

Douglas County Food Policy Council

Monday, August 19, 2019

6:30pm to 8:30pm



Lumberyard Arts Center

718 High St, Baldwin City, KS 66006

In attendance: Kim Criner, Marlin Bates, Elizabeth Burger, Tamara Cash, Michele Dillon, Sarah Hartsig, Connie Fitzpatrick, Christina Ostmeier, Tyler Lindquist, Michael Steinle, William Vesecky

Absent: Jason Champagne, John Pendleton, Scott Thellman

Staff: Jasmin Moore, Amilee Turner- Sustainability Fellow

Public: several members from the public were in attendance

Food For Thought for Today's Meeting:

Of 945 farms in Douglas County, 86 sell products directly to area consumers. [2017 Douglas County Food System Assessment](#)

I. Action Item: Administrative Items 6:36

- A.** Determine quorum of members, agenda approval (need 9 for quorum) Motion to approve by Marlin, second by Michael. Approved
- B.** Approval of July meeting minutes. Motion to approve by Marlin, second by Sarah. Approved.
- C.** Pendleton member update. He is interested in coming back later. Would like to ask for an approved absence until the end of the year (4 months). Marlin, motion to make an exception to the bylaws with the condition that he let the FPC know in December. If he intends to return. Second by Michael. Motion passed.

II. Public Comment

III. Presentation and Discussion: Ruua Hassaballa from the KU Center for Community Health & Development shared preliminary findings for Kansas Alliance for Wellness Policy Implementation grant with Health Equity working group.

- A.** Advancing Food System Plan Goal 4, Objective 1: Apply Equity Principles to Local Government Food System Efforts
- B.** Interviewed all store owners. Preliminary finding shared in a handout. (get document from Ruua).

IV. Presentation and Discussion: [Growing Kansas Agriculture](#): Strategic Action Plan for Growing Douglas County Agricultural Growth

- A.** Advancing Food System Plan Goal 1, Objective 1: Develop Local Food and Agricultural Business
- B.** Presentation by Russell Plaschka, Agribusiness Development Program Manager/Workforce Development with Kansas Dept of Agriculture and Marlin Bates.
 - i. <https://agriculture.ks.gov/AgGrowthStrategy>
 - ii. The Kansas Dept of Agriculture is looking for direction from counties about which agricultural growth industry sectors are desirable in their community. The state

identified 19 sectors of interest, and hopes to grow the Kansas economy and agriculture industry.

- iii. The Aggies working group has a strong interest in engaging the Douglas County community in conversation about available assets, needs, and which industry sectors are ideal to promote in Douglas County. The goal is to complete the recommendation and submit to the state by the end of the year. There was a discussion about using some of the remaining FPC budget to allocate to this effort, but it was not called to a vote.
- iv. The Aggies will meet next Wednesday, August 28, 8:30 a.m. to discuss public engagement strategy. There are a number of stakeholders who could be involved in this work including, but not limited to, state and local chamber of commerce, Peaslee Tech, Health Department, and Community Health Plan.

V. Staff Report

- A. The Sustainability Advisory Board presented a recommendation to the City of Lawrence Commission to implement a \$0.16 fee for plastic and paper bags. The Commission expressed support. City of Lawrence staff will meet in September to discuss additional areas of research and develop a plan to bring the issue back to the City Commission before the end of 2019.
- B. Sustainability Office staffing changes: Sustainability and Food System Analyst position beginning the interview process.
- C. Call for application: [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\) Local Foods, Local Places program](#). Grant application deadline September 30, 2019. Communities with projects located in federal designated Opportunity Zones will receive special consideration. The Local Foods, Local Places program will provide selected communities planning assistance that centers around a two-day community workshop. At the workshop, a team of experts will help community members develop an implementable action plan that promotes local food and neighborhood revitalization. [Click here to see examples of action plans from community workshops organized through this assistance](#). This assistance is not a grant, and the program does not provide money directly to communities.

