 - The Local Food Summit was a great way to connect, and one of Katje's goals with MSU Extension is to bring it back.
- Marissa:
 - Huron River Watershed Council:
 - Community open house to introduce new space: downtown Ann Arbor (117 N First St), stop in tomorrow between 4-7pm to meet staff/volunteers, etc.
 - Re-starting the Change Makers program, which is a 2-3 hour course where a staff member explains what the watershed is, how it is impacted by local policy, and what you can do about it. Designed to be multi-county. There are a lot of areas where watershed issues intersect with food systems.
 - Northfield Township:
 - Will have a farmers markets 2x/month and will be accepting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).
 - Northfield's Human Services has a food pantry. The library has a food pantry, seed library, and gardening classes.
 - In person meals are once again available for seniors at the Senior Center.
 - The farm preservation millage passed in November 2022. Now in process of approving the corresponding development ordinance.
- Aubrey: PIAC update

- Food waste is the number one contributor to landfills, and it is important to address food waste for food system and climate change. The passed Part 115 Bill Package improves and increases our solid waste laws here in Michigan. Counties are now required to address composting and divergence. Resilient Washtenaw already has goals, and now there is discussion about implementing them.
- Discussion about the RE-AMP grant.
- Katy Adams, the Education Director at the Ecology Center, has zero waste curriculum for second graders. Ann Arbor Public Schools requires this, and other school systems are starting to require it, too. Katy would be willing to come to a WFPC/Food Waste & Packaging PAT meeting.
- Discussion:
 - How is compost addressing environmental racism? Where is there racial equity?
 - Part 115 encompasses the entire state. PIAC is a county-wide committee and is wondering how this can be implemented on a county-wide level (not just Ann Arbor). Biggest issues: curbside compost pick-up is only for single family homes (does not include multi-family residences, commercial areas, etc.). How can get whole county to be a part of this?
 - Landfills are often located in areas with a lower income population and negatively impact these communities. If can get less food in landfills, then can get less methane in the air.
 - Ann Arbor never wants to talk about environmental racism. People do not want to talk about slums. Composting is one environmental issue. Need to be able to ask design questions: how is the food shed being designed; who are you talking about; how to approach environmental racism; etc.
 - Representative Carrie Rheingans (47th District: Ann Arbor, western Washtenaw County, southeast Jackson County): shared social media post on redlining, especially with recent power outages.
- Jae:
 - The Farm at Trinity Health:
 - Applying for two big federal grants to help support the farm share program. Finding that the demand for free/reduced produce boxes is very high. Applying for grants to provide food boxes but know that lack of food access is a symptom of a larger problem. Have a lot of resources at the hospital, including Community Health Workers who can help patients (i.e., get access to transportation, etc.).
 - Food pantry has a refrigerator and shelves. Thank you to Food Gatherers for getting us the food we need. Marketing the food pantry to our colleagues at the hospital, customers, and community members.
 - In Sharon Township:
 - A farmer left his farm to his farmhand, but the farmhand does not want it. Stoneco is a mining company that is trying to buy it to put in a gravel pit. Stoneco must prove that there is a need for this gravel pit and that there would be no serious consequences (to surrounding wetlands, negative impact on property values, etc.). This really shows the importance of land link programs: your farm is a precious asset, who is taking this farm over for you? This conversation has been ongoing for a while. The Washtenaw County Conservation District has hired a land link coordinator for the County, Sam Stokes, to make connections with established farmers and new farmers. Sam has created an advisory committee and has funding for two years to do this work and to update the website.
 - Discussion:
 - Communities look at death, work, time, and timeframes differently. A lot of people do not want to talk about this, because of white fragility.

7. Round Robin

a) Things on horizon, important updates from Council Members

- Not discussed

8. Open Comment (Council Members and Public)

- Not discussed

9. Adjourn

11:03 am

ACTION ITEMS

- Strategic planning process: Jae will prepare a draft RFP for the April EC meeting. Then will send the draft RFP to the entire WFPC for review/passive consent. Once approved, council members can distribute widely with their networks. Hope to have the strategic planning in August (in-person). Would be helpful to think of dates now. Stay tuned for more from the EC.
- RE-AMP grant: The grant is due 3/21, and Aubrey can write the draft for the grant. The project itself must be completed in November. Aubrey wants to figure out details for the grant (like the budget) prior to requesting letters of support from the partners. Jae can draft the letter of support.
- Annual report presentation: Jae will be presenting the WFPC's 2022 annual report to the BOC on March 15 at 5:30. Aubrey and Ann will also be at the meeting, and anyone can attend! Ariane will print 20 copies of the 2022 annual report.
- Aubrey will share the direct link to the tracking form after the meeting. Please use this form to track your work with the WFPC. Moving forward, Aubrey will send out an email before the meeting to remind people to fill out the tracking form.
- FAN PAT: Julius will email out information on community gardening and growing space throughout the County. Email Julius if you are interested in becoming involved with the FAN PAT.
- Food Waste & Packaging WorkGroup: Email Aubrey if you are interested in becoming involved.
- Planning & Zoning PAT: Marissa will reach out to Lauren to discuss meeting times. Email Ariane to be added to this PAT's google group. Ariane will try to find former master planning documents on the google drive. If Ariane cannot find items, Markell might reach out to Anikka.
- Keesa will ask Megan Masson-Minock to present how government intersects with food at a WFPC meeting.
- Liaison assignment: Please look at the list; you can add groups. Please sign up to be a liaison for one. Jae will email you before the meeting to see who has updates to share.

RECORDED VOTES

1. **Motion 1:** To approve January 11, 2023 meeting minutes
 - a. Approved: Yes-10, No-0
2. **Motion 2:** To approve March 8, 2023 meeting agendas
 - a. Approved: Yes-10, No-0