



## Access to Healthy Foods Subcommittee

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

5:30pm – 7:00pm

Marysville City Hall

1049 State Ave.

### JUNE 4, 2008 MINUTES

City Councilmember John Soriano, Wendy Bart, Doug Buell, Colin Rehm, Maryke Burgess, Deb Loughrey-Johnson, Dorothy Stanton, Eric Owl, Marielle Harrington

**Introductions and Welcome** | Doug Buell introduced Marielle Harrington, Healthy Communities Specialist in the Snohomish Health District Community Health Division. Harrington, previously with the American Heart Association, will serve as Coordinator for the Marysville Healthy Communities Project.

#### **Informational Items** |

**Report – Local Food Policy Council Workshop May 15** – The Workshop was hosted by the Access to Healthy Foods Coalition. Food policy council basics were discussed, such as:

1. The role they play
2. How to get one started
3. Organizational models – who needs to be at the table
4. Outcomes

About 100 operate across the country – some are city, some county, some state level, Buell said. Food Policy Councils are comprised of stakeholders from various segments of a local food system. Councils are typically sanctioned through government action, but others form through grassroots efforts. Their main goal of is to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas and recommendations for improvement through public policy changes. That, in effect, is some of what we're doing through our Healthy Communities work, or could be doing.

Some types of policy decisions include:

- A decision by school officials whether to purchase foods raised by local farmers;
- Food ingredient and menu labeling;

One of the workshop speakers was Seattle City Councilmember/Council President Richard Conlin. He spoke about a Local Food Action Initiative that he championed that was passed by the Seattle City Council in April. The Initiative will:

- Expand resources for food banks
- Strengthen local farmers' markets
- Develop solutions that will reduce the cost of food for urban consumers by making stronger connections between rural and urban areas

- Plan for better management of the food system in emergencies and disasters
- And more.

The City will now develop a Regional Food Policy Action Plan to identify policies, programs and opportunities to promote local food system sustainability and security, and along with that a Regional Food Policy Council. The Council would pull together stakeholders from Seattle and King County

Dorothy Stanton asked whether they would go wider. Buell said they talked about the possibility of leaving that option open if representatives from the Snohomish County wanted to join in. Colin Rehm asked whether the people that would serve would be policy or technical people. Buell got the impression that it would be largely policy people, with some technical individuals drawn from higher learning institutions.

The Subcommittee deferred whether a food policy council would be necessary for Marysville, since the Subcommittee is already working on some of the same types of policy issues.

### **Report – Washington Economic Development Association April Conference – Farmers Markets**

Buell reported on a forum concerning Agriculture for Economic Development – Farmers Markets and Agri-tourism, moderated by Moderator Linda Nuenzig, a Snohomish County Farmers who serves on the Snohomish County Agricultural Economic Development Action Team, and is now on the Everett Healthy Communities Project team.

The program featured nationally recognized consultant Vance Corum of AdVance Marketing, co-author of “The New Farmers Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers and Communities.” The Vancouver, Wash. resident has a proven track record across the country for establishing economically-viable farmers markets. Some of his observations of note if a community wants to establish a successful farmers market:

- You need \$50,000-\$60,000 and a solid Request for Proposals to start a good market.
- Expect to not earn a profit until the third year of operations.
- Sunday (or Saturday) is a good day for farmers markets; in some instances it compels downtown businesses around the on-street market (like on Third Street, for example) to open for business because of all the foot traffic. City park works well, too.
- Ways to fund? Long-term leases with City, state and city funding.
- If there is a fixed building that is the focal point for a farmers market, it has to stand for a long time.
- Had very good things to say about the Bellingham Farmers Market. The City had its qualms about moving forward because of funding issues, but the market has become so popular that they have even added a full-service kitchen. Depot Market Square Saturday Market on Railroad and Chestnut, and another one in Fairhaven.
- Very important to create relationship with local farmers and growers.

