

PCFFC Third St. Community Center Forum

What is a Food Council? How can I get involved?

Opening and Introduction

- Dr. Morrow opened up the group...Have you ever heard this: you are what you eat? Studied nutrition before he went into medicine... Not Just an old adage.
- Every system in body is dependent on the food that you eat, constantly replacing cells in body. Our body is not the same as when we were younger.
- All replaced by the food that we eat. Only thing that doesn't replace itself is our brain cells. Our food fuels the ability of our body to replace its cells. Important as it sustains life.
- Food is cultural and societal: what we do in life, in families, part of religious culture. It's at every event.
- Food is medicine-cures us and heals us. Just like medicine you can have wrong food.
- 1/3 of adults overweight in Pitt County...Those with normal BMI getting the "wrong foods." We are passing those food habits on to our children
- 73% of adults in Pitt overweight or obesity...now in children with obesity related chronic diseases
- Current food environment needs to be changed..."too many people living to eat, instead of eating to live..."
- Food is a System. Making sure people have right food...access to healthy foods, and huge part of our economy. If economy isn't healthy, people aren't healthy.
- Goal is to get people involved...
- Here to listen to people of Pitt County: How do you think that we can make the pitt county food system a healthier food system for everyone.

Roll Call:

Community:

Amy Joslin (Town of Fountain)

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Tyler Brown (Town of Fountain)
Walter Strathy (Director 3rd St.)
Carlton Gay (Exceed program, Falkland)
Henry Crews (GRRO – Green Rural Redevelopment Association)
Ardis Crews (GRRO)
Marion Barnes (GRRO)
Mike Skinner (farmer – Strawberries on 903)
Kim Jordan (librarian)
Will Connell (independent crop consultant)
Kimber Roche (Making Pitt Fit Community Garden)
Amanda Wyatt (Making Pitt Fit Community Garden, PhD student)
Samantha Miller (AMEXICAN, community)
Jim Hooker (Council on Aging)
Danny Peed (Robersonville Meat and Packing company)
Raj Jagad (lives in west Greenville, growing own food)
Dwight Wright (farm manager, 3rd St., Vance, GRRO)

Gini Knight (Community Food Strategies, video)

Task Force:

Alice Keene (Pitt County Planning)
James Rhodes (Pitt County Planning)
Robin Tant (Pitt County Health Department)
Maxine White (The Coalition for Healthier Eating)
Marie Welch (AHA, community)
Dr. John Morrow (Pitt County Health Department)
Leigh Guth (Pitt County Cooperative Extension)
Joni Torres (Coordinator, Community Gardens)
Derrick Boyce (Vidant Health)
Eric Derstine (Pitt County Cooperative Extension)
Greg Gauss (community)
Doris Connell (PCFFC Coordinator)

Program

Presentation – Leigh Guth (Video Attached on Facebook)

- Food System Demonstration. Food Council is set up to increase communication between each portion of the food system.
- Farmer (beginning of food system)--Processor (washing, packaging, chips)--Distributor (moving product...store, farmers market etc.)--Consumer (buying for home, restaurant, feed children in school system, etc.)-- Recovery (Waste, compost)
- When food system is in line it's easy to see how it works, but it is actually in a cycle.
- Food council gets all the people in the same room, or connects them to food council to understand how they can better communicate.
- Task force created to connect people in the food system
- North Pitt conversation: counseling on nutrition...client was unable to follow up because of transportation issues. Issues with consumer getting to distribution, however unable to get it back to her house. Solution? Wheeled Cart! Food Council determines how you can get a wheeled cart (analogy).
- Why form a food council? Asked the farmer, "Do you know the distributor?" Improve efficiencies through communication...
- NC is 10-13th in agriculture receipts or value of agriculture (amount of money generated from AG), but 25.3% of children are struggling from hunger. Counterintuitive
- Pitt County high in the nation for food scarcity...Grocery stores have left, but fast food is up. "When I was a kid we went out to eat as a celebration, but now my family eats to get something to eat."
- Food Council isn't all about scarcity of food or poor nutrition, but it's about increasing likelihood people will stay in farming, and even creating policy. Making sure food can be produced locally. Broader than poverty and hunger, but encompasses it.

