



Boston Food Access Council Meeting

6-8 p.m. Thursday, September 14, 2017

BCYF Tobin Community Center

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

BFAC Members: **Laura Benavidez** (Director of Food and Nutrition Services, Boston Public Schools); **Chris Bosso** (Professor of Public Policy, Northeastern University); **Allison Bovell-Ammon** (Deputy Director of Policy Strategies, Children's HealthWatch); **Bing Broderick** (Executive Director, Haley House); **William Dean** (Director of Advocacy and Public Impact, Tufts University); **Noreen Kelly** (Director of Programs, Project Bread); **Sutton Kiplinger** (Greater Boston Regional Director, The Food Project); **Barbara Knecht** (Urban Farming Institute); **Liana Krupp** (President of the Board of Directors, Krupp Family Foundation); **Emily Broad Leib** (Director and Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic); **Anne McHugh** (Director for the Division of Chronic Disease and Prevention, Boston Public Health Commission); **Elizabeth Miller** (Food Security Fellow, Mayor's Office of Food Access); **Doug Rauch** (Founder and President, The Daily Table); **Vickey Siggers** (Farmer's Market Manager and Program Coordinator, Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition); **Carol Tienken** (Chief Operating Officer, The Greater Boston Food Bank); **Vidya Tikku** (General Manager of Boston Community Gardens, The Trustees)

BFAC Delegates: **Jenny Silverman** (Director, Dorchester Community Food Co-Op)

Other attendees: **Catalina Lopez-Ospina** (Director, Mayor's Office of Food Access); **Stephanie Voltaire** (Project Manager, Mayor's Office of Food Access); **Rachel Hoh** (Coordinator, Mayor's Office of Food Access); **Jillian McKoy** (Intern, Mayor's Office of Food Access); **Kate Baker** (Former Intern, Mayor's Office of Food Access); **Kristina Stefanini** (Former Intern, Mayor's Office of Food Access); **members of the public**

Absent BFAC Members: **Tara Agarwal Pedulla** (Program Manager, Boston Children's Hospital); **Alison Brown** (Board Member, Dorchester Community Food Co-Op); **Juan Leyton** (Executive Director, Dudley Square Neighborhood Initiative); **Eric Mitchell** (Deputy Director of Field Operations, Action for Boston Community Development)

(SEE SLIDES)

Welcome and Introductions

- Catalina Lopez-Ospina welcomed the group to its second Council meeting and provided a brief overview of the work that OFA and the BFAC has focused on throughout the summer.
 - The OFA works to increase the physical, economic, and social access to affordable, nutritious food for all Bostonians.
- In quarterly meetings, the BFAC will advise OFA on the development of a strategic plan to increase food access in Boston.
- OFA is exploring development of Community Steering meeting to gain additional insight from the community on food insecurity and food access.

Data Gathering Process

- Listening Sessions
 - Kate Baker discussed how she gathered and assessed responses from participants in the OFA-led Food Insecurity listening sessions.
- Food Access Survey
 - Kristina Stefanini presented how the OFA-led Food Access survey was designed and distributed to Boston residents.
- Quantitative Data
 - Liz Miller reviewed the data gathering process for multiple quantitative data sets that OFA received with support from several agencies and organizations. The data included demographic and socioeconomic information in Boston, as well as BRFSS survey responses on food insecurity, and information on the locations of various food resources in the city.

Data Presentation

- Jillian McKoy discussed some of the major findings from the listening sessions, Food Access survey, and quantitative data analysis. This data included an overview of top concerns that Bostonians said they face in accessing and purchasing food, as well as race/ethnicity population comparisons and suggestions on further analysis on food insecurity, cost of food, and SNAP utilization in the city.
 - Council members can review the full presentation in the PowerPoint slides posted in the BFAC Google Doc folder.