VI. Future Agenda Items

- A. Working Groups discuss their Food System Plan goals and health equity connections (September)
- B. Receive KU final report / discuss actions on report findings (September)
- C. [Climate and Energy Project- Climate and Health Declaration](#) (September)
- D. Rotating reports from working groups

VII. Key Takeaways Review

VIII. Member Updates

- A. FORWARD working group is working in partnership with several community partners (KU, USD 497, Health Dept, and Lawrence Restaurant Association) to develop and distribute a Food Waste Tool Kit. They plan to roll out the tool during Lawrence Restaurant Week 2020.
- B. **Farmers Market Permanent Location efforts.** Several FPC members engaged with people at the Lawrence Saturday Farmers Market and shared the work of the Architecture students from last year and spread awareness about a market permanent location. People were very engaged.

- C. Tyler and Sarah presented about the FPC Food Waste efforts at the Kansas Environmental Conference.
- D. Kim will be on a panel to discuss the Food Plan System, Thursday, September 26 in Wichita.
- E. Connie is hosting an exhibit, August 24- "Untold Stories: Douglas County Social Movements from 1968-2018."

IX. Adjourn 8:41 pm Motion by Michelle, second by Christina.

X. Upcoming Meetings

Date	Time(s)	Location	Who helps coordinate / make arrangements?
Monday, September 16 th	6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Vesecky's Farm, 1814 N 600 Rd, Baldwin City, KS 66006	William Vesecky
Monday, October 21 st	6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Stull United Methodist Church 1596 E 250 Rd., Lecompton, KS 66050	Brenna Wulfsuhle (staff coordinate)
Monday, November 18 th	6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Eudora City Hall / Chamber / Library (?)	Staff
Monday, December 16 th	6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Cider Gallery / Bon Bon	TBD

Ethnic Food Retail Study: Preliminary Findings



Quotes from owners:

"My food and products are from my people. I'm always attached to them. I have family that eat the food, so we can't forget about our culture."

"There is no other place like this. I have a relationship with all the customers, and I don't treat them like customers, I treat them like friends. That's important for my clientele. We serve the community generally."

People love to be here. It's not just a restaurant or grocery store. It's a unique place where they can find a bit of everything. We have henna so it reflects the culture. It's a unique umbrella.

Owner Summary

- ❖ The stores specialize in unique food items from other countries. The **owners review data, the customers' opinions, and how much product was sold to formulate stocking decisions.**
- ❖ The largest suppliers include **California, New York, and Chicago**. Some of the ethnic food retailers bring items from India, Turkey, Greece, Mexico, and Nigeria.
- ❖ Few food items are from local sources due to **cost, convenience, and timing**. Specialty grocery items are not available locally (e.g., Asian produce, Indian goods).
- ❖ **All owners are unaware of any incentive to purchase locally**. Some **expressed interest** in knowing more.
- ❖ **Most owners would like to sell more fresh produce, especially fruit. Barriers include budget, space, and not enough people knowing of the business.**
- ❖ **Most store owners say about 25-50% of their food is healthy.** There are gluten free options and organic vegetables or food available at the stores. Other places would like to expand their selection of organic products by having more space.
- ❖ **Owners said that increased awareness of the ethnic food retail stores through educational programs or TV advertisements would increase the store's offerings and sales.**
- ❖ Most store owners say there is no problem with city regulations or requirements (e.g., tax law, health and safety regulations).

- ❖ Two of six business owners are members of the Chamber of Commerce
 - Two used to be members but stopped due to moving or getting busy and not seeing much benefit
- ❖ **What people need to grow business: Help with advertising, better location, expansion and monetary support**
- ❖ Some serve 20 customers a day (Cosmos Indian), 50-100 (Mediterranean), 500-600 (La Estrella), and more (F Mart). Others serve a smaller number (African Caribbean Store & J&V).
- ❖ The stores provide the following services:
 - Educational center (Mediterranean Market)
 - Laundry services (African Caribbean Store)
 - Money transfers (La Estrella)
 - A visit bureau for new people in Lawrence who want to find information about how to connect to their Southeast Asian community and culture (Cosmos Indian Cafe)
- ❖ Places have between 2-9 employees.

Preliminary Participant Findings

Customer Quote:

"It's a closer connection to community to go to La Estrella compared to other stores; it's different culturally. It feels more welcoming to go to these stores and I wish there were more stores like this. Community was also woven into the experience."



- ❖ More variety
- ❖ Ethnic stores offer specific items
- ❖ Ethnic food store(s) consistently offer specialty foods for traditional and/or holiday dishes, create a strong cultural community, and provide a comfortable space for customers to frequent.