What can local food councils do?

- First food policy in Knoxville

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- When you think about food policy: Oakland put a fruit and vegetable truck in street...but it's not that simple. Made policies so that fresh fruits and vegetables could be sold in similar locations ice cream would be.
- Louisville KY Policy Change:
- At a Little League concession stand what food would be available?
- Marion, what would be there? Hotdogs, popcorn, chips.
- They brought refrigerators, fresh water, grapes, (by bringing healthier foods, concession stands didn't lose money!). They made changes. Example of how to effect policy.
- Feast down east...February 10th: what did they talk about? In terms of local, it's whatever they can do to boost the local economy...brewery and spent grains connection ...working on closing loops that were lacking in communication and networking (regional activity in Wilmington).

We have worked for 2 years. Officially sanctioned by the board of county commissioners as an official group (thanks to Alice Keene and James Rhodes) - Group working on food related issues

- Working with Consultant Jared Cates (Carolina Farm Stewardship Association) specialized in helping develop food councils across the state...helped to bring group together, mission and vision

What have we done so far?

- Food Assessment to figure out the relationship that Pitt County has with food. Our Values encompass (healthy people, vibrant farms, strong communities, sustainable ecosystems, thriving local economies, justice and fairness)
- Thriving local economies (i.e. entrepreneurial), sustainable ecosystems (i.e. teaching farmers), healthy people, Vibrant farms (i.e. Can't give product away: Doris elected to pay to support farmers produce), strong communities (i.e. All areas represented), and justice and fairness (i.e. AMERICAN migrant farm laborers..."take this season, farm laborers coming in to pick crop, it's cold, delayed in production 2 weeks later than expected, but those laborers are here, farm laborers not able to feed themselves because of 2 week delay....are our farmers and laborers being paid a fair wage)

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- Food insecurity: means there is some point in my month of February that I am not sure how I will eat, or pay for it. Or, if I have to make a decision either to get to work by paying for tires, or eat that week.
- Sometimes food councils only choose 1 or 2 segments to work on
- Briefing of Food System quick facts (people were nodding their heads based on the facts, Mayor and Principal very engaged on younger generations of farmers and the need)
- Brown Bag Luncheons
- Mission and Vision Statement: Pitt to be informed and engaged community...access to healthy foods and nutrition
- Issue: farmers want to do pasteurized meats, but they don't know processors able to take them (Danny Peed Conversation)...do you do shrink wrap? Yes. Customers may not buy meat because they can't see it. Can still kill up 10,000 chickens...at your own house!

Public Input-Two questions: What are some of the food issues in your community (Food Concerns in my Community)? And, who needs to be at our next farm and food meeting (Who else needs to be here)?

We will group priorities

Joni Torres - Grouping Farm and Food Concerns: Education, Access, and Networking.

*Have to be able to cook something right there after work. Need cheap resources (Education)

*Amy-Our farmers take our food out the county...We are surrounded by food...Marketing opportunities are traditional but not new (Networking)

*Teaching about healthy food options (Education)

*Partnering with Farmers (Networking)

*Deer! I have a farm and they don't share. They just eat. (Education)

*Walter-I'm a small farm transitioning to organic...so far away to connect to other (Networking)

*Our children go to school hungry, and their parents went to school hungry (Access)

*Community grocery store (Access)

*Kim-Healthy and inexpensive food...natural in my family, but not everyone knows how to do it (Education)

*Jim-Identifying how to get food to Pitt County Children...two years ago working with Kiwanis, decided we wanted to identify children that are hungry. We learned that the city doesn't know. We found through school there was 14,200 kids were on title 1...meaning when they are not in school they aren't getting enough food (holidays, summer, and weekends). We found there is a significant effort in county by churches, called back pack program. 1,000 kid's approx. working with that group. We have a lot of work to do because we don't know where hungry kids are (Access and Networking).

