# 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: 4/3/2019

Time: 3:30-5pm

Location: Community Food Co-op

## Present

Facilitator: Various  
Note taker: Diana Meeks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 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  Amy Esary |

Red = DECISIONS

Yellow = ACTION ITEMS

Blue = Opportunities for Collaboration

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| --- | --- |
| **MEETING SUMMARY:** | |
| **Item** | **Summary** |
| 1) Agenda Review | Agreed |
| 2) Go Round | See notes |
| 3) Forum | Signed up for outreach and day of tasks. See below. |
| 3)Re-envisioning the WFN, continuing the conversation | Specific goals for this coming year related to that focus on strengthening communication:   * + - 1. Go over proposals and approve, amend, or deny       2. Get Kerry oriented and happy       3. Get new SC members oriented and happy       4. Look at strengthening membership (do some member outreach and get all contact updated, do a new member form)       5. Listserv aligns and supports communication goal: do more on the listserv.   Proposal:  Item 1 – agreed.  Item 2 - Agree to double SC. Have one rep. from each sector and then another that can be cross sector or have no sector. If any SC member has three consecutive unexcused absences the chair can then bring it to the whole group for discussion.  Item 4: Agreed, meet every other month.  Item 5: Agreed, For item C instead of more public outreach change to do more targeted outreach. |

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| **FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:** | | |
| **By when** | **Action Item** | **Person(s) responsible:** |
| 4/8 | Post Steering Committee updates from the go-round section to the Listserv | Diana |
| 4/30 | Re-read how WFN membership/participation is currently set up, and then come back and see if we want to make changes to our structure who is a member/associate etc. | ALL but Diana will send out most recent orientation materials, or URL to website if we have it clearly stated. |
| 4/8 | Email everyone the folks/organizations they signed up for | Diana |
| 4/8 | Send Promo outreach toolkit to SC | Diana |
| 4/12 | Make sure we have an updated outreach list | Diana |
| 4/12 | Follow up with Karlee to cement Small Group Discussion activity | Diana |
| 4/12 | Contact Annah and Krista for help at Forum | Diana |
| 4/12 | Send out Itinerary and sign ups to Steering Committee | Diana |
| 4/24 | Work with Holly and Chris on intro slides/presentations | Diana |
| 4/12 | Share language about absentee meeting members | Ali |
| 6/5 | Revisit Proposal item #4 for consensus/total clarity for a new meeting structure and membership/participation rules. | Steering Committee |

