



Boston Food Access Council Meeting
City Hall, 1 City Hall Sq, Room 801, Boston, MA 02201
September 25th, 2019 | 6:00p - 8:00p

MEETING GOALS

- Cover what is food policy & potential goals/projects of the BFAC
- How OFA will intersect with the BFAC
- Explain new structure of BFAC, ways to get involved, and membership and steering committee application

AGENDA

Opening

- **Welcome & Remarks from Chief Marty Martinez, Health & Human Services Cabinet, City of Boston (Catalina López-Ospina, Mayor's Office of Food Access)**

OFA Director Catalina Lopez-Ospina welcomed everyone. Here to establish new goals and strategies for the BFAC, thanking Liz, Anna, Yardley, and Transition Committee. All of them are the brain behind the new council. Welcoming this great group to the inaugural BFAC meeting and introduced Chief of Health and Human Services Martinez.

Chief Marty Martinez - Welcome, excited to be here. Exciting work together through Health and Human Services Cabinet.

- We've reimagined what food access is within the city and how to really tackle these critical issues.
 - Worked with partners and community stakeholders to increase understanding of what is currently going well and where to improve.
 - Defining Mayor's policy views, how to tackle issues, where there are systemic issues.
 - Final piece - food insecurity is a multifaceted issue that is outside the scope of the OFA and health and human services in general. We don't work on anything alone, everything is in partnership with other organizations. This is personal to him, and everyone on this team. Breaking down barriers. Thank you and keep pushing the city to be better.
- **Say hello to your neighbor, introduce yourself**
 - **Review evening's agenda (Liz Miller, Mayor's Office of Food Access) (SEE ATTACHED AGENDA)**



Discussion of Food Policy Work in General

- **Presentation from Emily Broad-Leib & Erika Dunyak with students Maggie McGovern and Matt Elkwood (Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic) - (SEE ATTACHED SLIDES)**

- Food policy possibilities
- Examples from Boston and other cities

These are just ideas, thoughts what other groups/policy councils have done. To get creative juices flowing. What does law have to do with food policy - policies around food safety, farmers, trade, exports, etc. Our work engages with all these different areas.

Today going to discuss food policy overview, food policy ideas from other cities, group brainstorm. Have a guide available for you to see

- What is a food system? - food is interconnected, from growing/production, processing, transport, retail/restaurants, consumers, waste. Each part impacts the other parts.
- What is food policy? - several levels, levels of government. federal/state/local law.
- Who makes food policy? - federal, state, local governments. Each level there are numerous decision makers, congress, state legislator, city council. Agencies at all levels, guiding and implementing those policies. It can be confusing when there is a food related issues to know where to go - where is that problem, where do we go to fix it? There isn't one agency that deals and impacts all the potential issues with food, great to have groups/councils like this to facilitate and be a place to go to make change and find solutions
- Over the last twenty years the number of food policy councils has gone from 1 to 200.

Overview of levels of government - the policy makers

- Federal level - limited authority, regulating state to state food, food labels, farm bill, school lunch program, food assistance program. When the federal government is spending their dollars they can tell us how to spend it
- State level - much more broad implications. Lots of recent food policies have come from city/state governments. Example NYC calorie counts on menus & banning trans fat, both later were adopted at the federal level
- Local government - business licenses, who and what organizations are they prioritizing. Can impact where there are grocery stores, food vendors, urban farms, etc.

Main policy issues:

- Consumer access (economic, retail, transportation barriers). Methods to improve more retail options, increase transportation and increase economic access (SNAP)
 - Baltimore - tax incentives for supermarkets to open in specific neighborhoods that need more food stores, property tax
- Consumer demand - ban of products, more controversial reduces access and hurts businesses, taxes or labeling are other options that affect consumer demand
 - NYC mandates sodium labeling
 - Minneapolis - requirements to have 5 stable produce items and other dairy/egg requirements, at convenience stores

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- Martha's Vineyard - year round food education for K-12 students.
- Farmers markets - linking consumers and producers together. Improving access, also a direct market for producers.
 - Flint, MI - replace wooden tokens with electronic system
 - San Jose, streamlining permitting process for farmers markets
- Procurement
 - Guidelines agencies use when buying food and using vendors - vote with money. Choosing to pay attention to geography, production methods, labor practices
 - Local? Organic? Fair Working Conditions
 - Boston passed city council ordinance on how institutions acquire food
 - Albany CA - food mile limits produce at city events cannot travel x number of miles
- School food and education
 - Eating most of their calories at school
 - DC universal access wherever 40% of kids qualify for free/reduced breakfast (everyone gets it, eating in the classroom)
- Urban Agriculture
 - Row crops, animal agriculture, slaughter
 - Benefits - air quality, community connection, culturally appropriate farms
 - Examples
 - BOS permissive zoning, you are allowed to farm in the city. Some allow chickens and bees
 - Seattle - requires one community garden for every 120 residents
 - Baltimore - lease lands to people who are going to farm
- Food recovery/waste
 - Where can the food go? People, animals, etc
 - NYC - armed health inspectors with packet to educate business owners that they can donate, the protection they get from liability
 - LA - requires business to donate
 - Consumer level
 - Getting people in their homes to limit waste - composting, ex cambridge curbside pick up
 - Consumer education - how to use food in different ways. Date labels

- **Discussion of OFA overlap with BFAC (Catalina Lopéz-Ospina, Mayor's Office of Food Access)**

What the city is committed to doing

- The office changed from food initiatives. Have open the scope of work, because of Mayor's vision
- Trying to create more resilient city and stronger communities.
- Access through three lenses - affordability, physically accessible, culturally appropriate

