

ESTABLISHING A FOOD COUNCIL FOR DANE COUNTY

On June 1, 2004, the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee of the Dane County Board approved the creation of a subcommittee to examine Dane County food system issues. Dane County has a vibrant and complex food system that encompasses the many social, political, economic, and environmental relationships between food producers, processors, and consumers. The Local Food Policy Advisory Subcommittee's (LFPAS) charge was to explore, review, and develop strategies to strengthen the local food system and economy.

The LFPAS has met regularly over the past 13 months and convened a Local Food Summit Conference in February 2005 that brought together key stakeholders and the broader community to generate information and ideas to improve the local food system. While the LFPAS has laid the groundwork, the hard work of implementing its recommendations remains.

The report of the Local Food Policy Advisory Subcommittee recognizes the following factors:

- Food system issues significantly affect the public health, land use, economy, and quality of life of Dane County residents; and
- Food is a necessity of life and access to nutritious, affordable, and locally grown food is important to residents of Dane County; and
- Food production is a core component of Dane County's economy and culture and Dane County produces more value of agricultural product than any other Wisconsin county; and
- Residents of Dane County spend about a billion dollars each year in restaurants and grocery stores, yet little of that money goes directly to Dane County farmers. However, there is a growing interest among consumers in purchasing fresh food locally. While Dane County farmers now sell some \$3.6 million in direct marketed and organic foods each year that accounts for only about 5% of the county's fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. There is an enormous potential for growth in this sector; and
- Food and agricultural sectors are central to the economy of Dane County and a strong regional food system of food production, processing, distribution, storage, access and reuse protects our natural resources and contributes significantly to the environmental and economic well-being of the region; and
- On February 11, 2005, approximately one hundred people including local farmers, food retailers and processors, nutritionists, educators, anti-hunger advocates and local

government officials met for a Local Food Summit and expressed overwhelming support for the creation of a local Food Council; and

- Food policy councils established in other counties, cities, and states have provided government officials and stakeholders with a forum to identify policies that harness the potential of the food system to foster economic development, provide children and those in need greater access to fresh and nutritious foods, and support stewardship of finite land and water resources; and
- Several county agencies are connected to particular aspects of food policy – e.g., the Division of Public Health, the Department of Planning and Development, the Department of Land and Water Resources, UW Dane County Extension, and the Department of Administration. No single unit looks at the many ways the food system impacts the County, from the production of food through the food chain to the eventual disposal of food waste.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors hereby establishes the Dane County Food Council to address food system issues in the County, including development of educational programs, data-gathering, research projects, and policies to address food system issues.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council shall have 12 members with an interest in local food issues to be appointed as follows:

- Three members recommended and appointed by the Dane County Executive to represent economic development, food system, and processing and distribution concerns (one term ending April 11, 2006; one term ending April 10, 2007; and one term ending April 15, 2008)
- Three members recommended and appointed by the Mayor of the City of Madison to represent accessibility, urban agriculture, and processing and distribution concerns (one term ending April 11, 2006; one term ending April 10, 2007; and one term ending April 15, 2008)
- Three members appointed by the Dane County UW Extension Committee to represent nutrition, food waste, and large-scale agricultural concerns (one term ending April 11, 2006; one term ending April 10, 2007; and one term ending April 15, 2008)
- Three members appointed by the Environment, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee to represent environmental, planning, and small-scale agricultural concerns (one term ending April 11, 2006; one term ending April 10, 2007; and one term ending April 15, 2008)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Food Council shall focus its efforts on implementing the following recommendations of the Local Food Policy Advisory Subcommittee:

- Develop strategies to increase the amount of locally produced food the County and other local governments purchase
- Develop a list of local food producers in concert with the UW Center for Integrated Agriculture, Dane County UW Extension and other entities
- Devise, support and enhance direct marketing opportunities for local food producers by establishing a county-wide network of farmers markets
- Work with the City of Madison and Public Market Project participants to implement the project.
- Assist with further study and potential formation of a Central Agriculture Food Facility, including helping to organize the stakeholder community and working with the City of Madison and other groups to determine the long-term feasibility of such a facility
- Develop strategies and find opportunities to educate and inform a wide range of citizens about the Council's activities and seek citizen advice, comments, and suggestions for building a better local food system
- Explore the interest of neighboring counties and cities in forming a regional food council by working with Dane County UW Extension and other organizations and agencies
- Explore and actively seek grants from foundations, the state and federal government, and the university with the assistance of Dane County UW Extension to carry out the work of the Council
- Pursue other recommendations in the final report of the Local Food Policy Advisory Subcommittee that the Council deems appropriate

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Food Council shall make an annual report of findings and accomplishments to the Dane County Executive and Board of Supervisors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Dane County UW-Extension, and others as necessary, shall provide support to the Food Council.

Submitted by:

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- Referred to:
- Executive
 - Hlth/Hum Needs
 - Pers/Finance
 - Pub Prot/Jud 3
 - Pub Wks/Transp
 - Envir/Ag/Nat Res

- Approved as Submitted
- Fiscal Note Not Required
- Policy Note Not Required
- Forward to: Extension for completion of:
- Policy Note
- Fiscal Note