



Bloomington Sustainability Action Plan Open House
Meeting Notes
13 February 2018
City Hall Conference Room
4 pm – 5:45 pm

Topic: Local Food and Agriculture
Facilitator: Nan Stager
Easel/Note Pad: MaCie' Moore
Computer notes: David Cullmer
Number of participants: 3

Summary of Interests discussed

- Bloomington has severe food security issues with a large number of population facing hunger
- Bloomington has several organizations aimed at addressing food advocacy, and security. However, there is not enough fresh food to meet the needs of food-insecure population
- Accessibility to fresh foods, may be a larger issue; Suggestions were made to have more mobile food pantries, religious organization as fresh food distributors, and more strategically placed community gardens to address this issue
- Bloomington has several amazing farmer's markets, however more space, and promotion is needed for the winter markets
- More community engagement in food advocacy and security issues
- Suggestion was made to revisit Food Charter that the city signed and create actions steps

Detailed Notes

What is going well in Bloomington?

- Several awesome farmer's markets
- One of the only community orchards in the United States
- Strong community gardening program that includes plot rentals, gardens shared by communities as a whole, and garden skill programs (locations vary: Mother Hubbard's Cupboard, churches, Monroe country park)
- Mother Hubbard's Cupboard- a food pantry that encourages food growth through advocacy, tool share, and cooking/gardening education for clients who are food insecure
- Abundance of local garden classes and education entities
- Hoosier Hills Food Bank which, has recently focused on growing fresh food/vegetables for the food bank and 100 agencies within the county area
- Gleaning, where donations are collected from local farmers for less fortunate people in the community
- Crimson Cupboard- although their maybe potentially challenges with funding
- Shared kitchen spaces around the city (One World Enterprises, Dillman Farms)-May be at capacity soon
- Growing awareness at Indiana University Bloomington of issues with food quality and nutrition through programs like "prepared food recovery"

- Participation of religious organizations with food groups and food advocacy issues, like Churches Monroe County United Ministries – Umbrella Organization
- Advocacy Groups building political will, example is the creation of the Food and Farms Collation by Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard

What’s not going so well in Bloomington?

- Local grower’s guild
- Bloomington has an influx of food-insecure people who often require assistance from the city-lots of rural hunger
- The lack of healthy, fresh foods available to people in need, currently ¼ of Hoosier Hills Food Bank’s food is fresh- they are currently trying to address this issue
- Accessibility to food
- Participant raised question on how many people are food insecure out of the local population
- Quality of school lunches and institutional purchasing of local foods
- Financial concerns surrounding Crimson Cupboard
- Winter Farmers Market having issues around inadequate space, and local promotion
- Bloomingfoods is struggling due to organic market in super stores like Walmart and Kroger
- “Greenwashing” of local products - Use of word like “natural,” and ‘locally grown,” when products are neither

What changes would you like to see in Bloomington in the next 5 years?

- Create bigger space for Winters Farmers Market
- Aid in the creation of community composting projects
- Creation of local programs that assist new/young farmers with the skill development, resources, and land, needed to get started
 - Participant mentioned maybe the use Sycamore Land Trust
- Have more strategically placed community gardens, and gardens on school grounds
 - nearly 90 percent of garden plots are at capacity- so there is a need for more
- More local food production and food processing centers
- Creation of Food Hubs, a one stop shop for local foods

What can Bloomington do to move forward to address concerns and to achieve its vision for the future in the next 5 years?

- Address issues surrounding accessibility to healthy food
- Expansion of the program where SNAP recipients get double their benefits at the farmer’s market to encompass grocery store /markets to ensure more access to fresh foods
- Mobile food pantry to address accessibility issues in food assimilation and acquisition
 - Mother Hubbard’s Cupboard does it during summer months, as well as Hoosier Hills Food Bank,
- Use Churches and religious institutions as fresh food distributors and distribution centers
- Secure Farmland for food production for entities like food banks within Monroe county
- Connect aspiring farmers with land
- Increase advocacy, and influence surrounding farm bill and locally grown foods
 - Need for a farm bill that strongly supported people growing food
- Revisit Food Charter that the city signed and create actions steps
- Encourage property developers to include/incorporate areas for gardens
 - City provide incentives to set aside land in development for neighborhood gardens
- Pest control: to help with community gardens- deer especially
- Make it easier for homeowners to have their own gardens

- Introduce more (small) community gardens that are located closer to neighborhoods
- Have neighborhood organizations manage community gardens instead of city
 - HOA type organizations
 - Need community engagement from “ground floor”
- Increase community engagement in food advocacy and security issues
- Use of Produce prescriptions, where doctor prescribes fresh produce to patients
- Encouragement of best management practices to help mitigate climate change
- Increase/ start city composting projects
- Reduction of Waste reduction
 - Green Camino
- Creation of a Food innovation district