Food Policy Councils

Presented by Mark Winne, Food Policy Council Project Director, Community Food Security Coalition – mark@foodsecurity.org, www.markwinne.com, www.foodsecurity.org

- **Mark Winne was the executive director of the Hartford (Conn.) Food System (1979 – 2003)**
- **Co-founder of the City of Hartford Advisory Commission on Food Policy and the State of Connecticut Food Policy Council**
- **Provider of technical assistance to over 100 emerging and developed food policy councils, networks, and coalitions**
- **Member of Santa Fe Food Policy Council**
- **Author of *Food Rebels, Guerrilla Gardeners, and Smart-Cookin' Mamas* and *Closing the Food Gap***

Why Have Food Policy Councils?

- "No major famine has ever occurred in a functioning democracy with regular elections, opposition parties, basic freedom of speech and a relatively free media (even when the country is very poor)." Amartya Sen, Nobel Laureate
- "Decisions on important matters should not be made by one person alone. They should be discussed with many." Japanese Buddhist Constitution, 604 AD.

Food Policy Councils (FPCs) Complement the Work of the Private and Public Sectors

- **The "3-Ps" of effective community food system work: Projects, Partners, and Policies**
- **The private (for-profit and non-profit) and public sectors have developed numerous food and farm projects, programs, businesses, and services at the state and local levels**
- **Partnerships have been forged to improve networking, coordination, and collaboration**
- **But local and state public food policies have not been fully engaged to promote a just and sustainable food system. This is the primary task of FPCs.**
- **Food Policy: The actions and in-actions of all levels of government that influence the supply, quality, price, production, distribution and consumption of food**

FPCs: What They Do and How They Operate

- **No state or local government has a "Department of Food"; FPCs can be a de facto Dept. of Food**
- **They serve as a food system planning venue for nutrition, health, food security, natural resources, food production, and the food economy**
- **Membership: representatives from an area's food system: government (local or state), academia, community, farmers and gardeners, food banks, restaurants, retailers, and faith communities**
- **They work to coordinate and focus numerous government functions –around local or state food system concerns**
- **FPCs tend to be advisory; they address local/state food regulatory, budgeting, legislative, programmatic, and administrative functions**

FPC Operation (cont'd)

- **FPCs can work across (synergistically) government lines; they look for intersections between programs at all levels**
- **Conduct public education and awareness campaigns: promotion of local food buying or obesity reduction initiatives; conduct community food assessments and other research**
- **Organizational: FPCs created by state statute or local ordinance, an executive order, or may be independently organized**
- **Non-profit groups often conduct grass-roots advocacy to create FPCs; may provide staff, funding, and other resources**
- **FPCs may link to other local efforts such as an obesity reduction coalition or a mayor's office of sustainability**

What Do We Know about FPCs?

(based on recent FPC survey by Food First and CFSC)

- **Over 100 FPCs in North America (only 12 in Canada)**
- **75 FPCs contacted for the survey; 39 FPCs responded: 7 state, 17 county or multi-county (regional), and 14 city**
- **A small number are joint city/county FPCs**
- **About 50% of FPCs have no staff; 40% have less than 1 FTE; 10% have 1 to 3 FTEs**
- **Most (60%) of state FPCs are part of gov't; some (20 to 40%) of local/county FPCs are a part of or have a strong connection to gov't**
- **Between 8 and 28% of FPCs have no funding; between 16 and 50% receive some gov't funding; Foundations fund about 25% of FPCs**
- **Federal sources of FPC funding: Community Food Project Competitive Grant Program and Center for Disease Control**

Types of Networks

- **Cooperating**: Low risk to members; little chance of systems change; can model best practices, test ideas, convene problem-solving sessions
- **Coordinating:** Low to moderate risk; better chance of systems change; can push organizational boundaries; engage in activities requiring greater mutual reliance
- **Collaborating**: Moderate to high risk to members; best chance of systems change; methods in place to resolve conflicts; pursuing long-term system creation; radical shifts from past operations