## PROPOSED NEXT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING:

**June Meeting: Wed, June 5th, Sustainable Connections**

## NOTES

1. **Agree on agenda for meeting**
   1. Agreed
2. **Go Round**
   1. Mardi: The Co-ops Annual Meeting was wonderful. Patrick & Jessica presented on the Good Food Promise. They have designed a five week menu cycle where there are no repeat with local ingredients and whole foods throughout. Mataio Gillis is now working for BPS Central Kitchen on staff. They are also doing taste tests for Shuksan dinner program and at different schools, and WF2S has been doing menu surveys with public and kids. Launched the Bellingham Public Schools Foundation Good Food Fund, to raise money for all things farm to school, getting more healthy food into school meals and education. State Farm To School Network is alive and well and they are planning for regional meetings across the state.
   2. Karlee: The water forecast came out and it looks like there is drought potential for this summer. There could be challenges with water for farmers and salmon. DOE has some open houses scheduled in regards to Hirst fix. DOE is going through rulemaking and are sharing their findings with public. April 22 meetings in Lynden and Ferndale. Portage Bay was recently re-opened for commercial shellfish harvest, first time it’s been open in four years. Legislative session is still going on, Senate and House budgets were released last week and they are rectifying. All orca legislation has passed. Truth About Plastics Symposium on April 27th at WCC.
   3. Sara: Successful Farm Share Fair at Boundary Bay, we have new 2019 Guides to CSA Farms. This Sat is the first Bellingham Farmers Market of the season and we will be there with the new 2019 Food & Farm Finders. We are focusing outreach efforts in Skagit to spread Eat Local First to Skagit restaurants. We have a Farmer Chef Meet & Greet on May 8th. Yesterday we had a meeting in Skagit with NW Ag Biz center, CMFC, and other to look at opportunities increase markets crop plan, market plan, and connect around packaging preference. First goal is to find 10 key crops to increase sales of across our region.
   4. Amy: AMP was this weekend, bulk sale on 4/13, Garden Days and compost days happening and Master Gardeners will be tabling here 5.4.
   5. Chris: State budget, had applied for match funding for 3 easements for PDR program and all are fully funded. They have a newly created budget for forest land easements and will be applying for two of those. We have our Natural Resource Newsletter printed, please grab a copy. For the Ag Advisory Committee we are doing an update to the rural study areas and are tracking permit history and land use change to demonstrate how things have been shifting and we have lost 500 ag acres in ag zone and 400 acres outside the ag zone. Am working on follow up from that data on how we fix what’s happening. Climate Committee is still ongling, we do GHG inventory, and for the ag related GHG inventory all that is tracked is gas related to cows. Don’t think this an accurate representation of GHG emissions in ag and we are looking at how to better report on this.
   6. Diana: Kerry has been hired; there will be a two week crossover time with me. June 5th – we can re-assess how often to meet.
   7. Lisa: Quarterly we update and maintain food and meal resource guide, this will come up in April. Outlines all hunger relief agencies hours and info. Basic food and SNAP “able bodied adults” challenges at Federal level continue. WCHD has been working on food access and childhood obesity program, population in greatest need are migrant farmworkers. They are struggling to connect and bring these services to this population. Maple Alley Inn, grants to fund this program are hard to come by, most food grants that support hot meal programs have an expectation that each meal costs 2.00 or less, this makes it really hard to provide healthy fresh meals. I’ve been grappling with this, how do we make a case that this doesn’t make sense, we need to think about this from a health care perspective, shift focus from providing a meal to being a part of the healthcare stream. If anyone sees any helpful resources or info please send them my way.
   8. Ali: COB is looking at banning non-compete clauses in grocery/retail in order to prevent food desserts in vulnerable areas. DOH is exploring funds to do healthy funds in early childhood centers.
   9. Cheryl: Farm is busy! We are taking interns to Central Kitchen to speak with Patrick and Mataio about what buyers want. We are still working with WWU to get local producers into Aramark, CM got through all the hoops and now they are excited to work with PSFH. Another project happening in Lynden with the Lynden Fair Board of Directors to rebuild and are building a huge educational food system learning center. Will house WSU scientists. Am helping develop food lab, should be open by time fair happens. Have been talking more with Food Lifeline, out of Seattle, to learn about how we work with growers to increase more access to fresh local food.
3. **Update from Food System Subcommittee**
   1. Food System Committee met, talked about four different food system plans. Went well. Next meeting is 4/17, 4-5:30 at the Ferndale Library.

1. **Spring Forum**
   1. Outreach – each SC Member to pick 10 people off of the list (passed around the table)
      1. Diana will email everyone the folks/organizations they signed up for
      2. Diana will make sure we have an updated outreach list
   2. Diana will send us a promotion toolkit with easy cut and paste messages to promote; phone calls followed by an email work best
   3. Sign up for DAY
      1. Sara – speed networking set up
      2. Mardi – Welcome table and set up
      3. Lisa – set up food and drink
      4. Amy – set up and timing presenters
      5. Krista – photos
      6. Steering Committee that will help with Small Group Discussion
         1. Farming: Annah from Cloud Mountain
            1. Diana to contact Annah separately, send info/instructions
         2. Land: Chris
         3. Fishing: Pete
         4. Labor: Rosalinda or Sara
         5. Processing & Distribution: Amy
         6. Consumption: Ali
         7. Waste – Mardi
         8. Water – Holly
      7. Diana to follow up with Karlee to cement Small Group discussion:
         1. a few questions for reflecting
         2. ending on whats your personal action item
         3. hand out evaluations at beginning
   4. Remaining Forum tasks:
      1. Diana to send out Itinerary and sign ups to Steering Committee
      2. Work with holly and chris on intro slides/presentations
2. **Re-envisioning the WFN, continuing the conversation. Questions to address:**
   1. Continuing the conversation we started last month we’d like to present a model used for co-ops called the Participation Pyramid. You can’t move up the pyramid until your base level needs have been met. The people at the top are your true believes. For us our pyramid looks like (from top down) CT, SC, members, associate members, organization member supporters and staff, and the public on the bottom level.
      1. Rule of thumb is you can’t force people to go up pyramid you can only make it easy to move up.
      2. With this model in mind we have some ideas:
         1. Focus on coming year with just strengthening communication. Make sure our top three levels of the pyramid (CT, SC, and Members) know:
            1. That the WFN exists/what we do
            2. The existence of FSC
            3. What a food system is
            4. And awareness of initiatives that are strengthening the food system
      3. We assume that coordination and collaboration will improve once this first goal is met.
      4. Specific goals for this coming year related to that focus on strengthening communication:
         1. Go over proposals and approve, amend, or deny
         2. Get Kerry oriented and happy
         3. Get new SC members oriented and happy
         4. Look at strengthening membership (do some member outreach and get all contact updated, do a new member form)
         5. Listserv aligns and supports communication goal: do more on the listserv.
      5. Goals for year 2:
         1. Select and drive initiatives as per the food system plan. Having initiative will drive energy in the SC.
         2. Make steering committee meetings awesome. We are really strengthening the collaboration and communication component of what we do.
            1. Have some meetings just focused on collaboration and coordination = Collaboration & Cocktails. Open these meetings up to members. Make it a good party!
      6. Reviewing the Proposals (see below for proposals):
         1. Item one: Definition of terms. Agreed
         2. Item two: Expand steering committee:
            1. Do we really want to expand?

