



PHILADELPHIA FOOD POLICY ADVISORY COUNCIL

FPAC May 2018 Executive Session

May 2nd, 2018 | 3pm - 5pm | Municipal Services Building

Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Subcommittee Status Check-In, Executive Committee
3. Farm Bill Update, Kathy Fisher
4. At-risk Gardens Update, Ebony Griffin
5. Open Session
6. Close Meeting

Attendees

Amanda Wagner, Hannah Chatterjee, Mary Pham, Kathy Fisher, Billy Hoffer, Amelia Duffy Tumas, Darrell Wiseman, Cathy Davies, Catherine Bartoli, Khalia Pitts, Jo Fagan, Jen Aquilante, Molly Riordan, Dwayne Wharton, Jessica Moore, Sam Mogil, Annie Preston, Ebony Griffin, Michaela Kupfer, Suzanne Weltman, Ada daCosta, Meghan Smith, Leanne Sullivan, Allison Sure, Allysa Scanlon, Jasper Jones

2. Subcommittee Status Check-In

At the April general meeting, attendees discussed diversity, inclusion, and equity within FPAC. The May executive session meeting goal is to continue the conversation by checking in with the FPAC executive committee on opportunities and challenges at the subcommittee level. FPAC convenes six programmatic subcommittees: Anti-Hunger, Food & Health, Good Food Procurement, Workforce & Economic Development, Urban Agriculture, and Zero Waste. Subcommittee work is driven entirely by its members and meetings are held ad-hoc at the discretion of the chairs, as described in FPAC's bylaws. Currently, all subcommittees meet monthly in various places throughout the city during regular office hours. This is not a required structure. FPAC Co-chair Amanda Wagner and Manager Hannah Chatterjee opened the floor for feedback from subcommittee chairs and attendees on how subcommittee meetings can be structured to be more inclusive.

Suggestions

Some attendees stated that they did not like the subcommittee speed-dating exercise at the beginning of general meetings because chairs are unable to hear other subcommittees' updates. One member suggested that chairs provide updates to the group at-large, rather than break into groups. Another attendee suggested having speed-dating updates available on the FPAC website in addition to including them in the minutes.

The Food & Health subcommittee may meet on weekends or in the evening in a community-based setting to be more inclusive. Currently, many attendees are people who represent institutions and Chair

Dwayne Wharton would like to make the space more accessible to community members, without sacrificing institutional representation. The subcommittee may also offer a public live stream of meetings.

The Food Trust (TFT) is developing a list of community-based organizations with whom to engage. TFT is sending liaisons to meetings to develop relationships with communities. Dwayne also believes that the recent Health Justice Summit at Temple University was a great example of effective community engagement.

One attendee stated that the first step to engaging more with communities is to make them aware of FPAC's work. To do so FPAC needs to develop a robust communications and engagement strategy and convene more public-facing meetings, like Mayoral Forums.

Good Food Procurement (GFP) Co-chair Molly Riordan stated that GFP has elected to temporarily suspend the subcommittee. Molly is the Good Food Purchasing Coordinator for the City and is spearheading the Local Food Economy Assessment. Subcommittee members previously recommended that the City conduct a Local Food Economy Assessment. The Assessment will be completed by September, which is when Molly can report back and bring new issues to the table. Molly also suggested that subcommittees work collaboratively on projects and uplift each other's work. One example is the GFP and Workforce and Economic Development (WED) working collaboratively on a fair labor employer training manual.

Zero Waste Co-chair Linda Knapp was unable to attend the meeting, but provided comments via email. Linda stated that meeting attendance is a challenge for the subcommittee. Attendance is usually from the Zero Waste and Litter Cabinet, Parks and Recreation, and Food Connect. She believes that the topics are important and that people are interested, but that they cannot take time out of their work day to attend. FPAC Coordinator Mary Pham believes that the most effective meetings, with the largest turnouts, occur when the subcommittee chair requests feedback from attendees on a specific topic. For example, a zero waste organization presented its work at one meeting and solicited feedback on stakeholders' needs and potential Philadelphia projects.

FPAC Manager Hannah Chatterjee's main concern is that there are many meetings occurring around the city on similar issues, especially anti-hunger and urban ag issues. The crucial questions are "What meetings need to happen?" and "Why are they happening?" Anti-hunger subcommittee members stated that the meetings are valuable because it's the only group that focuses on hunger in Philadelphia County.

At the end of March, some leaders within FPAC who are all people of color will meet as an ad hoc Equity Working Group. FPAC will report back on this work as it develops.

