

## **Council Meeting Summary Monday, August 22, 2005**

### Council Members in attendance:

Elaine Brown, Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems  
Michael Hamm, Michigan State University  
Mitch Irwin (Chair), Michigan Department of Agriculture  
Mattie Jordan-Woods, Northside Association of Community Development  
Cheryl Kobernik, North Star Organics  
Jane Marshall, Food Bank Council of Michigan  
JoAnn Merrick, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality  
Justin Rashid, American Spoon Foods, Inc.  
Todd Regis, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 951  
Dennis Sykes, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth  
Dennis West, Northern Initiatives  
Todd Wickstrom, Heritage Foods USA  
Carol Wolenberg, Michigan Department of Education

### Public in Attendance:

Melinda Curtis – Select Michigan Detroit, Ken Dahlberg - Western University, Dana Debel – Governor's Office, Christine Lietzau – Michigan Department of Agriculture, Ameer Miller – Allen Neighborhood Center, Marla Moss - Michigan Department of Education, Joan Nelson – Allen Neighborhood Center, Ken Nye – Michigan Farm Bureau, Betsy Pash – Michigan Department of Community Health, Christine White – Michigan Department of Agriculture, and Irma Zuckerberg – Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

Mr. Irwin called the meeting to order at 10am and welcomed the Council Members to the Michigan Food Policy Council. Mr. Irwin introduced Dana Debel, Environment and Agriculture Policy Advisor to Governor Granholm. Ms. Debel explained the charge for MFPC, the development of the Council and the importance of the Council's work to the Governor. Mr. Irwin then asked all those present to introduce themselves, as there were several new Council Members and public attendees.

MFPC staff member, Kristin Brooks, introduced Joan Nelson, Executive Director for the Allen Neighborhood Center, for the Food Stories Presentation. The Food Stories session will be repeated at each Council Meeting in order to highlight the successes and challenges of various initiatives throughout the state. Ms. Allen provided background on the Allen Neighborhood Center (ANC) as a community development and resource organization. ANC now hosts a community farmers' market with the ability to accept Food Stamps through the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, a service and accomplishment few farmers' markets have been able to meet. Ms. Nelson said that ANC is happy to share their model with any interested parties. She recommended that developing a state-level information clearinghouse detailing the rules and regulations

that impact the development and implementation of farmers' market and the options for accepting food stamps would be extremely helpful for others interested in doing the same.

Ms. Brooks then introduced Christine Lietzau, MDA Select Michigan Coordinator, and Melinda Curtis, Select Michigan Detroit, for the Select Michigan presentation. Reviewing the Select Michigan program is a goal specified in Executive Order 2005-13. Ms. Lietzau explained that Select Michigan is a Governor's Initiative that started in 2003 and now focuses on educating consumers at large retail outlets on the benefits of purchasing Michigan products. The program predominantly works with fruit and vegetable commodities. With limited grant funding, the program has been successful in boosting sales of Michigan produce often at higher prices benefiting the partnering retail outlets and the farmers. Ms. Curtis described many of the partnerships Select Michigan has built with retailers, commodity groups, farming coalitions, and media personalities. Ms. Lietzau highlighted that grant funding runs out at the end of 2005 and that the state has not provided funds for the program. In the future, Ms. Lietzau would like to see Select Michigan housed in MDA as an information clearinghouse for regional efforts throughout the state.

After lunch, Mr. Irwin invited the Chairpersons for Task Forces A, B, and C to give reports on their first meetings. Jane Marshall, Chairperson for Task Force B: Improving Access to Fresh and Healthy Foods, presented first. Ms. Marshall went over the Executive Order goals and Objectives the Task Force has decided to investigate. Council Members proposed that since access to fresh and healthy foods is often just as difficult in rural areas as it is for urban areas, improving access in rural areas should also be a priority. Other Council Members suggested it would be helpful to investigate incentives and disincentives that affect the use of electronic food stamps at farmers' markets and to also keep in mind that a barrier to fresh food consumption is often inconvenience of preparation. Council Members accepted the general direction of Task Force B.

Cheryl Kobernik, Chairperson for Task Force C: Promoting Michigan Foods, presented next. Ms. Kobernik described the Executive Order goals and Objectives the Task Force has decided to investigate. Council Members suggested adding a numeric goal to the objective regarding Michigan foods in state correctional facilities. Council Members also discussed the level of specificity of the Objectives and Activities for each Task Force. Some were concerned that many should be more specific in order to better meet the overall goals in the Executive Order of supporting Michigan agriculture and farmers, particularly small and medium sized farms, improving access to at-risk populations, and increasing economic activity across all food-related sectors of the state.

Mitch Irwin, Chairperson for Task Force A: Expanding food-related Businesses and Jobs, presented next. Mr. Irwin briefly summarized the Executive Order goals for Task Force A, which will focus on a wide-range of economic opportunities across the food system. Mr. Irwin described the structure of the activities and recently completed research by the MSU Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources for use in

the Task Force. The Task Force decided to investigate ethanol production in the state as one part of its work because it affects the food system and economy. A member of the public noted that there are opportunities to convert the waste stream to energy, which could positively affect both energy and food prices and opportunities for locally sustainable food and energy systems.

Mr. Irwin adjourned the meeting after no further public comments were requested.

The next Michigan Food Policy Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2:30pm at Constitution Hall in Lansing.