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- Don't want to limit the scope of OFA and BFAC work
- Mayor's Food Access Agenda was created with the community and stakeholders collaboratively. High level overview
 - Mayor is committed to racial equity in all the programs we are working to implement
 - In the plan you will see a lot of common themes - intentional
 - We want to recognize the shame and destigmatize it
 - Opportunities to work together, city led, city catalyzed, city enabled
- **Q&A**
 - Comment** - We cannot forget about the affordability piece when we are thinking about local/organic. Premium labels might discourage purchasing that product.
 - Question** - Farmers markets and accessibility - Catalina- We are trying to increase the point of access. DTA, HIP incentive program and the previous Bounty Bucks program. There is a lot of work to do to make it more economical and equal across neighborhoods. Emily - These are all a system, people are coming from producer and consumer side. How do we balance these different groups and their needs

Small group discussions, facilitated by Transition Committee members

- **Offer ideas for what the BFAC can do to support food access in Boston**
 - **3-5 things the BFAC should work on; your priorities for this year**
- **Report back to full group**

Group 1

- Food Waste opportunity to city wide composting, JP oscar project
 - Packaging
- Farmers markets could better serve different cultures, tailor their products depending where the market is located
- Entrepreneurship connecting to purchasers. Expanding programs to equitable way
- Families who don't qualify for official assistance, closing the gap
- Role of council - partnership and sharing of ideas

Group 2

- Processing and distribution of food direct to consumer. Private connection like amazon. How to get ahead of them.
- Consumer getting the food they want
- Engaging with real life experience, struggling how we engage them
- Expand HIP program more sustainable, beyond farmers markets
- Disconnection between hunger and consumers

Group 3

- Last mile problem and those most food insecure, homeless population. How do we get them free/ready to eat foods bridging that gap
- Urban agriculture, roof taps and lots. Places with lots of square footage. Composting? Urban farmers can collect that waste/compost
- Streamlining municipal processes/permitting. Getting those permits into the correct people, who want to get involved
- Building agriculture education programs
- Data will play a big role in connecting different groups
- Schools as a driver of education and dc breakfast program.

Group 4

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- School and nutrition
- Food access - financial bridging gap
- Community engagement and equity/justice values

Group 5

- Streamlining city process for permitting/
- Food waste education, already a lot of initiatives out there how do we spread the word
- Community spaces more open and connected
- Urban ag with job growth

Group 6

- Not reinvent the wheel what is already helping in other place or here and how to leverage them further
- Food waste disincentivize, food rescue and redistribution.
- Accessibility, local and affordability of local food. kiosks

History of BFAC

- **Trajectory of Boston Food Policy Council and Boston Food Access Council, 2009 - Today (Liz Miller, Mayor's Office of Food Access)**
- **Transition Committee work (Tara Agrawal, Boston Children's Hospital)**

Skipping in the interest of time. BFAC has been through a lot of phases, hoping this next phase constituents will be driving the work and organizational partners are helping to drive the work. (SEE ATTACHED SLIDES)

Structure of new BFAC (SEE ATTACHED SLIDES)

- **New BFAC structure & Ways to get involved (Leah Triscari, ABCD, & Sonia Carter, Boston Public Health Commission)**
 - OFA and Transition Committee are trying to structure the new BFAC to bring community voices together to guide the next phase of this council in a more inclusive way. Multiple ways to get involved.
 - *General Membership* - Anyone can be a member, just fill out a form. Share with your networks. Voting members = attendance at 2/4 meetings. You will be voting for the steering committee. You will be a voice of the council, impact the direction of the council and drive decisions. You can also work on working groups.
 - *Working groups* - open to all members, research and implementation of programs/advocacy the council decisions as a group to work on. More focused lense, research, agendas, etc.
 - *Steering Committee* - 9 members, 2 co-chairs. Designated seats for community members. Must be a voting member to run. 2 year appointment.

We want to stress working group participation - open to any topics and need the community voice heard.

- **Q&A**

Question - What do you mean community member on steering member? - combination of organizational reps and community / constituent members. Not all organizational representatives

Comment - That's ambition plan - how are you going to do outreach and get community members committed to this?

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Question - can you explain the voting process? - fill out application, providing background what's important to you and what can you bring to the committee. Will develop a pitch and share with voting members. Specific process is TBD

Comment - Regarding outreach, every neighborhood has a liaison to the city. They could that be a good person to run for Steering Committee or get the word out to those that would be interested in running

Comment - Regarding the community member seats on the committee, we also need the organizational representation to get work done and help provide resources to be successful

Question - Do you have any applications yet? No. This group/Council will need to do outreach

Comment - Good for outreach, door knocking to get people connected and have the face to face interaction. We as members need to do the work to get connected and do the outreach, to ensure we have all the possible voices at the table.

Question - Is OFA the leader of this council? No we are not, but the Steering Committee is going to be a leadership role and will need others to lead and push for the work to get done

Comment - Can we do fundraising? Yes, OFA can't be involved

Question - Can we connect to other councils across the country? Yes, Johns Hopkins have a group that helps facilitate those connections

Question - Does the Steering Committee select the co-chairs? Yes

Question - Will city act as fiscal agent for the council? No we cannot play that role. Help with logistics, etc. Plus a lot can be done without a fiscal agent. Structure can shift, leaving a lot for Steering Committee to decide. OFA and other City departments will be non-voting advisors to the Steering Committee.

Comment - Thanking Transition Committee for acknowledging the need for more constituent involvement

Next steps for December 4th meeting

- **Overview of BFAC Membership Form and Steering Committee Application**
- **Steering Committee elections**
- **Outreach**
- **Explore Working Group ideas**