



## Access to Healthy Foods Subcommittee

Wednesday, March 5, 2008

5:30pm – 7:00pm

Marysville City Hall

1049 State Ave.

### **MARCH 5, 2008 MINUTES**

Mayor Dennis Kendall, City Councilmember John Soriano, Wendy Bart, Doug Buell, Tara Mizell, Eric Hatzenbuehler, Colin Rehm, Maryke Burgess, Tonya Miranda, Colleen Fullmer, Deb Loughrey-Johnson, Dorothy Stanton, Vicki Mattson, Eric Owl, Teresa Trivett, Mark Johnson, Susie Starrfield, Tom Sherry, Maria Sherry

**Introductions and Welcome** | Doug Buell | Wendy Bart

**General Group Discussion** |

**Prioritize Action Items – Short vs. Long-term** |

**Identify Next Steps** |

**Summary/Wrap-up** |

Maryke Burgess talked about the education for seniors to teach them that they may be eligible for food stamps. Some 60% of seniors don't know they are eligible, or choose not to participate because of the stigma attached to food stamps. Susie Starrfield said that now a debit-style card can be used in place of food stamps, removing the public stigma. Eric Owl told the group that food stamps can be used to purchase seeds and starter plants, too.

Starrfield asked about whether Marysville has a farmers market. Tara Mizell said no, not anymore. The contracted-out market was poorly attended, and the few booths that operated were more flowers and crafts than fruits and vegetables. There was discussion about the importance of needing a coordinator to operate and promote it accordingly. Mizell added that a representative from the Everett Farmers Market once said at a Healthy Communities Subcommittee meeting that most of the fruits and vegetables they sold were shipped to Everett from Eastern Washington, not locally grown.

The discussion turned toward availability of commercial-style kitchens in Marysville to support a congregate meal site for seniors. Dorothy Stanton said the Marysville United Methodist and Bethlehem Lutheran churches were two sites that would be willing to make theirs availability if there is a program in place. In general, she thought many churches had the right type of kitchens to prepare foods in larger quantities.

Burgess mentioned that the Salvation Army has a mobile kitchen that has potential. Sean Kelsey is the contact person. The Salvation Army Office is located across the street from the Ken Baxter Senior Community Center downtown.

Wendy Bart spoke about menu labeling, including status of the program in Seattle/King County. She also brought information about state legislation favorable to the goals pursued by Healthy Communities, including the Washington Farmers and Fresh Healthy Foods for Kids bill. She also presented information about the ICMA Community Health and a Plant-a-Row program that would have participants grow for themselves, but donate a portion back to the food bank.

Deb Lowry Johnson, Director of Grandview Village, described a program she has worked on with Steve Fulton that provides hot samples of, say, lentil beans, cooks them at Grandview's kitchen, then delivers them to the food bank nearby for clients to taste test. The program is a way for clients to see how they can turn a basic healthy food into something tasty; recipes are included, too. Colleen Fullmer with the WSU Extension said the agency has a program that works with food banks, very similar to what Grandview has and is will to do in concert with the Marysville Food Bank. She also talked about the Monroe Food Bank (Shelly Carpenter) and community garden adjacent to the food bank that donates the vegetables grown back to the food bank.

Teresa Trivett talked about the potential for getting local homeowners to consider donating tree fruits and garden vegetables to the Marysville food bank when they have an overabundance. Teresa had leftover plums, which she donated to the food bank. She sees several other small growers around the community with, for example, pear and apple trees, and it seemed a shame to her that so much fruit that has fallen to the ground ends up going to waste.

Eric Owl talked about a proposal he worked on the Marysville Parks and Recreation Department's request for a community garden project using Dolshel's Tree Farm Property on 67<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE near Kellogg Marsh Elementary. Such a proposal ultimately would need to be presented to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in these early stages. Committee members asked Eric about whether graffiti and vandalism are problems for community gardens. He said no, none that he came across. Generally, community gardens were not completely fenced off – until the first time an act of vandalism occurred.