### **Doleshel Farm Community Garden Site**

On behalf of Marysville Parks and Recreation Director Jim Ballew, Maryke Burgess shared an update with Subcommittee members regarding the proposed Doleshel Farm Community Garden site. She said the site will be the next focus for Eagle Scout projects. Marysville Parks and the Eagle Scouts will:

- rebuild the bridge at the site
- Remove trees on the proposed garden site for chipping
- Reclaim the fence line for safety and visibility.

The next step will be to move forward on a standard contract with Eric Owl, who serves on the Subcommittee, and is a graduate student currently working on a Ph.D. in Horticulture at Washington State University. He has outlined a Feasibility Study for the Doleshel Community Garden site (Eric presented a single hard copy at the meeting). Jim Ballew is working with Owl to assemble information necessary to complete a final draft consultant agreement.

The Eagle Scout and Parks work should be accomplished by the end of summer. Burgess reminded the Subcommittee that this is a very busy time of year for Parks.

Owl also presented a list of Seed sources at the meeting that will be helpful as the project advances. Additionally, he submitted a sample WSU Quilceda Elementary Garden Summer Watering form that can be modified to meet the needs of opening up the Doleshel site for educational purposes to adjacent Kellogg-Marsh Elementary.

The tree farm property is about a 2-acre / 3-acre split between usable land and wetlands.

Colin Rehm turned the discussion toward who the target users would be at the Community Garden. This will require further discussion throughout the year. Subcommittee members acknowledged that there is the educational component; there is also the potential to draw in low-income residents who live in the apartment complex a couple of blocks south and next to Cedarcrest Middle School, as well as the HUD-housing on Getchell Hill Road. Maryke Burgess inquired about the focus on low-income users of the Community Garden, but it was explained that the intent is to reach a much broader audience but to not forget including low-income families as potential volunteers or recipients of self-harvested or harvested fruits and vegetables from the site. Owl added that he would like to see some fruit trees grown on the property.

The discussion turned toward how to gauge the community's interest in the Doleshel Farm Community Garden and how it should be structured. Colin Rehm and others strongly suggested developing a survey, which could be distributed through a variety of means, both through publications (such as newsletters, door hangers) and online (such as Zoomerang). Subcommittee members thought the survey could be ready for distribution by September. Through the summer, there are other opportunities to gather input from residents, too, such as at the City's movie and concert series', and the Homegrown Festival Aug. 8-9 downtown, where the City's Community Information Booth will focus on Healthy Communities Project progress.

A couple of concepts for the Community Garden remains popular with the Subcommittee, such as building a base of volunteer growers by assigning people a 12-square-foot plot, harvesting 10 square feet for the garden grower and the remaining 2

square feet donated to the food bank. Pea patch arrangements were also discussed, as well as having plant-a-row holders committing to donate a set amount of hours to volunteer for general maintenance and operations at the garden.

The Subcommittee also talked about who is not on the Subcommittee that should be. City Councilmember John Soriano asked that with the prospects of a community gardening, it might be a good idea to have a master composter in the group. Members agreed that was a good idea as the project moves forward.

### **Meeting with Joyce Zeigen, Marysville Community Food Bank Director**

Buell briefly touched on his recent meeting with the Marysville Community Food Bank Director, Joyce Zeigen. She said that the food bank has been well-stocked with fruits and vegetables, and that where they are coming up wanting is dairy products. Buell said that while that probably means less need on the Subcommittee's part to get more local fruits and vegetables into the food bank, the objective still remains to get clients to eat them more, and incorporate them into their family diets. Subcommittees were in agreement. One thing that Zeigen said the food bank really needs was a display rack to hold publications and recipes, etc. for drop-in clients. She was enamored with the Marysville community's willingness to donate supplies and services. So, on behalf of Healthy Communities, we ordered her one, Buell said. It was to arrive this week. It will carry Healthy Communities information, and be identified as courtesy of Healthy Communities. For \$200, it was one easy way to help build a bridge there.

