

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY LOCAL FOODS POLICY COUNCIL

Minutes of the OCTOBER 10, 2012 Meeting

Members Present: Tod Satterthwaite; Rebecca Roach; Mary Ellen Farrell; Christopher Henning; Zach Kennedy; Brad Uken

Guests: Patti Petrie; Lisa Bralts; Leslie Cooperband; Brett Barkley

1. Call to Order—Meeting called to order at 5:45pm
2. Additions/Corrections to the Agenda—No corrections or additions
3. Approval of Minutes—Mel will take notes of meetings hereon and was voted in as Secretary of the LFPC
 - a. Public Participation
Brett Barkley introduced by Zach as a student in the Urban Planning Dept. He is considering a first-year project on the Olympian Drive in regards to the impact of urban growth on small farms; how these impacts can be mitigated. Brett may be attending our meetings as we move forward.
 - b. Patti reported on the introduction of a committee replacement, Maya Bauer, at the CC Board meeting. No votes were heard and a new vote will be taken at its next meeting.
4. Discussion of the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District in Regard to Enforcing the Public Health Code at Farmer's Markets—Lisa Bralts and Leslie Cooperband gave their perspectives on this issue: Lisa, with her experience the past few years as Director of the Urbana Farmer's Market, and Leslie in her roles at Prairie Fruits Farm & Creamery. Summary:
 - a. Baseline documentation for vendor approval is quixotic and uneven. Rules not stated clearly and vendors get upended at the last minute, even after spending money to come into compliance. As a result farmers' value-added products have a high barrier to overcome when it comes to dairy, meat, and eggs. It was noted that 2 prospective vendors were not able to sell this year and went to other market venues where rules were more relaxed. NOTE: THIS MEANS THAT OTHER MARKETS MAY BEGIN TO COMPETE MORE SUCCESSFULLY THAN THE URBANA MARKET. NOT A GOOD HARBINGER FOR BUSINESS ENTERPRISE IN THE TWIN CITIES.
 - b. The fact that local districts can make their own rules is a larger state problem. Interpretations of the codes vary widely statewide. This creates confusion for producers and a denial of choice and diversity for consumers. It is a barrier to economic development. Other cities with vibrant food entrepreneurial scenes [Iowa City, Madison, Austin] make it easy for businesses to succeed—not difficult like in Champaign Co.
 - c. The passage of the Cottage Food Operations Bill was a step in a good direction, but not emphatic enough. With local districts writing their own rules, the onus of enforcement is on the city [Farmer's Market]. This should not be their job.
 - d. What are some possible solutions? State intervention and interpretation. Leslie's participation in the state's IDPH indicates some small movements, but much needs to be accomplished. The local public health district [at the top] should be made aware of the situation. It should be emphasized that consistency and fairness is a prime goal. Clear documentation is a NECESSITY. An appeals process and an avenue for complaints might be a good idea to propose. Traceability: the concept that farmers selling DIRECT to consumers has the LOWEST risk.

- e. Motion passed that Tod and Rebecca pay a visit to Julie Pride, the Director of the Public Health District. Effort would be to point out the issues we heard at this meeting and make her aware of the problems.
5. Meeting adjourned @7:30pm