Kansas City Story

- Origins: Grew out of 2007 Healthy Food Policy Forum sponsored by Health Care Foundation and KC Healthy Kids (non-profit) – original focus was Farm Bill. Led to more forums, strategic planning, and FPC
- Organizational type: Independent FPC that operates under the auspices of KC Healthy Kids; its jurisdictions include 9 counties in 2 states (MO & KS)
- Leadership: Beth Low – Staff; Gretchen Kunkel, KC Healthy Kids; Health Care Foundation; BC/BS; KC Ctr. For Urban Ag, U. of MO Ext.
- Research: Conducting CFS with surveys, focus groups, collection of existing data, and GIS mapping

KC Continued

- Community Participation: Has 21-member steering comm. Comprised of 17 specific slots, e.g. emergency food, community gardening; recognizes need for geographic and sector diversity
- Big Break: Farm bill kicked off community wide discussion that led to FPC and commitment of KC Healthy Kids
- Issues and Outcomes: Hiring staff; Prepared several policy briefs; modernization of KC ag. zoning ordinance; co-hosted Food Policy Summit; conducted food issue survey of candidates for 2010 election; integrating food issues into other initiatives: Building a Healthier Heartland, Climate Sustainability Center

Muscogee (Creek) – Food Policy Focuses on Healthier Foods

Contact: Rita Williams at 918-759-1891; info@mvskokefood.org

- First Native American Food Policy Council – Tribal Resolution 10-079; 9/25/10; there are nearly 150 local and state FPCs in N. America
- Food and Fitness Council to promote farming, gardening, hunting, traditional foods, food sovereignty, healthy eating
- Partners: HIS, Health Div., Tribal Leg., Exec, and Judicial branches, Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative, farmers & ranchers
- Initiative of MFSI which also empowers producers, promotes sustainable agriculture and seed-saving, and youth programs

Innovative Food Projects in Tribal Communities

- Tohono O'odham (AZ) – bringing back native food production
- Santo Domingo Pueblo (NM) – mobile grocery story ("MOGRO")
- Navajo – Native American farmers' markets, farm training for youth, bringing irrigation to 900 acre Red Willow Farm (450 families)
- Alaskan natives working with state food policy council to protect and restore subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering

Baltimore Story

- Origins: Initial research and advocacy by John Hopkins' Center for a Livable Future; 2008 Mayor creates task force; hires Food Policy Director and task force becomes Food Policy Advisory Committee in 2010
- Organizational type: housed within city planning dept. but paid by a community foundation (501c3); goal is to make position city funded
- Leadership: City Planning Office and JH Ctr. For Livable Future; funding through several foundations
- Research: Task Force had research focus; it was preceded by a neighborhood food desert and health disparities assessment; Balt. Food system mapping; city farmers; market assessment

Baltimore Continued

- Community participation: 45 people sit on the Baltimore Food PAC for 1 year; their purpose is to advise the Food Pol. Dir.
- Big Break: Press Conf. with Mayor announcing the FP Dir. garnered major media (CNN, CBS, NPR) which increased funding and community support
- Champions: People in City Planning, Health and at JH Ctr. For Livable Future
- Issues and Outcomes: Expanded "virtual supermarket; created FM coalition and secured EBT at 3 FMs; proposed zoning changes to enhance urban farming; major public awareness increase which is being used to leverage several diet-related health initiatives

Two State FPCs – NM & CT

- Origins: both formed after 2 years of organizing and research
- Organizational type: NM independent with strong ties to people in state gov't; CT created by state statute and members appointed by legislative leaders
- Leadership: NM – Farm to Table (non-profit); CT – Hartford Food System (non-profit
- Research: Comm. Food assessments; inventory of state gov't food programs; community forums and white papers
- Community participation: Both prepared booklets that required interviews with dozens of community members
- Big Break: NM – Passage of legislative resolution; CT – focus on farmland loss and initiatives to address it
- Champion: NM – Secretary of NM Dept. of Ag; CT – Chairman of Legislative Planning Committee
- Issues: see following slides

