



Maryland Food System Resiliency Council

Meeting Minutes for Feb 3, 2022

Time Agenda Item

10:00 Welcome - *Secretary Strickland and Heather Bruskin, Council Co-Chairs, welcomed the Council to 2022.*

Roll Call

Wade Haerle moved to accept the minutes of the December 20, 2021 meeting; Nancy Nunn seconded the motion.

Heather Bruskin moved to accept the present meeting agenda; Janice Wiles seconded the motion.

Meeting Schedule

Anna Sierra announced to the Council that the 2022 FSRC meetings will be held on the first Thursday of each month from 10am to noon.

Vanessa Calaban reported on the status of the webinar series. Because there have been more ideas than can be scheduled in a year's time, staff are going to send out a survey asking members to narrow down the proposed webinar topics.

The first webinar will be held on Wednesday 2/16 at 12pm; the presentation and discussion will be on the current state of the regional supply chain and the work that regional partners (Mark Scott from DCHSEMA) are doing to study supply chain disruptions leading to product shortages.

Report recommendations update

Vanessa Calaban provided an update on the status of the non-legislative report recommendations from the 2021 interim report. She reported that while many of the recommendations that did not require funding nor legislation to implement have made advances since November 1, it has been more difficult to tackle the recommendations that do

require funding.

Delegate Lorig Charkoudian made a point of clarification that Council members who are employed by and representing State agencies can not publicly advocate DBM for how funds and spending are allocated; it is therefore necessary for non-state agency personnel who are Council members to take the lead on advocating DBM and the Governor for funding.

Heather Bruskin asked for more information on the timeline for putting together these budget asks; Secretary Strickland clarified that the budget process for state agencies generally begins in late summer/early fall, followed by a DBM budget hearing process and a finalized budget submitted to the Legislature by the end of the year.

Del. Charkoudian clarified that the process for regular agency budget requests is separate from how DBM might allocate any leftover ARPA money, which was the focus of conversation for report recommendations that require a one-time expenditure.

Sydney Daigle asked if it would be possible to convene a meeting to discuss further advocacy; Sec. Strickland replied that apart from the letter that the legislative delegation Del. Charkoudian and Sen. Hester sent, the Council has not publicly supported additional

Netta Squires asked about the possibility of funding from the federal infrastructure bill being used for this purpose; Anna Sierra replied that there are too many unknowns at this point to give an answer, but that those funds would still need to flow through DBM.

Review of 2022 report requirements

Anna Sierra reviewed the Council's upcoming 2022 tasks, including deciding on the long-term structure for a statewide food policy council (including appropriate policy and legislative changes and potential ways to restructure the Council, such as placing the Council within a different agency or organization, or enacting a sunset provision for the Council).

In addition, based on our planning session and gaps identified in our 2021 report, the Council plans to focus on equity and sustainability policy recommendations to increase long-term resiliency of the food system including addressing

and eliminating racial inequities in the food system; addressing and eliminating diet-related public health disparities; addressing and eliminating food deserts; and reducing food waste, increasing recycling, and encouraging other relevant environmental impacts.

10:34 **Legislative Session Update**

Michael J. Wilson and Sydney Daigle, C&C Co-Chairs, gave an update on the status of the multiple bills being tracked by the FSRC. They outlined the process that their subcommittee is following to capture all food system-related legislation as well as the decisionmaking process for supporting, opposing, or monitoring legislation, gathering more information, writing testimony, etc.

Del. Charkoudian explained the FARM bill (support), which contains three of the recommendations from the FSRC report: expanding MMM, farm-to-foodbank grant program, and farm-to-school grant program pilot.

Del. Charkoudian explained the school food waste reduction grant program (through donation, excess food reduction, and compost) (support). The FSRC provided written testimony for this bill.

Anna Sierra explained the other bills the subcommittee has decided to support: healthy beverages for children's meals, on-farm composting, cottage food business revenue cap increase, and the state meat processing inspections task force.

Bills being monitored: Sustainable MD, Urban Ag Incentive Zones, county and district food environment reports, Southern MD Agricultural Development Council funding, UMD ext. urban farmers program

Michael J. Wilson talked about a few items that showed up in the Governor's budget proposal - increase in funding for Summer SNAP, and increase the minimum benefit amount for seniors (62+) from \$30/month to \$40/month.

Sydney Daigle asked the Council to begin thinking about a process to handle budget advocacy and monitoring; Anna Sierra outlined the general budget process and reminded members that although the Council and MDEM don't have the staffing capacity to go through the budget to pick out

food-related items, they are happy to serve as a collection point if others come across line items they would like to track.

Sydney Daigle talked about conducting a legislative equity impact assessment on the bills the Council is tracking and supporting as a means of working toward the FSRC goal of eliminating racial inequities in the food system. Johns Hopkins and UMD have engaged in conversations with FSRC leadership about having public health and health policy students conduct these assessments to fulfill their practicum hours. Anne Palmer and Stephanie Lansing each have professors and/or students in mind who are interested in helping.

11:16 **Food Needs Assessment**

- Mischelle Williams, DHS, presented on the preliminary findings of the joint DHS/MDEM local food needs assessment.
- Anna Sierra showed several of the visuals included in the

11:45 **Council Member Round Table & Updates**