



Food System Committee

Wednesday July 1st, 2020

3:30-5 PM

Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Members Present:

Name	Sector	Present
	Export Sales Farming	
Margaret Gerard	Local Sales Farming	X
Kendall Whitney	Fishing	
	Processing/Distribution	
Riley Sweeney	Food Access	X
Amber Noskoff	Nutrition/ Public Health	
Maureen Darras	Labor	X
Krista Rome	Natural Resources	X
Mardi Solomon	Whatcom Food Network	X

Staff: Ali Jensen, Whatcom County Health Department; Chris Elder, Whatcom County Public Works

Call to order: Riley started the meeting at 3:35 pm

Land Acknowledgement Statement

Determination of Quorum

Quorum

Approval of minutes

Staff amended minutes to include addition of sending a survey to Committee members and changing the word “laborer” to “worker”.

Margaret made a motion to approve the 6/24 meeting minutes and Maureen seconded. Minutes were approved.

Public Comment

Margaret asked group about marketing The Committee. The Committee agreed to market when they had some content to market.

Review Recommendations for Whatcom County

- The Committee reviewed a draft letter created by Riley and recommended changes.
- Food worker was added to the list of people impacted by COVID.
- The Committee reviewed their suggested policies. Maureen had additions for farmworker protections.
- Riley suggested the group keep 7-10 recommendations total for Council.
- The Committee agreed to ask Council to support specific State Food Policy Forum recommendations, which have not yet been finalized.

- The Committee agreed to keep recommendations specifically tied to COVID health, safety, and economic impacts.
- Riley proposed to main categories for the recommendations:
 - o Farmworker and processing facility worker safety
 - o Pantries/ farmers markets
 - o Food access
 - o Use of CARES Act Funds
- Farmworker health and safety was discussed: hazard pay, more regulations of worker facilities and housing, acknowledging the “right to organize”, and for Whatcom to be a model county for farmworker safety.
- Allocating funds for farmers as soon as possible was discussed: grants for farmers, flexibility around the use of EBT and WIC (State programs), money for emergency food to buy local, processing and distribution facilities prioritized.
- Riley suggested getting a letter in front of Council by the 21st. Chris cautioned to take time.

Next Steps

- Ali will send draft recommendations to the Committee members.
- Committee will send notes back to Ali and Riley, who will finesse them.
- Chris will set up a meeting for next Wednesday July 8th from 3:30-5pm.
- The Committee notes two vacancies on the Committee and is interested in exploring opportunities to engage with those sectors to ensure cohesion in the food system.

Mardi moved to adjourn. Margaret seconded. Group adjourned at 5:04pm.