*Jim- We don't know where the seniors are that are hungry. Council on aging provides meals, but seniors don't know about it. (Access and Networking)

*Allow kids to develop a taste for non-processed food

*Kimber-Healthy Food Options...St. Paul Episcopal...partner with food bank...opportunity to find how we can get more fresh fruits and vegetables (Access)

****Seniors and Children's areas of Concerns****

*Dwight Wright-Food Desserts- (Access)

*Dwight Wright-Fresh Healthy Foods Higher...when younger they were cheaper (Access)

**** Ugly food...becomes landfill food...changing that food doesn't have to be beautiful in order to be healthy****

*Raj-Appreciate mobile market in food dessert, a lot of organizations and food pantry that meets west Greenville needs. Sometimes some of the food comes outside of county, and state, where big companies get a "write off." Education (Carrot demonstration, some with dark spots, and some that looked very healthy) information on how to distinguish between healthy food. Concern with health of it. Mike comment, "food is highly perishable."

*Mike- I have the resources to grow food, but not to make a profit---why aren't their grants to help make access/distribution of food more available. I could feed many people, but need the resources to distribute. What's the problem? Is it the food source?

*Raj- Can we bring farmers education on the different disease that food can catch. Never seen a black polka dot carrot!

- *Gaps in local supply (Networking)
- *Mike- I Can't compete as a small farmer, when big groups are selling them for pennies
- *Amy-Our very active food pantry feeds a family for 4 days out of 31(Access)
- *Amy-40% of our adults live 7 or more days a month hungry, so they can feed their kids (in Fountain) (Access).
- * Food quality at grocery stores...fruit has mold (Access)
- * Amanda Wyatt-Farmers market not well known, and not open year round...students don't know (Education)
- * Kimber- I have noticed in the past 3-5 years there are a significant increase of vendors...and farmers market is packed on Saturday.
- * Ardis-People think fast food is cheaper than home cooked food (Education)
- * Danny- Costs of goods...for farmers and consumers...I deliver to 351 homes, 1700 people, one of the biggest problems I have is costs of goods. Have to go to Wheatsville near Elizabeth city...uses 3,000 lbs. and has to go there for a good price. Need to look at selling the whole field, in order to make the money. Don't grow enough in this county because they grow a little bit of this and that, and the people may try to make a lot of money off of a little. I work 11 counties, 11,000 customers all together, and about 3% of clients actually go to farmers market. (Networking)
- * Food Dessert (Access)
- * Ardis-People don't know how to cook so they get fast food (education)
- * Shop on limited budget (education)
- * Amy-100% children in Fountain food insecure, children (Access)

Alice Keene Closing:

- If you want to get something done in the community, go to the community
- Task force will absolve and become a: Coordinating group-interacted by 4 action circles: (Farming and Economic Development, Food Security, and 2 unnamed action circles determined by forums)
- Before you leave we want to share with you about some opportunities. Your passion, stories, and experiences were moving.

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- Challenges of PCFFC might be, "Where do we start?" Here is the opportunity to take the second step!
- Two ways you can become involved:
 1. Become a part of the food council (Formal application, 3 year term, coordinating overarching council that will drive policy, 13 members appointed by county commissioners (8 members will be community driven)...Application given to Kimberly Hines.
 2. Action Circles (where day to day work will be carried out) : Farming and economic development, and food security, application, and you can join the action circles at any time, no set commitment for action circles (ask everyone to be sincere)

Thank you to Kayla Hall, and Vidant Health Foundation for funding a food council coordinator Doris Connell. We appreciate Vidant Health foundation for making it all possible

--Closing Remarks by Doris—

Thanks to Derrick Boyce for taking notes during meeting