



Food System Committee

Monday, April 8, 2024

1:00-4:00 PM

in-person

Minutes

Members Present:

Name	Sector	Present
Margaret Gerard	Local Sales Farming	
Nikki Oleson	Processing/Distribution	X
Sierra Crook	Food Access	X
Noelle Beecroft	Nutrition/ Public Health	X
Sean Hopps	Labor	X
Trevor Gearhart	Natural Resources	X
Rhys-Thorvald Hansen	Whatcom Food Network	X
Paul Burrill	Fishing	
Rob Dhaliwal	Export Sales Farming	X

Others Present: Dakota Stranik

Call to order: Rhys-Thorvald started the meeting at 1:05 pm. Group got into pairs and talked about their top hope for the Food System Plan.

Land Acknowledgement

Determination of Quorum

Quorum

Approval of minutes

Nikki motioned, Noelle seconds, all approved.

Review purpose and functions of the Food System Committee

Rhys shared the purpose of the Food System Committee, per the Ordinance:

The purpose of the Whatcom County food system committee is to draft, implement, provide oversight for, and regularly update a county-wide food system plan to strengthen our local and regional food system. (Ord. 2018-058 Exh. A).

They then shared a summary of functions of the Food System Committee, per the Ordinance:

- Conduct stakeholder outreach
- Assess current assets and challenges
- Create a report on the state of these challenges
- Identify prioritized actions
- Identify funding needs
- Identify specific time frames for decision making and completion of implementation
- Oversee the implementation of these action items
- Review implementation programs for effectiveness

- Update Community Food Assessment at least every 3 years

Determine an Organizing Structure

Rhys facilitated a conversation about how the committee should be organized and proposed a couple of options:

- Create a taskforce/working group for each goal
 - Minimum of two FSC members on each task force, joined by community partners.
 - Each task force would lead on functions for drafting, reporting, aggregating community information for reports, prioritizing recommendations to council, etc.
 - Each task force responsible for using the equity toolkit and collecting data.
- Create subcommittees for core purposes/functions
 - Some of the functions listed earlier in the meeting would be owned by subcommittee.
 - Data Committee, Oversight and Reporting Committee, Stakeholder Engagement Committee are some examples.
 - Community members could participate in these subcommittees.

Rhys also invited any possible other options. Most of the members present preferred the task force option, but the group did have a further discussion about funding. Ultimately, the committee decided to create task forces around each Goal.

Assigning roles within organizing structure

The Goal Task Forces will have the following responsibilities:

- Reporting to the Food System Committee (each meeting will have 30 minutes allocated to task force updates).
- Conducting stakeholder outreach to community and government advisory committees (ie Ag Advisory Committee).
- Recommend funding requests for FSC to bring to the County Council, as well as staffing and resources.
- Identify and communicate external funding opportunities for implementation.
- Track intersection of this goal with other goals.
- Autonomy for how each goal area functions.

The task force break down is as follows:

Goal 1: Equity	Goal 2: Water and Land	Goal 3: Economy	Goal 4: Food Access	Goal 5: Climate
Rhys (Lead)	Trevor (Lead)	Rhys (Lead)	Noelle (Lead)	Trevor (Lead)
Sean	Rob	Margaret	Sierra	Rob
	Margaret	Sean		Nikki
	Nikki	Noelle		Sierra
	Dakota (non FSC)			

Creating a workplan for the next 12-18 months

The committee discussed each month over the next 18 months and what the high level goals are:

2024

April- FSC meeting

May- FSC meeting, task force meetings

June- FSC meeting, report to council

July- FSC meeting, community report out

August- no FSC meeting

September- FSC meeting, quarterly report to Council

October- Annual workplan development (flesh out) at FSC meeting, Retreat (goals/measures development)

November- FSC meeting, community report back between 11/1 and 11/15

December- no FSC meeting

2025

Jan- FSC meeting, report to council: funding reqs

Feb- FSC meeting

Mar- FSC meeting

Apr- FSC meeting, report to council

May- FSC meeting

June- FSC meeting

July- FSC meeting, report to council

Aug- no FSC meeting

Sept- FSC meeting

Oct- FSC meeting, report to council

Nov- FSC meeting

Dec- no FSC meeting, FSC terms up (reapply, recruit)

Wrap Up

Each Committee member shared a reflection, a takeaway, and an action.

Sean affirmed that we have a lot of expertise and have achieved a lot already. His takeaway is the product of meeting- organizational structure and a timeline. His action is to not get in our own way.

Rob has a better understanding of the committee and what the goals are and where we need to go. His takeaway is having goals in place and have more things to do. His action is to get together with Trevor.

Trevor has a better understanding of what we're doing as a committee. He will email everyone on his two task forces to schedule a meeting in the next month or so.

Nikki appreciates being in person, saying there is something powerful in coming together. She identified clarity of purpose and function of the Committee. She is thrilled with Rhys' facilitation skills. Her action is to seek to see where she can contribute and right now she is in the information gathering stage. She'll learn more about County council structure.

Noelle is really excited about food system work. She is grateful to be part of this committee. She, too, is jazzed about Rhys' facilitation skills. Noelle has a better understanding of actions she needs to do, what our overarching goal is, and how to get there. Her action item is to work with Sierra and work on food access stuff. She will identify what's already happening, what are the wins, what are the gaps.

Sierra said this was really helpful in clarifying in what is contribution, action, and responsibility. Sierra feels like she knows what it looks like to contribute. She has a better understanding of where her work intersects with this committee. For food access committee, she will go through and chart what's already happening.

Rhys is excited about a structure where each of us are empowered to take action. Their takeaway is they are excited to get into rhythm of communication and coordination that is the legacy of WFN. Action is to work with Ali to draft these into a proposal of structure and to adopt.

Next meeting is April 23rd 4:30-6. Meeting adjourned at 3:57.