### **Sky Valley Food Bank Tour in Monroe**

Buell talked to Shelly Carpenter, who works in Human Resources at the City of Monroe, is a gardening aficionado, and has overseen the Community Garden at the Food Bank for the past 7-8 years. The Subcommittee is interested in this particular food bank-community garden arrangement in the event that a similar setup is viable at the new Marysville Community Food Bank currently under construction at St. Mary's Catholic Church near State Avenue and 88<sup>th</sup> Street NE.

The biggest positive change at the Community Garden has been the WSU Extension Master Gardeners Program involvement now, where gardeners can get their hours in.

The community garden program is run at no cost. Work is all done by volunteers. Community Service Workers are sometimes used out of the nearby Boys and Girls Clubs. The community garden does not impose on the food bank volunteers; however, at times they do make themselves available to water the gardens during dry temperature spells, or at harvest. Doing so is entirely up them. This is an issue that has been raised by Marysville Community Food Bank volunteers. They do not want to bear the responsibility for maintaining a community garden, so it is important to have a volunteer staff apart from them.

The garden has generated a significant amount of produce for the benefit of food bank clients. Buell is looking to schedule a tour of the Food Bank/Community Garden led by Shelly Carpenter on the morning of **Monday, June 23** or **Wednesday, June 25**. Carpenter will discuss the pros and cons of the operation. Subcommittee members present who were interested in attending said the June 23 date works better for them (***Subcommittee members will receive an invitation to this tour shortly; we are***

***tentatively looking at leaving City Hall in a City van at 9:30 a.m. on June 23, arriving at the Sky Valley Food Bank at 10 a.m.)***

**5Ps Strategies with Discussion About Committee's Priority Items** - Colin Rehm passed out the 5Ps strategies to Subcommittee members. While it's too soon to do the work of dropping the committee's action items into the format, he is tracking the information at his level for consideration by Leadership Committee members. He said he is encouraged by where the conversation is heading keeping in mind the 5Ps – Preparation, Promotion, Programs, Policies and Physical Projects.

Wendy Bart offered a new program she would like the Subcommittee to consider. The State Department of Health "Energize Your Meetings" program is a way to encourage businesses and other groups to incorporate healthy foods and beverages, and fitness, into their meetings to keep participants energized. The program uses a 5-star rating system. Bart believes that promoting this to local businesses will help meet the Subcommittee's priority to encourage more eating of health-promoting foods community-wide, such as fruits and vegetables, and is another way to change the culture of eating in Marysville, including within the business sector. Copies of the program will be distributed to Subcommittee members at a future meeting.

#### **Other Items |**

Deb Lowry Johnson, Director of Grandview Village, described the willingness to pursue a program she has worked on with Steve Fulton that provides hot samples of lentil beans, cooks them at Grandview's full 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 would be included, too, and these would be available in the new display rack at the food bank. This program could be held up as a short-term example of Subcommittee successes.

Johnson invited Subcommittee members as guests to two upcoming public events at Grandview Village:

3-4 p.m. **Tuesday, June 24** – Snohomish County Executive Aaron Reardon  
2-3 p.m. **Wednesday, July 9** – Sen. Jean Berkey, 38<sup>th</sup> Legislative District (Everett-Marysville)

Johnson said it would be a good opportunity to mention the Marysville Healthy Communities Project and how it is helping the community, involving seniors, the center, etc.

#### **Summary/Wrap-up |**

Topics on the table not currently on agenda:

- Farms to Schools (*further research*)
- Farms to Food Banks (*further research*)
- Menu labeling (*on hold pending discussions at the health district administration level*)
- Program to showcase healthy food samples/recipes/Healthy Communities in local grocers (*preliminary*)

**Next Advisory Meeting date(s):** Tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 9

**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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**Reminder of Healthy Communities “Access to Healthy Foods” Objectives**

- 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.