# Whatcom Food Network Steering 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: 3/6/2019

Time: 3:30-5pm

Location: Central Kitchen

## Present

Facilitator: Various  
Note taker: Diana Meeks

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| 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  Debbie Granger  ~~Jen Hey, WSU~~  Amy Esary |

Red = DECISIONS

Yellow = ACTION ITEMS

Blue = Opportunities for Collaboration

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| **MEETING SUMMARY:** | |
| **Item** | **Summary** |
| 1) Agenda Review |  |
| 2) Go Round | See Notes |
| 3) Update From Food System Committee | Had first meeting. |
| 3)Re-envisioning the WFN, continuing the conversation | Discussion about who the WFN serves and what the priorities should be around that. Identified some next steps, will work on finishing this conversation at April meeting. |
| 4) Forum | Finished a rough draft agenda. Ali, Holly, and Diana will continue to solidify. |

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| **FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:** | | |
| **By when** | **Action Item** | **Person(s) responsible:** |
| 3/12 | Work on Forum planning | Holly, Ali, Diana |
| 3/8 | Send out Forum and June Meeting invites | Diana |
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## PROPOSED NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING:

April Meeting: Wed, April 3rd, Coop Baker Conference Room

## NOTES

1. **Agree on agenda for meeting**
   1. Because of the weather/snow we will work to shorten the go round.
2. **Go Round**
   1. Sara: Very successful Farm To Table Trade Meeting last month, about 180 folks attended. We are now putting together our annual publications and Eat Local First Outreach campaign.
   2. Cheryl: Our interns started Monday, 8 new interns, ranging from folks who have some experience to very little. Education room is almost completed, insulated and with a big screen for presentations. We are trying to get things seeded! Planning ahead to working with WWU this year, and the Bellingham School District for Farm to School.
   3. Amy: The Co-op Annual Meeting and Party is Saturday, Feb. 30th at the Co-op. Board of directors voting is now open – members please vote!
   4. Diana: We submitted our 2019 Interim Grant Report it was accepted and the WCF also approved us moving $700 to work with Derrick Rhayn on funding. Applications for my position close this Friday, 3/8. We have had a great response so far. First interview will start next week, final interview will be 3/27 and my replacement will start 4/17. Diana will sit in on first round of interviews, Sara may be there for second, and Chris will attend the final round.
      * 1. We also confirmed that we will have NO May Steering Committee Meeting
        2. The last monthly meeting planned so far will be Wed, June 5th from 3:30 – 5pm and can decided then if you want to meet monthly.
        3. Diana will send out meeting invite
   5. Karlee: Update from water, we are exploring rolling out an app called Water Reporter to engage the community to report pollution or take photos of waterways. Can download it from regular app outlets. In middle of legislative session, next week is a critical deadline to pass bills (either out of the house or senate). To date bills look good.
   6. Holly: Nooksack Native Foods Project is moving along and there is a push to reintroduce camus into the landscape. In the food bank world there has been a lot of conversations about food equity in the County, and we are in a good place of people getting on same page with that. Bellingham Food Bank hosted an event on equity in the food system, it became apparent that the general awareness of what a food system is low and of the WFN is nonexistent.
   7. Debbie: Has an idea to involve young folks she will talk about later.
   8. Pete: Senate Bills 5617 were pushing to do away with all gillnetting in the name of protecting orcas. But in reality gillnetting is so restricted anyways and isn’t really a factor in protecting them, so far the bill has died. Fundraising dinner went really really well for the Working Waterfront Coalition.
   9. Mardi: We have two eco-hip hop events tonight and tomorrow and we are worried about snow. Mataio Gillis is now on staff and is working to find all possible options to make scratch food. The Central Kitchen is looking at how to provide food for summer programs and process summer food here.
   10. Ali: Helped Twin Sisters to apply for grant to expand some of their offerings.
   11. Chris: Climate Impact Advisory Committee still working on updating inventory for County. Agriculture is a vacuum where the only thing that gets calculated is animal related and it doesn’t account for all others. Legislature re-activated the Food Policy Forum after Roundtable crashed, and are working to get a report to the legislature this year.
3. **Update From County Food System Committee**
   1. They had the first meeting, Mardi facilitated. They mostly worked through administrative tasks picking roles and looking at other examples of food system plans in small groups. You can see the Committee’s assigned roles online. They are looking at Douglas County Kansas Food System Plan, Multnomah Food System Plan, WA State Food Systems Roundtable Plan, and some others. The next meeting is March 20th from 4-5:30, 5280 NW Drive. All are invited to attend.
4. **Re-envisioning the WFN, continuing the conversation. Questions to address:**
   1. Who do we serve?
   2. On what audience should we focus our efforts?
   3. Who is our membership?
   4. How much should we involve the public?