Data Discussion

- **Carol Tienken:** Important and useful to understand how residents are currently accessing information about health resources and benefits? (Participants in OFA's listening sessions noted that they often received their information by word-of-mouth or at community centers).
- **Laura Benavidez:** Different age groups access information differently; we should use this to determine what other groups they have access to and interest in (social wellness groups, nutrition, etc.).
- **Doug Rauch:** We should look into the extent and impact of language as a barrier to food access, and also determine what it is that residents want (in terms of food and resource preferences)
 - Liz noted that OFA has some of this data and other departments within the Mayor's Office will further help us collect information about language barriers.
 - OFA data shows that residents want meat, dairy, and healthy food such as fruits and vegetables.
- **Anne McHugh:** It could be useful to have a data-focused working group that could help determine what further information we need to collect and analyze. Consider reviewing a similar food insecurity plan that was implemented in San Francisco.
- **Emily Broad Leib:** Need to look into how money is being spent on SNAP, WIC, Bounty Bucks, FMNP, etc., and see what economically feasible actions we can take to leverage maximum change. Ex: in DC, residents automatically get a \$10 voucher at outlets when they show their SNAP identification.



Priorities

- Liz Miller discussed priorities that OFA developed based on initial feedback and input from the Council.

Group Discussion

- **Anne McHugh:** Need to have a broad focus when addressing food insecurity; important to examine and consider the effect of natural disasters on food insecurity and food access.
 - Catalina mentioned that the Mayor's Office is developing a comprehensive Resiliency plan. OFA has provided input to that plan and will share details once that plan is executed.
- **Liz Miller:** Perhaps we can add food justice to the Economic Development initiatives
- **Sutton Kiplinger:** Is the Council focusing more on food access or food insecurity – each problem is tackled differently. How do we want to address the larger, systemic issues?
- **Emily Broad Leib:** The Council should think innovatively when developing a plan, and help foster sustainable jobs in the food sector so that people can afford to work, and want to work, in the industry.
- **Liana Krupp:** Our work should be centered on economics just as much as health. The Council should also incorporate food sovereignty into its focus; how to enable people to grow and cook their own food, and address the barriers that prevent residents from achieving this independence.
- **Doug Rauch:** We should aim bigger and develop initiatives that are a challenge.
- **Chris Bosso:** We should find the larger, motivating factor among the initiatives that OFA presented; something that is more inspirational.
- **Noreen Kelly:** A lot of the initiatives are things that OFA and the Council members are already doing; the City can enhance these current projects, but the Council should find additional areas to focus on.
- **Jenny Silverman:** Our plan should be to eliminate food insecurity, not reduce it. We should go beyond what people are already doing, and we should put pressure on large and new businesses to provide financial support within the community.
- **Catalina Lopez-Ospina:** OFA can connect and invite other City Departments (Small Business Development, Mayor's Office of New Mechanics) that can support and help to move forward initiatives and programs that OFA and the Council consider a priority.
- **Allison Bovell-Ammon:** The Council also needs to consider federal policies that will ultimately affect Boston residents.
- **Emily Broad Leib:** The Council could identify four innovative, long-term initiatives and two short-term initiatives as part of the plan.

Audience Feedback and Input

- The Council should consider soliciting input from a WIC representative – WIC has a lot of data on food insecurity, and understands Boston's food culture.
- The Council should also examine how people find ways to bypass their lack of access to food (borrowing cars, getting rides, etc.) and track where they do shop.
 - Liz Miller noted that OFA's listening sessions and Food Access Survey retrieved information about specific places where food-insecure residents shop (and prefer to shop).
- Carol Tienken (BFAC member): The Council should consider the initiative and work of similar councils in other major cities, such as New York City.



- Food waste should also be incorporated into the Council's initiatives.
- Audience member from UMass Extension's SNAP-Ed program offered to have a representative attend a Council meeting to lend additional input on the program and its members. The Council should consider proposing price incentives that encourage healthy behavior, and also incorporate healthcare and mental healthcare into its work.

Closing and Next Steps

- Liz Miller said that OFA will review the comments and suggestions from members about the Council's priorities and initiatives, and will perhaps send a survey to obtain specific ideas from members.

NEXT MEETING:

6-8 p.m. Thursday, December 14

Location TBA