



RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN FOOD POLICY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes – January 23, 2017

Members Present:

Linda Blair	Orange County Representative
Michelle Edwards	Chair and RRRC Liaison Member
Rebecca Sheffield	Culpeper County Representative
Ken Smith	Production Sector Technical Advisory Member
Susan Vidal	Madison County Representative

Members Absent:

Kirsten Dueck	Health Sector Technical Advisory Member
Clyde Firman	Consumption Sector Technical Advisory Member
Kenner Love	Rappahannock County Representative
Jessica Palmer	Farmland Preservation & Conservation Technical Adv. Member
Ray Pickering	Fauquier County Representative
Taylor Richardson	Education Sector Technical Advisory Member

Vacant:

Processing and Distribution Technical Advisory Member

Guests:

Steve Cook	Virginia Department of Health
Pam Smith	Cool Lawn Dairy/Moo Thru

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Michelle Edwards, Chair, and introductions were made. Ms. Edwards noted that a quorum was not present, and therefore no official votes could be taken.

Processing and Distribution Member Vacancy

Michelle Edwards, Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission (RRRC)

During the previous meeting, Council members nominated and voted on candidates to fill the Processing and Distribution Technical Advisory Member vacancy. Ms. Edwards offered the appointment to the Council's top choices, Alan and Kim Clark of Thornton River Orchard. The Clarks have not responded to the letter or phone calls directed to their business. Since it is the

off-season, they are likely not receiving the messages. Ms. Edwards asked if any council members had the Clarks' personal phone number or email address. Linda Blair provided a phone number and email address. If both of the Clarks decline, she will proceed to the next candidate on the list until the vacancy is filled. Rebecca Sheffield, Culpeper County Representative, is on the Center's team and will temporarily fill this role until the vacancy is filled.

Local Food Marketing Update

Michelle Edwards, RRRC

Ms. Edwards provided an update on RRRC's three-year USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant (FMPP) project. Using grant funds, RRRC hired an intern to assist with several aspects of the grant, including assisting with consumer surveys, photographing Tween Rivers Trail Sites and maintaining social media sites. The University of Virginia student started work today and will be employed throughout the 2017 spring semester. RRRC will also hire another intern during the final year of the grant to assist with follow-up consumer surveys and promoting the agri-artisan trail.

After denying RRRC's Make It Happen grant application, the Path Foundation has agreed to provide \$5000 toward the region's local food branding effort through the Foundation's partnerships. The Center for Non-profit Excellence has received funding from the Path Foundation to provide technical assistance to RRRC via their existing agreement. The Center then subcontracted the Spark Mill to do the work on the branding effort. The Spark Mill's scope of work was distributed to attendees (see attached). RRRC will be providing a \$500 cash match, plus \$1000 of FMPP grant funds earmarked to contract a graphic artist for logo design. RRRC staff time spent on the branding effort is not being paid for by the Path Foundation; all funds will go to the consultant.

To gather feedback for brand development, an online consumer survey and two public input sessions are planned. RRRC will develop and conduct the online survey as required by the FMPP grant workplan, with guidance from the Spark Mill consultant. The Spark Mill will then analyze the survey data and present results during the public input sessions, which the consultant will facilitate.

One input session will be located in Culpeper and one in Warrenton, both with identical content. Ken Smith asked what the meeting content will be. Ms. Edwards responded that besides background and survey results presentations, the consultant will facilitate a discussion of the region's strengths and weaknesses as it pertains to its locally grown food and beverages. Similar to locality placemaking sessions, attendees will be asked to characterize the region and its food, as well as discuss any issues they perceive with brand development. A meeting flyer was distributed to attendees (see attached). Ms. Edwards encouraged council members to share the previously sent electronic version with their contacts.

Review of Draft Consumer Survey

Ms. Edwards distributed the draft consumer food survey (see attached), and attendees discussed each question individually. As a result, the following changes were suggested:

- In question 4, add Aldi's to the chain grocery store examples.
- Add examples of regions of the state to question 5.
- Instead of or in addition to percentages in question 6, use amount out of \$100 to assist people who have trouble thinking in terms of percentages

The survey will be open for two weeks beginning next week. Mr. Smith asked how the survey will be distributed, to which Ms. Edwards responded that the survey link will be emailed to RRRC's distribution list and posted on its Facebook page and the Tween Rivers Facebook page. A Facebook ad targeted to the region's residents will also be used to promote the survey.

Future Meeting Scheduling and Agenda Development

Ms. Edwards stated that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2017, at 6:30 pm in the RRRC Conference Room, as previously determined by a poll of council members. The branding consultant will present the results of the branding effort during the meeting, including the recommended brand name and logo. Food Policy Council meeting materials will be available on RRRC's food system webpage at www.rregion.org/foodsystem.html.