

E.A.T. Local

Everyone at the Table

1st Meeting

June 15, 2006

12-2, Gordon Avenue Library

Tanya Denckla Cobb (Senior Associate, Institute for Environmental Negotiation) and Tim Beatley (Teresa Heinz Professor for Sustainable Communities) opened the meeting by providing background on the UVA class they taught in Spring 2006, “Planning for a Sustainable and Secure Community Food System.” Their class presented its findings on May 8 in an open community meeting, and this presentation ended with a request by community members that a follow-up meeting be scheduled to discuss possible “next steps” by the community. This meeting was called in response to that community request.

Tim Beatley provided a brief description of the class assessment and findings, and noted that the class report can be obtained on the Thomas Jefferson Planning District website at: www.tjpd.org. An 8-minute film that provides an overview of the issues involved in creating a sustainable community food system, produced by graduate planning student Jonah Chiarenza, was shown to the meeting. Tanya Denckla Cobb facilitated the meeting discussion and Christine Gyovai recorded the notes on flip charts. Participants introduced themselves and their connection/interest in community food. *Participants and contact information at listed at the end.*

Ideas/Hopes for a Community Food System

- Create foraging maps for the city/ region (e.g. where to find local mulberry trees)

Schools-Youth

- Educational Calendar for kids <to be placed at stores>
- High school gardens: advice on how to do this, and resources are needed to facilitate this
 - Suggestions:
 - ♣ How to Grow More Vegetables, by John Jeavons – this is a good resource
 - ♣ Biointensive methods for growing food is recommended
 - ♣ “Ripe for a Change” – video
 - ♣ Alice Waters’ edible school yard model (model on DC mall): website is “Center for Ecoliteracy”
 - ♣ Create opportunities for students to learn how to use/cook the food they grow, and to create convenience food for families to take home
 - BUT/AND! Teachers need onsite, personal advice and assistance is also desired
- Connect schools to restaurants
- Continue UVA class efforts: can the class do more research, look at other states, identify “Best practices” that other communities have learned, write about these efforts? Could this group be a new “advisory committee” to the next school class?
- Further examine ideas from class – become integral party of study

Connections with others

- Need to connect with another mentor city/town with similar local characteristics; ideas are: Ithaca, NY; Asheville, NC; Burlington, VT
- Need to create a connection with Appalachian Sustainable Development (ASD) in Abingdon, VA.; Perhaps use new grant writer in C'ville to bring in grants to create a similar project here
- Recognize connection of local food with other local production – e.g. forestry, etc.
- Cost of living and land are increasing, and this is a critical connection to sustainable community food
- Embrace the Shenandoah Valley as part of our food system as there are many producers there who can provide food at lower cost

Outlets for Produce and Gathering Places

- Create a producer-only farmer's market: there was discussion about whether this does or does not yet exist in Charlottesville. There seemed to be agreement that this concept is important and that Charlottesville is on its way toward this goal, if not already there.
- Small farmers need support in marketing and selling – concerns about middle man costs –
- The area needs a wholesaler warehouse
- Create a Co-op or Food Center (*this was one of the meeting "big ideas"*) that could have a variety of components, such as:
 - Web component for students
 - Certified kitchen
 - Canned goods
 - Web component for students
 - Apprentice opportunities and connections
 - A place to enable labeling and sales
 - Education/speakers
 - Retail outlet
 - Café
 - Convenience foods <local, healthy>
 - Cooking/eating Idea Exchange

Other Opportunities

- Myco and bio-remediation offer multiple opportunities for healing the earth; there is an interest in compost, and networking among those interested in permaculture and identifying dollars available for this work
- For people interested in joining or learning about the local permaculture group, contact: Christineg@virginia.edu
- Create an *Urban* CSA: one person has already created a 1-share Urban CSA; this would enable people who don't know what to do with their yards or who don't have time to take care of their yards to connect with urban farmers looking for urban land to piece together a large urban CSA over a number of home-yards.
- Create a larger scale community composting effort

Policy issues

- Political advocacy and support for small farmers is needed; for example, the agricultural tax exemption should be reduced to 1 acre rather than the 6 acre minimum (if living on the farm) for the actual farmer, and this should benefit the actual farmer as opposed to the landowner. Mechanisms for changing or influencing policy should be explored.

