

San Francisco Food Alliance Meeting
October 23, 2003
San Francisco Children's Council

Introductions:

Leah Rimkus (San Francisco Food Systems), Karen Heisler (EPA), Zoë Rossing (San Francisco Food Bank), Larry Bain (Jardinière, Acme Chophouse, Next Course), Suzanne DuMont (Jardinière, Next Course), Sara Miles (St. Gregory's Food Pantry), Cheryl Magid (San Francisco Children's Council), Sue Trupin (Sustainable Agriculture Education), Sebastien Bacharach (Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council), Stacey Parker (Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council), Kat Sawyer (formerly with SLUG), Sraddha Mehta (Department of the Environment), Amy Zavora (Haight Ashbury Neighborhood Council), Tatiana Graf (Next Course), Susana Hennessey-Lavery (SFDPH Tobacco Free Project), Dyeshia Sampson (San Francisco Food Systems), Paula Jones (San Francisco Food Systems), Nan McGuire (San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance), Rajiv Bhatia (Department of Public Health), Bu Nygrens (Veritable Vegetable)

Presentation by Nan McGuire, San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance (SFGSA):

- SFGSA was formed in March of 2001
 - Group met monthly for the first two years and then moved to quarterly meetings
 - First year consisted of much strategic planning (mission, vision, etc.)
 - Staffing
 - Nan volunteers much of her time for the Alliance (about 50% time)
 - SPUR gives about 25% time from one person
 - SF Beautiful gives close to 25% time from one staff person
 - Other organizations have put in time and technical assistance
 - Membership
 - Database (email list) has about 160 people
 - About 25-30 people attend the quarterly meetings
 - About three very active members
 - Committees
 - Making the case – research around green schoolyards and related student, school and community outcomes
 - Technical assistance (most active) – gathering resources, pursuing DoE grant, administering mini-grants, producing workshops
 - Expanding the scope – advocating inclusion of schoolyards in school bond, fundraising to match Prop A money
- SFGSA “Growing Greener Schoolyards” Conference (Fall 2002)
 - First “ambitious” major project of SFGSA
 - Co-sponsored by SPUR, San Francisco Beautiful
 - 200 people attended Friday night program
 - 150 people attended workshops at three different school sites (5 workshops/site)
 - Hands-on project at each site, building and beautifying the host location
 - Will have another conference again next year

- SFGSA Advocacy around school bond
 - SFGSA discovered SFUSD was revisiting its facilities master plan and worked to get money allocated for greening school yards
 - Showed up at all board meetings to speak during public comment period
 - Lobbied school board members and won support from Jill Wynns & Emilio Cruz
 - Hired a consultant who prepared a paper making the case for greener school grounds and affects on students' health, building design, community involvement
 - Succeeded in getting \$2M from the \$250M bond earmarked specifically for greening the school grounds in the 13 elementary schools targeted
 - SFGSA will have to match the \$2M via outside fundraising in order to reach out to other schools not listed and to include a community organizing component
 - Proposition A requires 55% of the vote to pass in November

Presentation by Karen Heisler and Zoë Rossing, SF Food Alliance Organizational Issues:

- Follow up from discussion at last meeting around the structure of the SF Food Alliance
- Reviewed the San Francisco Food Systems' strategic plan, imagining that the mission, vision, and goals of the SF Food Alliance would be the same as those listed in the plan
- One of the six goals listed in the San Francisco Food Systems' strategic plan is "Mechanisms for community participation" – creating strong community participation and representation
- It seems the purpose of the SF Food Alliance merits its own mission and vision
- San Francisco's situation is unique and different from Berkeley's because it is anchored within SFDPH and has private foundation support – a public/private hybrid
- Thematic concepts and phrases to include in vision/mission statements
 - Participatory membership, active membership, engagement
 - Sustainable collaboration
 - Commitment to consensus in decision making
 - Community involvement and leadership
 - Will evolve ideally forever
 - Exist as a reliable presence in the community
 - Welcomes debate on food systems issues
 - Enhance the work of the group and of each individual agency represented
- *Question: Is this a group which comes together in a decentralized fashion for networking and advocacy or is this a group which plans to undertake its own project (requiring funding and leadership)?*
- *Question: Still unclear about organizational relationships between the SF Food Alliance, San Francisco Food Systems, and SFDPH*

Follow-up discussion around the role of the SF Food Alliance:

- After the presentation, Rajiv clarified some of the questions around the SF Food Alliance and the group followed with comments and questions as to the role of the SF Food Alliance. Several of these comments are included below.

