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MEMO

To: TJPDC Commissioners
From: Billie Campbell
Date: February 26, 2009
Reference: Hosting the Local Food Connection

Purpose: To recommend that TJPDC act as host for the Local Food Connection, using this initiative as the impetus to complete the application for non-profit status for TJPDC Corporation.

Background: The Local Food Connection is a new network in the Thomas Jefferson Planning District created to support existing programs and help identify and fill gaps where they exist. The organizations involved in the initial discussions to create this network are: JABA, Feast!/Local Food Hub, Piedmont Environmental Council, Darden School/Batten Institute at the University of Virginia, Twin Springs Farm, and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Several of these organizations have agreed, pending approval from their management, to form the initial board of the organization. blue moon fund has provided facilitation and coordinating support. The group is closely aligned with the Virginia Food Systems Council, a new statewide initiative, and is conducting outreach to many other groups and individuals involved in local food. Organizational documents are being drawn up and the group is seeking a host for its initial stages. Through Gordon Walker, the Local Food Connection requested that TJPDC serve as the group's host and fiscal agent, a request that was considered at the February 5, 2009 Commission meeting. The Local Food Hub also contacted TJPDC to make a similar request just prior to the February Commission meeting. TJPDC has been involved in the local food effort by serving on the advisory team for UVA classes focused on local food, by participating in EAT Local, and by submitting a grant proposal to "Build a Local Food System through Older Adult Volunteers" in November 2008 with JABA, Piedmont Environment Council and the Senior Center as partners, in response to EPA's Request for Proposals for Building Healthy Communities for Active Aging: Training and Demonstration Projects. The Commission authorized staff at the February 5, 2009 meeting to continue discussions with JABA about the possibility of TJPDC serving as host for the Local Food Connection.

Issues: TJPDC has the capacity and interest to serve as the host for the Local Food Connection. If pursued, TJPDC would like to take an active role in the initiative, serving as one of the partners in the network and taking on appropriate tasks related to the mission of the Local Food Connection and the Sustainability Accords. As a public non-profit, TJPDC is tax-exempt and can receive tax-deductible contributions. Most private foundations, however, only award grants to organizations with 501 (c) 3 status. TJPDC would generally be unable to act as the grantee for the network as a means of applying for and receiving funds through private foundations.

In 2000, TJPDC established TJPDC Corporation with the intent of applying for non-profit status. On September 6, 2007, the Commission, acting as the Board of TJPDC Corporation, adopted a resolution authorizing the Incorporator to file Articles of Restatement with the State Corporation Commission and TJPDC staff, working with the Incorporator, to apply to the IRS for non-profit status. Despite this action and an offer of assistance on the application by TJPDC Treasurer Jason Pearson, the application has not yet been filed, largely due to a lack of staff time to devote to the effort. Completing the application requires some expertise in non-profit organizations and staff time and/or legal counsel.

Recommendations: Staff recommends that the Commission grant permission to take steps to have TJPDC serve as the host and fiscal agent for the Local Food Connection and to use the network as the inaugural project for TJPDC Corporation and moving forward with filing the 1023 form to apply for non-profit status. This would require retaining an attorney to prepare the application and handle the filing. JABA has offered assistance in the process. The cost estimate for the work is \$2,500.

Action Needed: If the Commission agrees with the recommendations, the action needed to proceed would include a motion to authorize staff to pursue serving as host and fiscal agent for the Local Food Connection and granting at least \$2,500 from TJPDC reserves to TJPDC Corporation for preparation and filing of the 1023 form to apply for non-profit status.