# Whatcom Food Network Planning Committee Meeting

*Planning Committee purpose/function:* Working to build common understanding and facilitate collaborative efforts toward an equitable, sustainable and healthy food system for all.

**Agenda**

Date: 1/11/2019

Time: 10-12pm

Location: Cloud Mountain Farm Center

## Present

Facilitator: Various  
Note taker: Diana Meeks

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| ~~Adrienne Renz~~  Cheryl Thornton  ~~Chris Elder~~  Holly O’Neill  ~~Lisa Sohni~~  Karlee Deatherage  Diana Meeks  Ali Jensen | ~~Kent Kok~~  Mardi Solomon  ~~Rosalinda Guillen~~  Sara Southerland  Pete Granger  ~~Jen Hey, WSU~~ |

Red = DECISIONS

Yellow = ACTION ITEMS

Blue = Opportunities for Collaboration

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| **MEETING SUMMARY:** | |
| **Item** | **Summary** |
| 1) Agenda Review | Agreed upon  Diana let Steering Committee know she’ll be leaving at the end of April. |
| 2) Go Round | See notes. |
| 3) WFN County Rep | Mardi Solomon will be the WFN’s representative. |
| 4) Dec Retreat Follow Up | The Coordinating Team’s proposal was accepted: the main purpose of the network is communication, coordination, and collaboration. Goals will be changed to be called principals. |
| 5) Questions to answer in the coming year | See notes. |
| 6) 2019 Calendar | We will meet monthly for the first part of the year. |

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| **FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:** | | |
| **By when** | **Action Item** | **Person(s) responsible:** |
|  | Sara, Holly, Cheryl will offer some suggestions of folks who might be interested in filling that seat. |  |
|  | Diana will work with Holly to change header and the verbiage on the food system diagram. |  |
|  | Diana to see if the first Tuesdays from 3:30 – 5pm |  |

## PROPOSED NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING:

February Location: Pete’s/SeaFeast Office #8 at The Harbor Mall. 2620 N Harbor Loop Drive  
Agenda Items:TBD