Ali: One meeting a year could be a membership meeting

Yes, agreed.

* + - * 1. Do we want to do it by sector?

This is a tough question. Makes sense to expand an include some folks that don’t fit into a sector or for folk here who don’t fit perfectly.

Cheryl: Like idea of getting away from sectors – it allows you to think more freely about how we each fit into each.

Sara: It would be great to have an institution that is a buyer, more community influencers at the table.

We think of the Steering Committee as being representatives from organization members.

Businesses aren’t currently allowed as members.

Holly: We started this because we didn’t want folks to join just to promote their business.

Change to businesses can be associate members?

Holly: Have everyone re-read how the organization is currently set up, and then come back and see if we want to make changes to our structure who is a member/associate etc.

Sara: Perhaps we could keep sectors, try to have one member for each sector and then have another person who could be multi sector or not from any specific sector

Karlee: Each steering committee member update could also include important happenings across the sectors they work in, not just the one their from.

Could also think about representation across demographics or geography.

Chris: Absent Steering Committee members: Have three consecutive unexcused absences the chair can then bring it to the whole group for discussion. Someone will call member in question before the conversation. Ali will share language.

* + - 1. Item three: Steering
         1. Changes to Steering Committee meeting Structure:
         2. Sara: Have a report out about engagement added to the structure of the meeting. If our goal is to do more targeted engagement then it would be nice to share engagements with organizations/folks we’ve reached out to on behalf of the Network
         3. Start doing Collaboration & Cocktails
         4. Diana: I think we need to revisit this, I don’t remember there being consensus/total clarity for a new meeting structure.
      2. Item four
         1. With meeting frequency it seems to work a little better the more we meet.
         2. The more we get our goals defined the easier it is to meet more frequently.
         3. Lisa: Am small sliver of one sector and others don’t come into play with what I do, struggle with this work and how we can participate and add to the conversation. Willing to do more meetings but struggle.
         4. Ali: If we could commit to using Listserv more frequently don’t need to meet as often. But need to see that that actually happens. Could Coordinator send out weekly reminders to Steering Committee?
         5. Chris: We should stick with every other month. We could always skip August. Agreed.
      3. Item five
         1. Agreed.
         2. Sara: For item C instead of more public outreach do more targeted outreach. Have each Steering Committee members reach out to their networks and contact.

**Proposals Regarding Re-envisioning the Whatcom Food Network**

**February 5, 2019**

*In January, we asserted that the WFN’s purpose is: Increasing communication, coordination, and collaboration among food system-related organizations, agencies, and institutions.*

**1. Definitions of these terms:**

* 1. Communication is sharing information.
  2. Coordinationis having awareness of each other’s work and making decisions about one’s own work with that knowledge in mind.
  3. Collaboration is working together toward a shared goal.

1. **Build the WFN Steering Committee into a robust group with two members from each sector in order to increase the depth of communication, coordination, and collaboration across the food system.**
   1. The Steering Committee, when fully realized, would have 18 members (two each from land, water, farming, fishing, labor, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste).
   2. This would create a natural pipeline for Coordinating Team participants.
   3. Another benefit is if someone can’t attend a meeting or needs to step off the Steering Committee, there would still be another person representing that sector.
2. **A basic agenda for future Steering Committee meetings would be:**
   1. Half of the time spent sharing updates (communication & coordination) with a special focus on opportunities for collaboration
      1. Everyone plans their check-in in advance
      2. There may be a specific question for everyone to address at each meeting
   2. Food System Committee report with attention to opportunities for WFN involvement (e.g., gathering information, implementing projects)
   3. Hot topics needing discussion (possible future Forum topics)
   4. Forum planning
3. **Reconsider the frequency and timing of WFN Steering Committee meetings, either:**
   1. Every other month with the Coordinating Team meetings on the off months
   2. Monthly for several months and then a break for a couple of months
4. **Increase communication and public engagement by:**
   1. Increasing the number of people signed up on the listserv
   2. Posting to the WFN listserv more often
      1. WFN member organizations can post on the listserv. Remind them to do so.
      2. WFN Affiliates (i.e., members of the public not associated with a WFN member organization) can receive listserv posts but cannot post themselves.
      3. Listserv could be used as a place to post/re-post Food System Plan updates.
   3. More public outreach for Forums to increase attendance