

Full Council Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2024

Attendees: Lori Adkins (Oakland Schools), Jared Barnett (Honor Community Health), Shane Bies (OCHHS), Eric Candela (Forgotten Harvest), Robin Danto (OCHD), Susan Erspamer (Hospitality House), Melissa Gervais (Gleaners), Angela Gill (Lighthouse), Melanie Gill (UWSEM), Angelya Higginbotham (OCHD), Carrie Hribar (OCHHS), Kelly Humes (OC), Melanie Grund (OCHHS), Theresa Krell (Trinity Health Oakland), Lauren Marks (UWSEM), Kelsey Merz (OCHD), Kristin Olmedo (United Community Family Services), Katelyn Smoger (Trinity Health Oakland), Chad Techner (Metro Food Rescue), Madelyne Wright (OLHSA), Joann Wrobel (OCHD), Amanda Woods (OCHHS)

Guest: Peter Lindeman, Public Sector Consultants

Welcome and Introductions

Chad welcomed the group at large. Introductions were made in small breakout rooms to facilitate council members knowing each other better. After breakouts, members shared overall they appreciated the new arrangement.

Food Landscape Study Update

Guest Peter Lindeman (Public Sector Consultants). Peter provided an update on Oakland County's Food Landscape Assessment. Slides are attached. These are preliminary results from data collection, and a more detailed report will be made available at the end of the calendar year, along with another presentation by Peter. If you have questions about the data or project, email Amanda (woodsa@oakgov.com). She will share all questions to Peter. Oakland County Food Policy Council will remain engaged in the process and will be part of the action-oriented process moving forward the recommendations.

Workgroup updates:

Farm Bill Workgroup:

Lauren provided an update on the Farm Bill legislation. The proposed House Bill would eliminate Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) annual adjustments (included in 2018 Farm Bill), which accounts for more than inflation but also modern food shopping, preparation, practices and aligning with USDA Dietary Guidelines. SNAP advocates estimate that removing this allowance would reduce SNAP benefits amounts over time.

House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member David Scott (D-GA) recently wrote to his Democratic colleagues stating that the four House and Senate Agriculture Committee leaders (House Chairman Thompson, R-PA, Senate Chairwoman Stabenow, D-MI, Ranking Member Boozman, R-AR, and Scott) are in agreement opposing an extension of the 2018 Farm Bill at this point in time. Speaker Johnson's proposed CR had a one-year extension for the 2018 bill. The letter continues that the "four corners" agree that the best path forward would be a five-year, bipartisan, bicameral bill that would be included in a "must-pass" bill during the lame duck session.

In the House, Republican leaders are pulling together a continuing resolution that would fund the government for six months. It also includes controversial legislation opposed by most Democrats related to prohibiting non-citizens from voting. Currently non-citizens are not able to vote in the U.S., but the legislation would require potential voters to bring a proof of citizenship documentation to register to vote in a state. The House continuing resolution would also include a one-year extension of current Farm Bill programs which Congress has failed thus far to reauthorize.

In a coalition-based effort led by FRAC and several leading food policy stakeholder groups, nearly 1,100 national, state, and community-based organizations signed a letter to Farm Bill leaders stating that, although the letter-signers collectively believe that the 118th Congress can complete a new Farm Bill this year, that it cannot come at the expense of policies that address hunger, public health, farmers, workers, and the environment. Sustainable Agriculture also delivered sign-on letter. [You can view the formatted letter sent here](#). They created a tool kit to use or share.

OCFPC Farm Bill Workgroup has prepared an educational 1-page document detailing SNAP and how it impacts Oakland County residents and businesses. Workgroup members are meeting again to prepare a communication plan and will share with members.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workgroup:

Lori requested additional council member participation in the workgroup. Email Amanda (woods@oakgov.com) if you are interested in joining the group.

Amanda and Lori presented the key findings from the Key Informant Report. See full report attached to meeting minutes. The report will also be made available on the Council's website.

Key findings from community leaders:

- Workforce development, job opportunities, and housing were top priorities.
- They saw priority alignment between their organizations and OCFPC.

Key findings from residents:

- Food security and access, along with cost of living, affordable housing, and transportation were key priorities.
- They expressed a split regarding alignment between community priorities and the councils.

Eric asked what the workgroup was doing to bridge the gap between the two perspectives. Amanda and Lori will bring the question back to the group during their bi-weekly meetings.

The workgroup will be developing an action plan regarding community engagement. Amanda asked group members how they preferred to learn. Top responses were in-person and webinar format. Amanda will bring this back to the DEIJ Workgroup.

Council Member Check-In

Menti Survey Link: <https://www.menti.com/alqu3o3nrhbh>. Please complete by Friday, 10/4.

Chad and Amanda have 5 open ended questions for members to answer. Member responses will help Chad and Amanda better understand why you are coming to these meetings on a regular basis, what motivates you to do so and understand how to better drive future activities on behalf of the council. Please answer truthfully and honestly the questions. It is completely anonymous. You may provide your name (optional), and Chad and Amanda can meet with you about your thoughts more in-depth.

Partner Updates

- Angela G.: Angela has received a new position within OLHSA. She shared OLHSA is seeking a new Emergency Food Programs Manager. Reach out to her about any questions regarding the position: angela@lighthousemi.org
- Madelyne W.: Looking to connect with Pontiac area organizations to provide after-school snacks. Email: madelynew@olhsa.org.
- Lori A.: Universal school meals returns again this school year. This program provides breakfast (where available) and lunch at no cost to all students. School meal participation has increased from last school year. Amanda asked about program rollout issues experienced last year. Lori shared she felt that most schools have ironed out those issues. However, what continues to be a concern is providing quality meals with rising food prices.
- Katelyn S.: Trinity Health Oakland is looking to increase their program capacity which requires them to source from more farms, preferably in Oakland County. If you have connections to area farms please email Katelyn at: Katelyn.Smogger@trinity-health.org.

Next meeting: November 19, 9 AM-10:30 AM – Virtual