

# Whatcom Food Network Steering Committee Meeting

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

Date: 1/12/21

Time: 11am–12:30pm

Location: Virtual Zoom Mtg

## Present

Facilitator: Ander & Miik

Note taker: Kerry Eastwood

Kerry Eastwood Rhys-Thorvald Hansen Ali Jensen Cheryl Thornton Gavin Willis Elma Burnham	Ander Russell Sean Hopps Miik Wells Kent Kok Becky Snijder van Wissenkerke
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Red = DECISIONS

Yellow = ACTION ITEMS

Opportunities

FOLLOW-UP ITEMS:		
By when	Action Item	Person(s) responsible:
1/15/21	Send guiding q's in between meetings for us to reflect on to create more continuity between work sessions of the group.	Ander
1/31/21	Research conflict discussion/resolution facilitation tools to be more prepared.	Ali and Kerry

Decisions:

- 1) Have guiding q's in between meetings for us to reflect on to create more continuity between work sessions of the group.

## NOTES

- 1) Welcome & Agenda review/finalization (see link to [agenda](#)).
- 2) FSC openings (processing/distribution, labor, farming, and fishing, and WFN rep) Last meeting recap. <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/1585/Current-Vacancies>
  - a) Need a liaison between WFN and FSC.
  - b) Last FSA was 2017 and so we're doing the important and exciting work of updating this assessment right now.
  - c) Sean is applying for the Labor position because representation is so important. We want to share and partake in opportunities political. Important that FUJ be the labor rep on FSC.

- d) Liaison would have more decision making power (voting power) than the coordinator positions do.
  - e) Responsibilities include meeting once a month in normal times. Probably won't meet every month in summer months.
- 3) Impressions from last meeting
- a) Conflict – in the best-case scenario, it's can be an opportunity and highlight things that need attention – good lens to keep in mind as we go forward.
  - b) Biggest issue is when one WFN member attacks another WFN member. We need to address this.
  - c) In the next three month how can we set more clarity around the work that you want to do. May need a ½ day session to deep dive into this.
  - d) Taking ownership in the investment – what capacity can you come up with to make this work happen and reaffirm the value of this work. Participation is a part of that ownership.
  - e) Collection of wants, connection of all our actions across the network. Where do our needs overlap and conflict. Needs some attention.
  - f) Trajectory is what how who. Get clear on the what. Before you get lost in the weeds of how. Each sector might do the how differently but if we are all clear on the what we are headed in the same shared direction. Who breaks down the practice piece of who is going to lead each particular charge that is agreed upon – leverage talents, experience, strength.
  - g) In between time, would be key to come up with some guiding questions about how to approach your individual sector in framing your actions and work around a share goal of WFN. What are the obstacles, what's going wrong, what is it that we want to happen instead? Connect with the present instead of focusing on the past or the future.
  - h) What's happening? What do we want to have happen? What do we need to do to make that happen?
  - i) I like the idea of **having some guiding q's in between meetings for us to reflect on to create more continuity between work sessions of the group.**
  - j) What's happening in the country affects the county, your constituents. If you're not honoring your humanity, your not honoring yourself.
  - k) We've all had to adapt, it helps me to know that someone else is thinking outside the box. That we don't get stuck in this current that just goes round and round. How can we as a group think about and honor thinking outside the box in a different way. I get worn out going round and round and round. We need help doing the think outside the box and keep that as a focus.
  - l) Is it that we don't want to do this process the same way as before.
  - m) Can we ask questions in a different way so that we don't get stuck in the same route. It will help us move quicker and more seamlessly if we ask ourselves questions to check ourselves and think differently.
  - n) There is a tendency to over-process in groups like this. But there is also a desire for concrete action in this group.
  - o) There's the concrete of planting the seed and tilling the soil, the impact of that I'm not sure if I can track. In social equity work, some of the impacts are not concrete of social and emotional processing.
- 4) Committing to core values
- a) What do you want to do that's different than now??

