

San Francisco Food Alliance Meeting
September 17, 2003
San Francisco Children's Council

Introductions:

Leah Rimkus (San Francisco Food Systems Council), Fernando Ona (Department of Public Health), Larry Bain (Jardinière, Acme Chophouse, Next Course), Paula Jones (San Francisco Food Systems Council), Kate Clayton (Berkeley Food Policy Council), Chris Bedford (Humane Society, Iowa), Sraddha Mehta (Department of the Environment), Dyeshia Sampson (San Francisco Food Systems Council), Earl Hampton (San Francisco Food Systems Council, Hunters Point Community Youth Park), Cheryl Magid (San Francisco Children's Council), Zoe Rossing (Healthy Children's Organizing Project, San Francisco Food Bank), Hung Dang (San Francisco Food Bank), Karen Heisler (CSA Advocate), Rajiv Bhatia (Department of Public Health), Ilana Bar-David

Presentation by Kate Clayton, Berkeley Food Policy Council (BFPC)

- BFPC formed in Spring of 1999
 - Assemblyman (now mayor) Tom Bates was one of the driving forces
 - Original composition was very different from what it is now – more visible “big players” working at the top level rather than the community-based organizations and concerned residents that make up the majority now
 - Received a three-year USDA grant to start up Food Systems Project
 - Formal MOU with Public Health Department, playing an advisory role to the Department
 - Two-hours of staff time provided by each – the Health Department and by BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self Sufficiency, a local CBO)

- Membership
 - Email list has 110 people (including policymakers)
 - A year ago there were about 25 active members
 - Currently there are about 10-15 active members
 - Group is proud to have no formal, legal or highly politicized status – doesn't want to be a 501C3 or tied to any specific agency – but rather a real community group
 - Agencies aren't a part of the council, people are

- Writing the Berkeley Food Policy
 - Based off of Toronto's and the Berkeley Unified School District's food policy
 - Working group of 8-10 people
 - Most of the writing done by the two people providing paid staff time
 - Open meetings in restaurants for group to read, revise, wordsmith
 - Took about 8 months total to complete
 - Main barrier to getting policy adopted was City Manager's Office, not the policymakers
 - Policy does not include any mandates since these are too hard to enforce (e.g. fair-trade, shade grown organic coffee mandate), but it has still been a powerful tool in creating a broad common vision and in influencing city planning

- BFPC Actions/Accomplishments
 - Passed the Berkeley Food Policy
 - Wrote grant to start Farm Fresh Choice project in South/West Berkeley with the Ecology Center as the fiscal agent
 - Advised on zoning, open space, gardens in City's revision of the General Plan
 - Started an inventory of vacant/available land in Berkeley
 - Collaboration with the City Department of Parks, Recreation and Waterfront on a range of issues such as future edible public parks and food served in after-school/summer programs
 - Exploring supports for corner markets and liquor stores to increase quality and quantity of fresh produce
 - Creation of a resource guide on local food and a true cost of food flyer

- Recommendations and ideas coming from the conversation
 - Consider accessibility of group if email is the only communication mechanism
 - Consider making personal phone calls to recruit and sustain connections
 - Consider having guest speakers at meetings every month or every other month to generate interest among people who wouldn't normally come out to meetings
 - Consider going to other San Francisco groups' meetings (giving presentations, making announcements) to make the SF Food Alliance more accessible
 - Consider hosting a big public forum to educate and generate interest among people from all different sectors of the food system

Discussion:

- Group discussed questions such as the following:
 - What is the purpose of the Alliance? Who are we missing? What will bring people here?*
 - Faith-based community
 - Profitable business and commerce
- Group showed concern about the intangible nature of the SF Food Alliance and commented on the need for more concrete activities to take things off the page and make it more inviting for others to participate.
- Group showed concern around recreating the work of other food policy councils and the San Francisco Food Systems Council as well as the SF Sustainability Plan in drafting a mission, vision, goals, etc. for the SF Food Alliance.
- Group decided to come up with a Target Issues list of areas or “most compelling issues” that the SF Food Alliance might focus energy on in the first year [see below]. This list might help determine who we recruit to be involved, who we bring in as speakers, how we organize strategically and how we publicize or talk about the group.
- Staff voiced that meetings should not be repetitive – constantly reviewing the background of the SFFSC, projects the SFFSC is working on, participants' “why” for being at the meeting.
- Staff voiced that the group might consider changing the name of the SF Food Alliance since there is a well-established national group called the Food Alliance.

Target Issues identified from group brainstorm:

Yam vans (mobile produce trucks into low-income areas as job-training/enterprise)
Farm-to-school salad bars
Filling the SLUG void
CSA in every faith-based organization
Food assistance (i.e. food stamps, WIC coupons) accepted at farmers' markets
Increased utilization of food stamps
Increased utilization of the School Breakfast Program
Locally-grown, sustainable label
Promotion of the regional food labels that already exist
City land for food production
Public Benefits Zoning for rooftop gardens
More involvement from county extension office
Development of a market in Bayview Hunters Point
Produce stands in more neighborhoods
Cooking classes and lessons
Educational campaign

Next Steps:

- Next meeting will be in mid-October
 - The goal of the next meeting is to prioritize the Target Issues list into 3-4 areas that the Food Alliance wants to organize around in year one.
 - Specific location is to be determined but possible sites are the Children's Council (445 Church Street) or Acme Chophouse (Pac Bell Park).
- Subcommittee (Zoe and Karen, with help from Leah) will review the SFFSC Strategic Plan and comment on the relevance of the plan to the Food Alliance. Subcommittee will review documents from other food policy councils to draft some initial language around the purpose of the SF Food Alliance.
- SFFSC staff will put together an issue brief or communication piece outlining the high priority areas on the Target Issues list, as well as some FAQs regarding the SF Food Alliance and its current structure.
- Current members of the SF Food Alliance will commit to **recruit three new people** to come to the next meeting.

Announcements:

- The Department of the Environment has an RFP out for Environmental Justice projects in Bayview Hunters Point and Potrero Hill for which proposals are due September 30th.