3. Farm Bill Update

Kathy Fisher led the update. The House released its version of the Farm Bill in March and the bill has passed out of committee along party lines. It will go to the House floor for a vote in mid-May. The Senate has not released its draft bill yet, but the chair of the Senate Ag Committee released a statement on how it will be more bipartisan and will not change the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The most concerning proposals in the House bill are the removal of categorical eligibility, addition of work requirements, removal of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), and addition of mandatory childcare cooperation. Categorical eligibility enables people to be eligible for SNAP even if their income is higher than 130% of poverty.

Kathy suggested attendees call Congressman Evan's office and ask him to vote no on the bill. Advocates should also target Congressman Costello and Fitzpatrick in the suburbs. Registering people to vote is another great way to mobilize potential SNAP advocates.

If the Senate and House bills are drastically different, Congress will create a conference committee. The purpose of this committee is to reach a compromise on the two bills. Kathy is concerned about this possibility and believes that the best case scenario is to pass an extension and delay passing the bill.

4. At-risk Gardens Update

Ebony Griffin led the update. Ebony is staff attorney with the Public Interest Law Center. She focuses on projects that support low-income, historically disinvested communities, and communities of color in advocating effectively for sustainable and equitable neighborhoods. She is also the Director of the Garden Justice Legal Initiative, a project providing pro bono legal support, policy research and advocacy, and community education and organizing to community gardeners and market farmers in the Philadelphia region.

Ebony stated that there has been a huge increase in sheriff sales, which threatens gardens. A sheriff sale is a public auction where mortgage lenders, banks, tax collectors, and other litigants can collect money lost on property. A sheriff sale usually occurs at the end of the foreclosure process when the original property owners can no longer make their mortgage payments.

Ebony believes that the tax lien sale of 1997 is the cause of many issues gardeners face in accessing land today. A tax liens occurs when people do not pay their property taxes. As a means for collecting the money immediately, the City can sell the debt to a third party lender for a lump sum. This allows the City to collect money immediately, but provides the third party lender the option to collect the delinquent taxes from the original owner or put the land up for sheriff sale. Selling the tax debt prevents the City from being able to intervene and potentially forgive the debt or collect less because they no longer have control over the debt collection process.

Advocates are working with the Land Bank and using acquisition and disposition policies to save gardens. Councilman Domb is also pushing for a new tax liens securitization bill. In theory, tax securitization sounds beneficial because it targets people who own empty apartments and are waiting for the value to increase. Garden advocates do not want the bill to move forward as written without exemptions for gardens and open space and protections for tenants in the bill. Domb's new bill is different from the 1997 law because it exempts owner-occupied homes.

When parcels of land are up for sheriff sale, it is difficult to remove them from sheriff sale. Ebony suggested some changes to the sheriff sales process. Currently, the fact-finding or data-gathering phase and the authorization of the sheriff sale occur simultaneously. There should be a two-step process, or a

pause between the fact-finding stage and authorization. Before authorization, City Council should send multiple letters to tenants to warn them of the sheriff sale. Data is fallible, and this two-step process will allow time to remedy situations where land is incorrectly put up for sheriff sale.

The PA Commonwealth Court recently held that a claim of adverse possession could be brought against a municipality when the municipality's only use of the property was to hold the property for possible future sale. Adverse possession states that individuals that have taken care of a parcel of land for 21 years and meets other requirements are entitled to the title of the land. Historically, adverse possession was one approach gardeners could use to secure privately-owned land, but now there is a precedent for people to adversely possess City-owned land, too.

There has not been an opportunity to testify on the Domb bill yet. It may be helpful for the FPAC Urban Ag subcommittee to write a letter in support of changes to the Domb bill that protects gardeners, such as the sheriff sale process change. For more information on advocacy around sheriff sales, please contact [Ebony Griffin](#).

5. Open Session

Action Tank is a group of Philadelphia-area military veterans committed to tackling tough problems by harnessing the experiences, skills, and relationships of service-minded citizens to improve the social conditions of the community. Action Tank member Darrell Wiseman announced that the group will be convening a conference in the fall on food insecurity. If attendees have ideas on topics and who should be invited to the conference, please email [Darrell](#).

Greensgrow will be hosting an event on May 18th and 19th. Attendees can learn about using SNAP benefits to buy plants and seeds. There will also be free workshops, soil lead testing, and cooking demonstrations.

The Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) convenes its annual conference in February. For the first time in 27 years, the conference will be in Lancaster. This will be a good opportunity for urban ag advocates to attend and learn more about statewide sustainable ag initiatives. Email [Jessica Moore](#) to learn more.

The Anti-Hunger subcommittee's City Council Child Nutrition Briefing will be on June 14th. Appointed members are invited. This will be a good opportunity to network with City Councilmembers and constituent services staff.

There will be a hearing on sodium warning labels on May 7th. Hannah Chatterjee will send the testimony to appointed members for a vote.