- The SF Food Alliance was initiated by San Francisco Food Systems - an independent project of SFDPH and San Francisco Foundation which formed in 2002. The Alliance has the support of a part-time staff coordinator from San Francisco Food Systems for two years. San Francisco Food Systems, with SFDPH, is able to provide support (e.g. facilitating communication and meetings, writing grant proposals and other communication pieces, working within local government) for the SF Food Alliance. Still, the Alliance is here for the community to own and to build.
- The role of the Alliance is to function between San Francisco Food Systems' vision, mission, goals and the community.
- If the role of the Alliance is to create strong community participation and representation, maybe it is not worth everyone's time to go through the entire vision-making process again.
- Perhaps we could revisit the role of the Alliance and San Francisco Food Systems every six months or every year. It will become more evident what this group is able to do over time.
- Any organization in its infancy needs to build on its successes. Organizational structure, funding, and staffing decisions seem a little premature if there are resources available now.
- We need a uniform, understandable way to introduce and talk about the Alliance.
- Summary statement from Larry Bain
 - "The Alliance reaches out to all people and organizations that are working to create and maintain an equitable food system for San Francisco in order to coordinate and support their endeavors. The Alliance will be the forum to raise critical issues and imminent threats to our work and devise collaborative efforts to meet these challenges."
 - The Alliance is a "network" for strengthening the work of each individual member and for pushing collectively towards a similar vision of an equitable and sustainable food system.
- San Francisco Food Systems is dependent on the SF Food Alliance to bring urgent issues from the community to the table and the SF Food Alliance is dependent on San Francisco Food Systems to bring these issues downtown to City and County government.
- Some basic process-oriented homework assignments for the Alliance to determine
 - Ground rules for membership
 - What kind of decision-making process
 - What to do if/when conflicts arise
 - How to record decisions and keep a history

Discussion and prioritization of target issues in local food system:

- *Question: Is there a value or an anticipated outcome for prioritizing the local food system issues we have identified? (e.g. formation of committees, drafting action plans, etc.)*
- It would be helpful to educate the group first around some of these issues – have a presentation perhaps from outside experts and then actions steps that people can do, both individually and as a group.
- *Question: What criteria determine if it is a priority area?*
 - Short-term
 - Winnable
 - Local

- After grouping similar items and discussing the above criteria, the following five issues were selected as priorities:
 - Food assistance (food stamps, WIC, senior coupons) at farmers' markets
 - Farm-to-school salad bars
 - Increasing the utilization of community supported agriculture (CSAs)
 - Starting a market, produce stand, or veggie van in Bayview Hunters Point (as well as other low-income areas)
 - Cooking classes and lessons
- The following issues were tabled for a future date since they were found to be long-term or not likely to be affected by local policy
 - Underutilization of Food Stamp Program
 - Underutilization of School Breakfast Program
 - Education and promotion around locally and sustainably grown food
 - More involvement from UC Cooperative Extension
 - City land for food production
 - Public benefits zoning for rooftop gardens

Next steps:

- San Francisco Food Systems would like to convene a working group sometime in November to further discuss and define the structural issues of the SF Food Alliance including the ground rules, decision making processes, mission, vision, and leadership.
- The next meeting of the SF Food Alliance will be in early December.
 - Specific location is to be determined but possible sites are the Children's Council (445 Church Street) or the San Francisco LGBT Center (1800 Market Street).
 - At the next meeting, we will have a mini-presentation (10-15 minutes) on each of the five issues identified as priority areas:
 - Food assistance at farmers' markets (Paula, Dyeshia)
 - Farm-to-school salad bars (Leah)
 - Increasing the utilization of community supported agriculture (Karen)
 - Starting a market, produce stand, or veggie van in Bayview Hunters Point as well as other low-income areas (Sue, Larry, Sara, Bu, Kat, Sraddha, Susanna)
 - Cooking classes and lessons (Larry)
- Cheryl will talk to UC Cooperative Extension regarding the services and assistance they can provide specifically in San Francisco.
- **You** will get in touch with Leah if you have any feedback around the purpose, mission and vision statement for the SF Food Alliance.
- **You** will get in touch with Leah if you would like to be a part of the SF Food Alliance structural working group.
- **You** will recruit new people to come to the next meeting.

Comments and suggestions voiced by meeting participants:

- Check with the group to ensure it is OK to go over the allotted meeting time (8:00).
- Assign a group member(s) to bring food at the next meeting.