

**MINUTES**  
**LINN COUNTY FOOD SYSTEMS COUNCIL**  
**Thursday , September 27 , 2018**

The Linn County Food Systems Council meeting called to order at 9:00 A.M. in conference room 3A/3B at the Jean Oxley Public Service Center, 935 2<sup>nd</sup> St. SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Co-chair Schramm called the meeting to order

**ROLL CALL:**

**PRESENT**    Laura Seyfer, At-Large, Co-Chair  
:                Rachel Schramm, Linn County Public Health, Co-Chair  
                  Sofia Mehaffey, Horizons, Secretary  
                  RaeAnn Barnhart, ISU Extension  
                  Linda Gorkow, HACAP  
                  Lynette Richards, Feed Iowa First  
                  Joe Stutler, At-Large  
                  August Stolba, Feed Iowa First

**ABSENT:**    Chris Thoms, At-Large  
                  John Huntington, Food Distribution/Processing  
                  Emma Johnson, Grower/Producer  
                  Pam Oldham, Medical Provider/Registered Dietician

**STAFF:**      Mike Tertinger, Linn County Planning and Development, Staff  
                  Jill Mathey, Secretary  
                  Jessie Black, Secretary  
                  Jake Kundert , IVRCD  
                  Les Beck, Director Planning and Development

**Approval of Minutes**

Motion by Richards, seconded by Gorkow and carried, all members present voting yes, to approve the July 26, 2018 LCFSC minutes as submitted.

**Monthly Budget Report**

There were expenditures of \$0 during August, leaving an operating budget of \$4000 as of August 31, 2018.

## **Strategic Planning Meeting (Part I) with guest facilitator Scott Koepke**

Koepke introduced himself and gave a brief history of his food systems-related background. He explained his objective of facilitating the FSC meeting as leading a candid conversation on what FSC work plan should look like heading into 2019 and how the group can help prioritize said work plan. Koepke suggested procurement at the institutional level should be top priority.

Koepke said Linn County, plant hardiness Zone 5A, has much more potential for food growth than just corn and soy beans. Instead of outsourcing food, Koepke suggested diversifying crops and growing more small grains, nuts, fruit, specialty legumes, etc.

Koepke explained that landowners are not willing to take the risk of diversification without contracted buyers.

Koepke said he would like to bring guests to future meetings for purposes of public and institutional outreach.

Koepke asked the group for a list of things that have helped Food Systems Council.

1. Gorkow said Snap at the Market
2. Mehaffey mentioned quarterly supervisor meetings and also the Photovoice project with Iowa Big; largely possible because of collaboration with Food Systems Council.
3. Schramm said idea sharing
4. Tertinger added Eat, Grow, Share

Koepke also asked the group for a list of challenges the Food Systems Council has encountered.

1. Mehaffey stated the volunteers are busy with other things
2. Gorkow mentioned the work plan and high turnover rate of FSC
3. Barnhart said the group needs to be more informed and educated in order to better influence policy

Barnhart suggested revising work plan and removing some objectives. The group then discussed options of either revising and condensing work plan or re-creating it entirely. Schramm and Gorkow suggested re-creating work plan entirely.

Beck wondered if the council could run their own grant program. The group discussed various funding options and suggested more networking in order to obtain more funding resources.

Barnhart explained the need for more shared data within the council in order to be more impactful across the community. She gave an example of useful data, stating that there are eight dairy farms in Linn County, one of which is goat, the others cow. All seven dairies generate 19.7 million dollars of economic activity annually. Barnhart suggested such data could play a big part in Food System Council's impact within the community.

Koepke reinstated Barnhart's suggestion of gathering more data, starting with putting together a comprehensive list of landowners in Linn County. Richards agreed, stating that gathering more

data would allow for landowners to understand the benefits of diversification from corn and soybeans.

Tertinger mentioned all county landowner information is public and easily attainable.

Koepke suggested the council sponsor an event to educate the community about benefits of diversification and issues within our food systems. Beck wondered how FSC can be involved in current similar events. Koepke responded by saying he knows several people who could make it possible.

Richards brought up an example of one issue within the current food system, uniformity of appearance; a local farmer, who was growing broccoli and cauliflower for Hy-Vee, is no longer doing so because Hy-Vee sells by the head and if the vegetables did not meet Hy-Vee's sizing standards, they were deemed unsatisfactory and donated to Feed Iowa First, thus, not as profitable for the farmer.

Gorkow added that in one quarter, HACAP received 70,000 lbs. of produce that was rejected from U.S. Foods.

Koepke explained that Hy-Vee has been involved in previous discussions, acknowledging their lack of effort to purchase more locally grown produce.

Koepke opened discussion on amending organizational guidelines for Food Systems Council. Tertinger asked if the group if requirement of two forums each year was necessary. Mehaffey, Schramm and Gorkow stated the forums were unnecessary, Stolba suggested reducing from two to one, but not remove completely. Tertinger and Beck advised they would amend guidelines and update FSC. No need for motion.

Stolba suggested the council members each create a sheet of data they find impactful before next meeting in effort to educate.

Tertinger proposed the council use the next full year to gather data and learn more about food systems. Kundert and Beck both explained that obtaining more data would aide in the council's proposals for funding down the road.

Barnhart suggested the council look into the definition of "local food". Koepke said the term "local" is very controversial and also suggested the term be defined.

Beck asked if the council was willing to take one full year to learn. He questioned if it would be a better idea to take a year to learn, then prioritize the work plan, or prioritize the work plan while learning. Koepke said the council would have trouble prioritizing before educating, implying the group take a year to learn and gather more data prior to prioritizing the workplan. The council agreed.

Koepke asked the council what they want to be educated on. The group discussed and agreed to come back next meeting with a few ideas of what exactly each member would like to learn more about.

Barnhart mentioned wanting to learn more about commercial market barriers, local growers, consumer perspective and producer perspective.

Schramm suggested working with NewBo or Metro Economic Alliance to learn more about the economic development side of food systems.

Koepke mentioned inviting someone at the institutional level of procurement to a future meeting, to educate the council on the institutional side of food systems.

Koepke requested each member of the council recruit new members, or guest speakers, to further education of group.

**Meeting adjourned at 1 1:00 AM.**