      1. Holly: we should maintain the basic membership structure but we should focus on pushing out to get individuals on as members. We should the microphone for the general public for what the Food System Committee is doing. We should push to make our Forums much bigger and more public. And we should do more education about what a food system is at the Forums.
      2. Debbie: Citizens, helping them the importance of food. Working with Taylor Shellfish, and their watershed soup/stone soup idea. Getting every high school’s culinary arts program involved. Focusing on youth. Have them do food for Forums.
      3. Pete: Targeting the schools as a constituency. The general public it would take a lot of work. Present at high schools.
      4. Mardi: The original target audience of organizations that work within the food system is still very pertinent. Making sure that we have a good contact for each of those organizations and making sure they are on the listserv and all our contact groups.
      5. Ali: Having an actionable item for the general public the WFN could offer them. Utilizing subcommittees to cast a wider net might be a good opportunity (school team).
      6. Sara: Our primary audience is still food system related organizations. Second community leaders, third food and farming businesses that care about food system work. We could easily start to go a little wider is to ask our membership to be a little more involved. We ask that our membership help us promote forums. Maybe try to make time once a year to meet with our members. In order to keep momentum going for members we could hold smaller events that happen more frequently (not in place of Forums but in between).
      7. Cheryl: Actionable items is important. We should continue keeping with organizations working in the food systems, it would be good to target those in the organizations that are working on the ground. We could target a few organizations that naturally work well together and leaders and choose them to do a deeper dive with. If we are targeting organizations, who are we targeting in them, who do we need to show up?
      8. Karlee: I would echo others. We predominately serves the organizations, businesses, and people that work in the food system. Should we target citizens? Can see both sides, sometime hearing from them does ground the work. Ditto to what Sara was saying about re-engaging members. Smaller events that could focus on the lesser known pieces of the food system (storm water tours, how does this related to food system?). Would want to see more citizens who would want to be engaged at this level.
      9. Amy: Have been a little bit confused as to who we serve and what the objective is. If we take it back to the communication, collaboration, coordination: would break up the audiences by those categories. We need to look at our goal and then think who do we need to talk too to achieve that goal. It would help to know more laser focused goals around each of those topics and then look at audiences there.
      10. Chris: Maybe we don’t need to increase communication but we need to improve it. How can we do it better? Like what Amy said.
      11. Sara: We have to start with ground level and go from there.
      12. Mardi: Food Bank event was a WWU event – WWU is doing so much. We should have a representative on Steering Committee.
      13. Diana: Maybe we could look at each audience we have and then identify what our goals are regarding communication, coordination, and collaboration for each group.
          1. Steering Committee:
          2. Communication – IE We know what each other is doing.
          3. Coordination –
          4. Membership
          5. Food System Orgs
          6. General Public
   5. Some next steps: Map out target audiences, what we want them to know and do, relative to communication, collaboration, and coordination. Then look at how we can then connect with them. How can we connect with people meaningfully so they are activated and in the loop? Wisdom around starting with where we are and what we have and beefing that up. Western as a possible good first case study.
   6. We don’t have time to go through proposals so in April we will cover those tasks and then come back to this conversation.
5. **WFN Forum**
   1. Diana presented the preliminary draft of the agenda. We had identified three potential speakers. Feedback on the agenda:
      1. Need more time on the agenda to share and digest the information; key questions around how to address the challenges and opportunities that come up in discussion. In our evaluation, we’ve always heard that people do value the networking, and that may inc
      2. 4:25- 4:55 – hold that for people to discuss and reflect. Small round tables really make the break out discussions work.
      3. Group by sector to consider the discussion questions
      4. What is the goal for the forum? If this is one of our primary events, who is our target audience, and what is the main thing we want to get them to understand. When I first looked at this, I saw it as local food consumption and how to increase local food purchasing impacts the economy.
      5. There are other organizations and members of the public we should do more outreach towards. Transition for the teaser.
      6. Climate impacts as a topic for the fall? Processing and Distribution. Derek Ryan – funding for food organizations.
      7. Ali had some additional feedback in terms of the framing of the whole event (“Consumption”) and also regarding the rural county/food insecurity section of the agenda. Holly will get together with Ali and Diana and do some refining, then send back to the Steering Committee for review.