On the topic of community gardens used in a way to get fresh-grown vegetables in the hands of others in need, he said an effective way to build a base of volunteer growers is to assign people a 12-square-foot plot, harvesting 10 square feet for the garden grower and the remaining 2 square feet for the food.

Further discussion was had about the requirements and resources for operating a community garden, and working students into the program, such as the Marysville Youth Action Network (MYAN). Literature about how to grow various crops, and recipes, was discussed. Maria Sherry added that recipes should come in other languages adaptable for different cultures in the Marysville community.

Colleen Fullmer directed people to a very helpful web site at <http://nutrition.wsu.edu>, then type "Farmers Market."

John Soriano raised the possibility of using high school seniors in the development of community gardens as their community service project, or “senior project” required for graduation.

Teresa Trivett talked about Pinewood Elementary and its plot of land available for growing garden fruits and vegetables, and getting children involved. Eric Owl said he believed the school grows corn every year.

At this point, the Subcommittee broke into two groups to focus on:

- 1) Community Gardens
- 2) Food Bank action items to help promote access to more fruits and vegetables.

Here are the questions and needs gathered from the groups:

### **Community Gardens sub-group questions and needs**

- How did the community garden acquire their land?
- How did they decide on a specific site?
- What is the maintenance cost per plot?
- What do they charge per plot?
- What are their funding sources?
- What are the most typical challenges of maintaining the community garden?
- What is the hardest part about operating the community garden?
- What would be your best advice?
- How do you determine the level of interest in a community garden?
- How do you staff the community garden?
- How do you deploy volunteers?
- What are the liability issues?
- How did you build the garden?
- How do you choose who gets a plot?
- Do you have a waiting list? How do you deal with the waiting list?
- Have you ever had to kick someone out? What were the circumstances?
- Can you provide us with sample contracts?
- How do you deal with pests?
- Have you had any issues with vandalism? What did you do?
- Have you ever worked with seniors to help with gardens at their own homes?

### **Food Bank sub-group questions and needs**

- Would like to arrange a tour of the Marysville Community Food Bank.
- Meet with food bank leadership/board and explain HC project and implementation phase of Marysville’s Action Plan.
- What are the current strengths and barriers to accessing the food bank? Assess them.
- Would like background on, and to arrange a spring tour of, the Monroe Food Bank and adjacent community garden to provide food for food bank clients.

- Related to the above item, research best practices and strategies other communities are using to increase the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables available at food banks.
- Related to Operations/data information about a couple of other food banks in the region, including Renton Food Bank, run by Salvation Army and Rotary
- Also, research current sources of intake/supply for food bank – are there local sources that could provide additional fruits and vegetables, such as grocers, home gardeners, gardening groups, etc.
- Can we assess the amount, variety, quality and perception of fruits and vegetables offered by the food bank.
- Land/Facility details about the new Marysville Community Food Bank.
- Provide Subcommittee with original Marysville Food Bank data compiled during the community inventory/evaluation period of Healthy Communities process.
- Who are the stakeholders we need to incorporate into the plans above?
- What grants or other funding sources are available to assist?

## Summary

Based on input from this initial meeting, the early priorities appear to be:

- Objective 1A – Increase the amounts of fruits and vegetables consumed by Marysville Food Bank participants.
- Objective 1C – Establish new community gardens to make fresh, local produce more readily available.

Following is a second tier of priorities referenced in “Priority No. 2 – Access to Health-Promoting Foods,” that were discussed:

- Objective 2A – Menu labeling: ensure restaurants provide nutrition labeling on all menus.
- Objective 1D – Establish a congregate meal site for older adults.

**Next Advisory Meeting date(s):** Wednesday, April 9, 2008

**Time:** 5:30-7:00 p.m.

**Location:** City Council Chambers, 2<sup>nd</sup> Fl., Marysville City Hall, 1049 State Ave.

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