

NWMI Food and Farming Network

Business Meeting Minutes 4/19/17

***In attendance:** *Heather Ratliff* of Cherry Capital Foods, *Bill Palladino* of Taste the Local Difference, *Carol Danly* former Americorps VISTA for FFN, *Scott Smith* of the Local Food Alliance, *Rod Robinson* of the Agribusiness task force, *Maddy Baroli* Americorps VISTA for FFN, *Kelly Lively* of Cherry Capital Foods, *Tasha Lapinski* of Baker College in Cadillac, *Meghan McDermott* of the Groundwork Center, *Sharron May* of the May Farm, *Elise Crafts* of Networks Northwest, *Vic Lane* of Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, *Josh Stoltz* of Grow Benzie, *Jen Harris* of Crosshatch, *Valarie Handy* of USDA Rural Development.

***Grant Updates:**

- Josh Stoltz
 - Rotary Charities has awarded Grow Benzie \$41,000 for accessibility improvements to their property. Connecting all of the components of Grow Benzie (hoop houses, kitchen, bee area, compost area etc.) with paths and educational signage. Some money going toward collaborative food prescription program which is kicking off again on May 14th.
- Sharron May
 - Some Rotary money has been allocated for projects under the Lakes to Land Regional Initiative.

***Policy Updates:**

- 10 Cents a Meal
 - Passed through the senate appropriations committee with a commitment of \$250K, house committee gave it \$0 but there is still potential for negotiation and increase.
 - ACTION ITEMS:
 - Go to 10centsmichigan.org and email your legislators
 - Attend in-district meetings to express your support in person (meeting times also found on website)
 - Share the website and Facebook page with your networks and on social media
 - facebook.com/TenCentsMichigan
 - 10centsmichigan.org

- Farm Bill 2018- Field hearing in Lansing happening in May, date not final.

***Task Force Updates:**

- **Local Foods Sales**, Tricia Phelps
 - Shared 'Why Buy Local?' infographic that touches on the social, economic and environmental reasons to buy local food. Everybody wants a poster. It will be a two page spread in the TLD magazine.
- **Farm to Institution**, Kelly Lively
 - Task force will be working over the summer break on more community action materials similar to the FFN action toolkit.
- **Agribusiness Generation**, Rod Robinson
 - Task force will be working over the summer break on food system infrastructure database.
- **Farmland Resources**, Brian Bourdages (absent)
 - Farmer to Farmer web platform for farmland sales and job opportunities to be launched in late May.
- **Food Access**, Meghan McDermott
 - Shared final version of 'Healthful Food for All' resource guide funded by mini-grant. Highly collaborative project with tons of great food procurement and preparation info- printing and distributing in the near future. Summer Groundwork fellow will be working on specific area food assistance directory inserts to include in the guide.

***Mini-Grants:**

- 2016 Mini-grant Report
 - Maddy shared her comprehensive report on the eight mini-grant projects that the FFN funded in the spring of 2016. A snapshot of mini-grant recipient survey results are also included. Both the report and the full results of the survey are posted on the FFN website 'Documents and Publications' page, found under the 'Resources' menu:
foodandfarmingnetwork.org/documentsandpublications
- Everyone was in agreement that we should replicate the mini-grant program, so let's keep our eyes out for potential funding opportunities!

***Sharron May and Valarie Handy, Community Development Specialist for USDA:**

- The rural development sector of the USDA supports farmers indirectly by providing lending and financing for rural infrastructure. As community development specialist, Valarie listens to the community, brings partners together and provides technical assistance.
- Sharron and Valarie shared a document of the SET (Stronger Economies Together) agribusiness objectives and strategies, looking for overlap of action items and abstracts for projects that Valarie can seek funding for. This document can be found along with these minutes on our website meeting minutes page.

***General Updates and Summer Plans**

- **May 17th Study Session**
 - Our May study session is your chance to tour a protected farm and learn more about the tools of farmland preservation from local conservation professionals.
 - <https://www.facebook.com/events/1334029326664732/>
- **Leadership changes**
 - We are looking for a new co-chair(s) for the network! Bill Palladino will be stepping down. The new co-chair would be part of a distributed leadership model where work is distributed amongst task force leaders and the network's Americorps VISTA member. Please share within your networks.
- **End of the year potluck** Wednesday June 21st, details to come
- **Summer plans**
 - Grow Benzie '*Bayou in the Barn*' at St. Ambrose July 7th
 - Groundwork opening new office space in Petoskey, open house date likely happening June 15th
 - '*LivelyLand*' happening on August 26th, Texas musicians meets Michigan musicians!
 - Order of next year's study sessions to be released in August