- Farmer rental is one avenue that might be explored. A successful example of this was offered, where a farmer has negotiated a 30-year lease on Water Penny Farm in Rappahanock County, and is able to build and own the house on this leased farm.
- Need to support Albemarle County’s decision to hire a rural development person planner/coordinator. The BOS needs to know that this position is supported and should be acted upon. This group should send a letter to the BOS.
- Three possible ways to divide this discussion is: Where are we now?; Creating a vision; Implementation

Identity and Communication

- Create a non-profit entity; Bama Works would likely support this idea
- It is important to communicate ideas to public, educate them about the impacts of their decisions and the options available to them; “In The Kitchen” is one venue for this communication; The Dept of Agriculture’s “Virginia-Grown” program is another method for educating the public.
- The ATTRA website is a good source of information for people interested in food production and community food systems; perhaps C’ville could create a local version of this.

Next Steps

The NEXT MEETING is on

July 19, 5-7PM

POTLUCK

Main Street Market

We may be either in the upstairs café space or in the main floor space

- A question was raised about funding opportunities. Tanya mentioned a number of sources of funding that she is intending to pursue (time permitting) to fund a directory as well as possibly the coop idea – BAMA Works fund, USDA grants, and others.
- One participant mentioned that the Piedmont Environmental Council may be working on a food directory, and we should contact Melissa Wiley at pecva.org.
- Tanya volunteered to draft the notes from the meeting, get them out to people, and to form a listserv, under the university auspices. The group supported this idea and agreed that, for the time being, the group should be known as “E.A.T. Local” and the listserv could go under this name.
- Lisa at Feast! Offered space in the Main Street Market for local food information. This could be a central place for printed material and gathering. Meetings could be held there, as long as they are not during the main part of the day.
- The following 9 groups were formed, and people volunteered to lead each group:

1) Farm to School

Lisa Ramono, lead
 School Gardens – Bonnie M.
 Mark P.
 Shelly S.
 Ann Haskell, Slo Food
 Amy W.
 Ted Pet.
 Viola H.
 Terry L.

Christine G.
Kathryn and Michael B.
Melanie B.

- Used to be edible – landscaping group
- City – schools wellness plan – integrate with long-term

2) Co-op (the BIG idea)

Kathryn B. – co-lead
Bonnie M. – co-lead
Lisa Romano – non-profit help
Michael B.
Ted M.
Bonnie M.*
Lisa Riter
Mark P.
Christine G.
Mark T.
Melanie Bar.

Lisa with Feast! Recommended that this group use existing resources where possible; e.g. it should explore what is happening with Main Street Market, as this is trying to accomplish some of the goals articulated for the coop group, and the coop group might learn/ get ideas

3) Compost Group

Rochelle - lead
Ted P.
Anne Bedarf (volunteered by a couple of participants)
Jeffrey B.
Ellie

4) Enlisting the help of seniors

Bonnie and Ted, will check with the Senior Center & Master Gardeners

July 19th – 5:00 Main Street Market Potluck

5) Letter to Albemarle BOS

Nikolena – lead
Wendy R.,
Tanya DC.
Sharon B.

6) Urban CSA (community supported agriculture)

This group should check on land available, such as Meadowcreek Memorial Gardens (joke!)
Terry (for Belmont area) – co-lead
Logan – co-lead
Melanie B.
Mark P.
Shelly

7) Bio Remediation

Jeffrey B.- lead
Christine G.
Mark P.

8) Local Food Directory

Tanya –lead

(Elena) Nikolena M.
 Melanie R. – newsletter
 Rowena
 Mark T.
 TJPDC – Rochelle
 Kathryn T.

If money available, TJPDC could do design and development of local food directory

9) Listserve: Tanya will set up under name of “EatLocal” (*Postscript: Tanya was unable to do this for security reasons provided by UVA – the list is named “Sustcomfood” for Sustainable Community Food, but the “tag” to identify postings to the listserv will read “EATLocal.”*)

MEETING PARTICIPANT LIST

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