## NOTES

1. **Agree on agenda for meeting**
   1. Agreed
   2. Diana let the Steering Committee know she will be leaving at the end of April to pursue a graduate degree.
2. **Go Round**
   1. Cheryl: Cloud Mountain has officially merged with SC, and we will continue to do what we’ve always done but we’ve merged with an organization that does even more! So we are working on finding clarity and that all are doing what they need and want to do and that this work for orgs. At this point my role is farmer education and incubator, and working with institutional buying and paving the way for opening up markets for smaller farmers, and the WF2S network. Cloud Mountain is totally committed to working with the network. Also applied for the farmer position on the Committee.
   2. Ali: With the Food System Committee I making final decisions today, but want to make recommendations that reflect the full width of food systems sectors. I will come back to all the ins and outs of this for our next agenda item.
   3. Pete: Debbie and I are winding down as we move into retirement. Debbie is handing SeaFeast off to Liz Purdy. I am President of Working Waterfront Coalition, and have been busy. We have a fundraising dinner coming up on February 16th - there is a new Marina Room in the Yacht Club. We had a great sockeye season this year, both for local and tribal boats, the first time in four years and will return to fish again this year. Except for Bristol Bay, Northern runs were not good. Had our annual meeting with Doug Thomas last night, and we talked about a hatchery and education center that might take place, based on a model in AK (Dipack). Idea would be to get as many of the stakeholders together to increase our local fish runs. Wild Seafood Exchange is on February 13th.
   4. Mardi: With Farm To School we’ve had a shift in our funding, WCF is now going to Bellingham Public Schools, so we are now much more Bellingham focused. Central kitchen ribbon cutting happened, and is an amazing facility. We will have a meeting in February to bring farmers in to tour it and talk. They are working on getting it staffed up by February 30th and will serve Sehome and schools Sehome prepped schools for and will then serve the whole district by fall. We are also working on state Farm to School Network and there is a great new website with communities of practice groups and network action teams. http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/.
   5. Holly: Flag the possibility of building out a local program called Farm & Fish to School. Are seeing this pop up in webinars. Pete: Genuine AK Pollok Producers Foundation (located in Seattle), a breaded paddies.
   6. Karlee: Updates from Water Sector – the County is still working in implementing the Hirst fix legislation. Karlee is hosting Greendrinks which will be the first Wed of every month, the legislative session is starting Monday (Sharon Shewmake and Debra Lekanoff are new representatives). ReSources launched a new page on legislative session and their priorities (statewide plastic bag ban, better response to sound oil spills, 100% clean energy bill, and orca related legislation). Northsound Stewards, new citizen science project is also launching.
   7. Sara: Annual Farm to Table Trade Meeting is coming up on February 19th that is for all food producers and creators to connect with wholesale buyers (let folks know!). We are putting together all the publications we do for the year right now (Food & Farm Finder, Wholesale Directory, Culinary Agritourism Map, CSA Farm Guide). The online Food Atlas is going strong so continue to share and if there is an opportunity for you to list the Food Atlas as a resource on your websites that would be great. We continue to see challenges with food business as costs continue to rise. We are seeing now with our ELF data and survey, for the first time since we launched the program ELF participation and actual percent purchased is down. Which isn’t a surprise as costs continue to rise in many ways. Our Food Recovery Initiative continue to grow, we are looking to have more businesses online in 2019.
   8. Holly: One vision is to capture this sharing that is so valuable and share through our communication channels. Will also share a check in with Rosalinda was going to try and be on the committee but because she lives in LaConner couldn’t apply. She was most worried about a trend in major farmland purchasing by foreign government (Saudi Arabia purchased 400K acres of farmland in AZ).
3. **WFN County Committee Representative**
4. Only one WFN Steering Committee applied, Mardi.
   1. The Steering Committee unanimously approves Mardi as the WFN Representative. Mardi is ideal because she has historical perspective with the network, has helped with the CFA since the beginning, and can offer a broad systems perspective.
   2. Ali will be deciding the rest of the seats for the committee today.
   3. No one applied for export farmer position. Sara, Holly, Cheryl will offer some suggestions of folks who might be interested in filling that seat.
   4. The nominations will go to Jack Lowes office today (for County Council on 29th), the first Food Systems Committee meeting will be sometime in Q1. The first few meetings will not be about information gathering, the first will be an introduction to systems thinking / the collaborative approach.
5. **Dec Retreat Follow Up: What is our purpose?**
   1. Review Coordinating Team Proposal: There are two distinct proposals so we’ll address each item separately.
      1. #1: After the December retreat and review of the meeting notes, the Coordinating Team would propose that the Whatcom Food Network’s main purpose is still collaboration and communication. That we work to build common understanding and facilitate collaborative efforts in service to a thriving Whatcom food system.
         1. Mardi: We are missing the coordination piece. Definition = where you are aware of what the others in the food system are doing related to what you are doing and you base your work off of that knowledge. This eliminates redundancy of work happening in the food system.
         2. Sara and Diana – see this as possibly confusing. Confusing coordination with taking action on a particular issue. Could coordination fit under collaboration?
         3. Mardi – no coordination is separate and one of the biggest drivers for starting the network.
         4. Cheryl: The coordination piece has always been the hard sticking point – it is a lofty and important idea and should stay a part of the networks purpose.
         5. Holly –Am seeing that overall there is agreement about the sentiment, and can see finding definitions for each of these words is impoartant, think this would be a good issue to address in agenda item 6, is this a question we could revisit later.
         6. Steering Committee approves this part of the proposal and agrees to revisit precise working and defining definitions later.
      2. #2: The Coordinating team also recommends that we shift and call our goals our principles.
         1. All Steering Committee unanimously agrees.
         2. Diana will work with Holly to change header and the verbiage on the food system diagram.
         3. Sara: Remembering a proposal from the retreat. Do we want to shift our goal headers to match the new Food System Committee to healthy people, healthy workforce, etc.?
            1. Our principals would then be more aligned with Food System Committee
            2. The language would be plainer, more accessible
            3. We leave the diagram the same for now and just get rid of the verb on the goals so that they don’t sound like goals.
            4. We will keep diagram the same for now, will just change the language for the goals to the principals.
6. **What questions do we need to answer in the coming year?**
   1. We’ve defined our purpose, now we need to define for WHO and HOW that happens
      1. What activities best serve our purpose?
      2. Revisit Forums. The why and how and how it fits into the bigger picture and serve our purpose?
      3. How do we define communication, collaboration, and coordination? And how do we effectuate them?
         1. Should we change the diagram?
   2. Membership
      1. What does that mean? Who are they and what are we offering them? Who is a member (public/organization)?
      2. How can we be better connected to larger membership? How can we build connectivity to members?
      3. Structural changes for membership, creating an MOU for membership?
   3. WFN Structure
      1. Who will fill the Coordinator role and where will it live?
      2. Options for short and long term funding?
      3. How should we structure meetings, especially for Steering Committee members so they are valuable and helpful! Some of the sharing that happens here is what feels most valuable about the network and getting together, how can we strengthen and capitalize on this?
      4. EDI
      5. Transparency and democracy
7. **2019 Calendar**
   1. A proposal to meet monthly to work on above questions was put forward
   2. Pete: Those are a lot of questions. Should we have a spring forum?
   3. Mardi: Could we instead have a series of “forums” that were about the network, and about answering these questions with the membership?
      1. Could the food system committee want to use the Forum to gather info? Ali – most likely not. Food System Meeting will meet monthly (and won’t be doing an information gathering for the first few months)
   4. Steering Committee agreed upon monthly meetings for 90mins
      1. February 5: Wed at 3:30 -5 – First Tuesday’s 3:30 – 5pm
      2. Diana to see if the first Tuesdays from 3:30 – 5pm
      3. Pete can host one meeting down at the #8 at The Harbor Mall. 2620 N Harbor Loop Drive