



RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN FOOD POLICY COUNCIL
Meeting Minutes – July 21, 2016

Members Present:

Linda Blair	Orange County Representative
Kirsten Dueck	Health Sector Technical Advisory Member
Michelle Edwards	Chair and RRRC Liaison Member
Jill Jefferson	Processing and Distribution Technical Advisory Member
Kenner Love	Rappahannock County Representative
Ray Pickering	Fauquier County Representative
Taylor Richardson	Education Sector Technical Advisory Member
Rebecca Sheffield	Culpeper County Representative
Ken Smith	Production Sector Technical Advisory Member

Members Absent:

Clyde Firman	Consumption Sector Technical Advisory Member
Jessica Palmer	Farmland Preservation & Conservation Technical Adv. Member

Guests:

Khalil Hassan	Rural Madison
Sara Knott	Path Foundation

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Michelle Edwards, chair, and introductions were made. Ms. Edwards noted that a quorum was present, and welcomed Taylor Richardson, newly appointed Technical Advisory Member representing the Education Sector.

Rural Development Roundtable and Networking Workshop

Michelle Edwards, RRRC

The Rappahannock-Rapidan Regional Commission and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are hosting a Rural Development Roundtable and Networking event on August 4th, at 9:00am-12:00noon. Flyers for the event were provided to attendees (see attached). Staff of USDA's Rural Development Office will provide information on their grant and loan programs and lead

small group breakout sessions on topics including but not limited to community facilities, business development opportunities, and value-added activities for agricultural producers.

The workshop will be held at Germanna Community College's Daniel Technology Center in Culpeper, and there is no charge to attend. Registration is required by August 3rd, and can be completed at <http://rdroundtable.eventbrite.com>.

Local Food Marketing Research Results

Michelle Edwards, RRRC

Ms. Edwards provided an overview of the local foods marketing research Zach Beard, previous RRRC intern, conducted this spring. The full documents, "Baseline Research for a Local Food Marketing and Awareness Campaign" and "Regional Food Marketing Interview Results," were distributed to attendees (see attached). The first document is based on internet research, while the second is the result of interviewing six key stakeholders within the Rappahannock-Rapidan Region and four outside the region.

Ken Smith commented that the baseline research document contains a great deal of useful information and provides a good framework for moving forward with a regional marketing campaign. Ray Pickering agreed that it is a great start, but suggested the Council may not necessarily want to do each activity in the order listed. Ms. Edwards concurred that this represents an "ideal," which very likely will need to be tweaked to fit our region's needs. Jill Jefferson asked for clarification whether the intent is for the Food Policy Council to use the "Local Food Marketing Toolkit" as the framework for developing the regional campaign. Ms. Edwards responded that it was her intent for it to be used as a basic framework, while maintaining flexibility to adjust as Mr. Pickering suggested. Council members agreed that the Toolkit would be used as a guide in developing the regional marketing campaign.

While Ms. Edwards invited David Robishaw of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), Division of Marketing and Development, he did not attend the meeting. She noted that, in speaking to him, it seems VDACS mainly assists with getting agricultural products into markets and promoting Virginia Grown products, rather than providing advice on branding or marketing.

Rebecca Sheffield brought a copy of a Virginia Tech article, "Virginia Tech Professors Look at Food and Nutrition Choices through the Lens of Economics" (July 15, 2016). This article and the book it references may help guide the Council's activities. Ms. Edwards agreed to summarize the article for the next council meeting. Kirsten Dueck stated that the Path Foundation may be able to purchase the book for use by the Council. The article can be found at <http://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2016/07/070516-cals-economicsbook.html>.

Kenner Love commented that farmers are price takers and always have been. They cannot set prices. We need to prove value throughout the supply chain, but margins are also small throughout the chain. Mr. Love stated that Market Maker has a way to track sales and may be a good tool to utilize in the Council's research. Kim Morgan at Virginia Tech and Rose Jeeter with Market Maker are good contacts and could be asked to speak to the Council. Ms. Edwards will research Market Maker's functionality.

Ms. Jefferson mentioned she would like to talk about food waste at some point in the future, since it is part of the food system and can help farmers. Many communities are now composting food waste, such as Tacoma Park, MD. Ms. Edwards agreed that food waste is something the Council should consider tackling in the future, perhaps after the regional food campaign is well underway.

Regional Food Branding Research Results

Kirsten Dueck and Sara Knott, Path Foundation

Kirsten Dueck provided background on the Path Foundation's research of regional food branding efforts. Sara Knott, Path Foundation Intern, examined regional food campaigns across the United States, then selected a few prime examples of regional brands to develop case studies. For each case study, she summarized who developed the brand campaign, what went well and what didn't. A few copies of the research report were provided to attendees (see attached).

Ms. Knott presented an overview of each case study beginning with Woodbury County, IA. Ken Smith asked what the County's campaign promoted. Ms. Knott answered that the goal of the Sioux City Sue campaign was mainly to promote the County's value-added products, but farmers were not interested in producing value-added products and the infrastructure to produce them was not present. The campaign ultimately failed due to lack of communication and a failure to gain buy-in from farmers. Despite issues with the campaign's implementation, several members voiced their appreciation for the vintage charm of the Sioux City Sue logo.

Ms. Knott highlighted several key aspects of the successful Kentucky Proud campaign. Membership and labels are free to Kentucky producers, and it includes a restaurant reimbursement program. Additionally, anyone can view the campaign's social media posts without having an account, which increases the potential audience.

Catawba County, NC's Eat, Drink and Be Local campaign hosts a week-long event with a variety of activities to suit all demographics. Members did not express interest in the campaign activities because they have been used within the region; however, the Council agreed that the logo is the most appealing and timeless.

While the Jersey Fresh logo was attendees' least favorite, they liked the individual ads used in the commercials (e.g. Born to Jam, Born To Be Tender). This campaign has a \$30 annual membership fee. Membership has stipulations, such as products must be USDA #1 or higher and subject to inspections by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.

Ms. Knott pointed out that Puget Sound Fresh is now a state-wide campaign due to its success. Mr. Love asked whether the name will change, to which she responded in the affirmative. Ms. Knott felt that the campaign's very user-friendly phone app was its best feature. Puget Sound Fresh also has a Fresh Bucks Program for EBT shoppers, which doubles users' money up to \$10 per market per day.

Ms. Dueck asked what the Council's next steps are for the regional food campaign. Ms. Edwards responded that advertising agencies need to be contacted to more clearly determine the potential costs, timeline, and process. Ms. Dueck offered to put together a list of the Council's preferred campaigns and contact the advertising agencies involved to request a scope of work for the regional brand development. She will then bring the results to the next meeting.

Future Meeting Scheduling and Agenda Development

After discussion, Ms. Edwards stated that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 30, 2016, at 6:30 pm in the RRRC Conference Room. The results of the Path Foundation's further research of regional branding efforts will be the primary focus. Food Policy Council meeting materials will be available on RRRC's recently updated food system webpage at www.rregion.org/foodsystem.html.