- b) C2C cannot collaborate with WFN without knowing what we represent and stand for. WFF has attacked C2C and personally – I'd like to ask Gavin some questions:
  - i) Who posted the FB post?
  - ii) Please take it down (if not you, who has the authority?)
  - iii) Take 'Protect farmerworkers' page down on WFF
  - iv) I believe the values represented by WFF do not match WFN values
- c) Sean's is asking:
  - i) WFN to assert values
  - ii) WFF to make changes to communications to reflect the WFN values
- d) What is Sean hoping to be the outcome of a convo with Gavin – if we do, then that's valuable to the WFN group. Is it important that WFN SC as a whole be a part of this conversation
- e) WFN SC needs to be involved because WFN SC needs to decide what they do when one SC member attacks another, and what WFN values are.
- f) Sean thought that WFN was a policy advocacy network. Values are stated. The real important thing right now is that we participate in the rebuilding of our food economy post-pandemic. We see opportunities to address issues of social equity and justice in this rebuild and want to be a part of it in the best ways possible. What is the impact we are trying to have? C2C wants to be involved if the goals align with ours. We want fairness, equity and to share the power.
- g) National situation is affecting our own community. We can absolutely apply the lessons we are learning in our micro-universe. I'm hopeful about collaborating with the WFN, but the participation of WFF who is attacking C2C is making it hard to commit to WFN collaboration.
- h) The group votes to address this now.
- i) In some previous meeting had talked about trying to find ways to resolve conflict in groups that disagree. Would be useful to have conflict discussion tools to be more prepared. [Ali and Kerry will research]
- j) If you said that WFF is working to counter the WFN core values – I don't see any values that disagree. We may disagree about how to reach those values. To say that we are actively subverting the values of WFN is incorrect.
- k) Listserv provides a vulnerability and a tripping point where the WFN is not able to move forward.
- l) Asking WFF to take down the protect Farmworkers now tab.
- m) WFF represents farmers – responding to false claims made by C2C about working conditions on farms about what's happened in the past.
- n) How are WFF and C2C to collaborate?
- o) If WFF wants farmers and farmworkers to be harmonious, it seems like having WFF collaborate with C2C makes a lot of sense to achieve that. Farmworkers deserve to have representation just as much as farmers.
- p) Lack of advocacy ability/capacity in WFN – what do we share when we are not in conflict?
- q) Difference of opinion within the group – if it doesn't relate to the values of the network than it doesn't matter. If it has relevance to the values of WFN, then it matters. If FUJ decided to say something against the values of WFN, it should be called into question. Each membership org's actions should be consistent with the values of the network.
- r) Moderating the listserv so that posts have to be approved before they go out would be really good.

- s) Difficult to navigate the conflicts, or filter posts, without having framework for what is ok and what is not. The other side of creating more processes is that we will need more capacity to enact them.
  - t) Difficult to do something in service of justice without having the principles in place. Especially on a timeline that works for folks involved.
  - u) Unequal land access and policy between C2C and WFF. While both may feel attacked, when we think about equity, it's not about being equal, but rather equity. Farmworkers lead on what farmworkers need in terms of safety, pay, and health. Farmworkers and farmers need to work together, but farmworkers know best what they need. There is unequal power in our country and in our food system. I hope that the network can help bring equity to this issue – remove the barriers that farmworkers are up against when they are trying to get what they need.
  - v) Clarity around what the values are. That's the what. That brings us to how. Can we collaborate and participate in the whole is greater than it's parts. What does that look like in the dynamics between individual orgs and sectors?
  - w) Create clarity around what do we mean when we say equity, etc.
  - x) Accountability – we won't know what to do in these instances of conflict unless we have the framework of how to respond. How – are we going to go for full collaborative participation, or do we leave space for some disagreement.
- 5) Follow-up guiding Q's: [Ander will send to SC]
- a) What are we doing?
  - b) How are we doing it?
  - c) Who is leading that?
- 6) Next meeting agenda
- a) What do we do when one member/org on the SC attacks another member/org on the SC?