FPC Actions and Accomplishments…a sampling

- **The New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council: Created school nutrition rules governing use of competitive foods; developed and expanded a farm to school program; expanded funding for farm enhancement grants (new farm marketing and value-added enterprises); currently working on a new economic development initiative to address the lack of high quality grocery stores in "food desert" rural counties; addressing state procurement policies**
- **Cleveland/Cuyahoga County FPC: Instrumental in securing zoning changes that protect community gardens, urban farms, and raising of chickens and bees; expanding urban agriculture through use of city economic development funds for such enterprises, and promoting use of city/county purchasing for locally grown food; working with Case Western Reserve University and Oberlin College to buy local food**

FPC Actions cont'd…

- **Missoula, Mont. FPC working with county land use board to direct development away from prime farm and ranchland**
- **Boulder County FPC working with county government to develop a plan for the sustainable agriculture use of 25,000 publicly-owned acres of farmland**
- **Fresno, CA food policy coalition worked with city planning office to secure zoning changes to protect farmers' markets and protect community gardens; also included significant food-related components (farmers' markets, community gardens, supermarkets, and protected farmland) in a plan for annexation of 9,000 acres**

FPC Action cont'd…

- **City of Hartford FPC worked with city WIC agency to improve service delivery that restored WIC caseload to 10,000 from 6,000 persons; conducted public transportation study that led to the creation of a new bus route that connects the city's lowest income residents to new supermarkets;**
- **State of Connecticut FPC conducted major public education campaign regarding loss of the state's farmland that resulted in the development of $30 million per year in state funding for farmland preservation, a farm to school initiative, and farm viability grant program; coordinated and improved the delivery of nutrition education services that were previously operated independently by 5 separate state agencies; developed a plan that brought the EBT program to most of the state's farmers' markets; currently working on the development of new livestock slaughter and processing facilities**

FPCs in the Pipeline

- **City of Seattle and King County working on creation of a food policy council as part of the area's larger sustainability initiative**
- **Salt Lake City FPC is the "food expert" on the newly formed Mayor's Office of Sustainability**
- **San Francisco has announced a new region-wide sustainable food initiative that includes a FPC**
- **Los Angles recently announced the creation of a FPC**
- **Legislation to create a Massachusetts Food Policy Council recently passed**

FPCs – Opportunities and Challenges

- **With limited resources and occasional resistance from large food and agriculture groups, FPCs have demonstrated the ability to identify, and secure important local and state policy gains**
- **Their comprehensive focus – from food security to sustainability – often makes FPCs the only place where systemic and coordinated local or state food system work take place**
- **Given the enormous complexity of the food system, the number of stakeholders, and the vast array of local, state, and federal food and farm programs, well-staffed and adequately resourced local and state food system planning, educating, and coordinating entities have become an increasing necessity**
- **FPCs should receive additional financial and training support to expand their numbers and effectiveness, and to ensure a just and sustainable food system for all**

Lessons Learned

- Relationships count; cultivate them
- Be inclusive of wide range of interests
- On conflict – work for consensus; foster climate of robust debate, and don't expect to take on the oligopolistic forces of multi-national agribusiness
- Educate the public and policymakers constantly
- Public education and information is a powerful tool
- Look for synergy between all levels of gov't
- Don't worry, it takes 20 years.

Resources

- Community Food Security Coalition/Food Policy Council Project: Mark Winne, (505) 983-3047; mark@foodsecurity.org; www.foodpolicycouncil.net.
- Connecticut Food Policy Council (Linda Drake), www.foodpc.state.ct.us
- Planners Commissioner Journal, No.63, Summer 2006; www.plannersweb.com
- Progressive Planning, (No. 158, Winter 2004); www.plannersnetwork.org
- New Mexico Food & Agriculture Policy Council (Pam Roy – (505) 473-1004); www.farmtotable.info
- Dane County Food Policy Council (Madison, WI); www.countyofdane.com/foodcouncil
- National Association of Counties – "Counties and Local Food Systems." www.naco.org
- Portland-Multinomah FPC: Matt Emlen (503) 823-7224; mattemlen@ci.portland.or.us
- Lessons Learned Report on FPCs: http://www.foodsecurity.org/pubs.html#fpc