

## 2013 Annual Report

MASSACHUSETTS FOOD POLICY COUNCIL (MFPC)  
(M.G.L. CHAPTER 20 § 6C)

### CHAIRMAN

Greg Watson, Commissioner, MDAR

### STAFF LIAISON

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Late in 2010, Chapter 277 of the Acts of 2010 amended Massachusetts General Law Chapter 20 by inserting Section 6C, creating a 17-member Food Policy Council (“FPC”). Four meetings were held in 2013. The purpose of the council, detailed minutes and reports are at

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/boards-commissions/food-policy-council.html>

### STATE AGENCY MEMBERS

Commissioner Cheryl Bartlett, MDPH

Kerry Bowie, designee for Deputy Commissioner Gary Moran, MDEP

Undersecretary Michael Hunter, designee for Secretary Gregory Bialecki, MEOHED

Katie Millet, designee Commissioner Mitchell Chester, MESE

Frank Martinez Nocito, designee for Commissioner Stacey Monahan MDTA

Commissioner Greg Watson, Chair MDAR

### LEGISLATIVE MEMBERS

Senator (vacant)

Representative Kimberly Ferguson

Senator Robert Hedlund, Assistant Minority Leader

Representative Stephen Kulik, Vice Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means

### PUBLIC MEMBERS (APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR)

Frank Carlson, Carlson Orchards, Food processor and handler

Helen Caulton-Harris, Springfield Board of Health, Local health department representative

Jeff Cole, Executive Director, MA farmers markets, direct to consumer marketing

Manuel Costa, President, Costa Fruit and Produce, Food processor and distributor

Amanda Kinchla, M.S., Food Safety Extension Specialist, UMASS Amherst

John Lee, Allandale Farm, Farmer

Vivien Morris, MS, RD, MPH, LDN, Boston Public Health Commission, Community nutrition

### 2013 Activities of the Massachusetts Food Policy Council (FPC)

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Worcester Union Train Station

Commissioner Watson introduced Jessica Burgess from MDAR's legal staff to discuss the MA Open Meeting Law. Commissioner Watson asked for feedback on the Food Trust Grocery Task Force Guidelines; consensus was that the report is not broad enough and that there are issues with some conclusions and recommendations. The report was sent out to all members for comments, collected by Bonita Oehlke of MDAR. Christa Drew reported on the Advisory Committee's recommendation for an implementation structure for the first phase of a statewide plan consisting of 3 consecutive 6 month plans. The Advisory Committee would serve in an ad-hoc role, the Core Team and Steering Committee would be separate but related working groups, and Project Bread may act as a fiscal agent. The Advisory Committee members discussed concentrating on increasing food production in the state and leaving related items to other projects. Commissioner Watson volunteered MDAR legal counsel to provide assistance and stated that deadline should be moved ahead to allow plenty of time. There was general agreement that the plan needs to address barriers and leverage points. Commissioner Watson asked for public input, committed to respond to legal matters the next month, and will advise the Council and Advisory Committee. Representative Kulik expressed support.

March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013, Worcester Union Train Station

Commissioner Watson discussed legislation in progress to enhance food access including the Farm Bill. The Advisory Committee presented strategies for the development of a statewide food plan. They recommended that the FPC be given authority to act as a fiduciary agent and hold and administer funds and contract for services. The FPC should also oversee the strategic planning process including drafting an RFR for a facilitating entity. The facilitating entity could be a private group or an individual and the funding could come from any source. The FPC enabling statute was amended to allow for this. General response concluded that wide engagement and inclusion is important. John Read presented for the Boston Redevelopment Authority and Alex Risley Schroeder presented for the Massachusetts Workforce Alliance.

June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013, Worcester Union Train Station

Commissioner Watson reported on the CDC's report linking locally grown food and the prevention of chronic disease, on Article 89 by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, and the Food Safety Modernization Act, on which the FPC will submit a comment letter. Representative Kulik sent an update on the budget legislation; a \$100,000 appropriation for the strategic plan was included and language allowing MDA to administer public and private funds to execute it. The Advisory Committee reviewed the draft RFR for a facilitating entity for a statewide strategic food systems plan. Changes were made to increase the time span. Evaluation criteria should reflect wide representation, have public and private balance, and be an evolving and responsive process. The draft was approved and the changes were adopted by consensus. A subcommittee to incorporate the revisions and to finalize the RFR was appointed including Katie Millet, Commissioner Watson, Jeff Cole and a legislative representative.

November 25, 2013, Worcester Union Train Station

Jeff Cole questioned state procurement rules that require public comment after the presentations and award. Commissioner Watson provided clarification that it is unusual to have a contract review in public, but this process combines state procurement and open meeting rules, necessary due to the decisions of the MA Food Policy Council. Public comment after a decision follows the State of MA

procurement rules. Three presentations were made in response to the RFR for a facilitating entity to develop a statewide strategic food systems plan. Clarifying questions to address during the 30 minute presentations were developed by the Review Committee and provided to the bidders in advance. Presentations were given by **Changing Tastes** <https://changingtastes.net>, **Metropolitan Area Planning Council** <http://www.mapc.org/> and **Dialogos** <http://dialogos.com/>. All three groups had strong content and the clarifying questions which they responded to provided additional important information. The Review Committee was thanked for their time to review the proposal and develop the clarifying questions. MAPC received the most votes from FPC members. Representative Kulik moved to award the contract to MAPC and instruct the Department to take all necessary steps under state procurement rules to negotiate and execute the contract in accordance with the specifications set forth in the RFR. Katie Millet volunteered as a representative of the FPC to work with MDAR during the contract drafting process.

### **FPC Advisory Committee Meetings**

February 13, 2013 Worcester Union Train Station Conference Hall

The Public Meeting Law regarding remote participation was reviewed. The Advisory Committee discussed various models for a facilitating entity, either separate or tied to the FPC. Options were developed, to be discussed at the FPC meeting on March 1.

- 1) Develop legislation to amend the FPC enabling statute to give authority to receive/ expend state appropriated funds and private funds for the purpose of a statewide strategic planning process with MDAR. The legislation and funding mechanism would set up the scope of services based on the project goals. State procurement rules would be followed. A Trust could be established at MDAR so that funds would be specifically for this project. MDAR would contract under the direction of the FPC.
- 2) The strategic planning process could be completely detached from the FPC through an existing or newly created entity(s). The FPC and Advisory Committee would have representation. The outcome and the input received through the planning process would be presented to the FPC for approval and endorsement during regular intervals.
- 3) Both could be pursued by perusing option #2 but aligning it with #1 so that six months of time is not lost. It would be possible to align the interim entity to be eligible should state funding be allocated.

March 1, 2013, Worcester Union Train Station, prior to the FPC meeting

Options for a facilitating entity were reviewed in anticipation of sharing with the FPC for a decision.

May 15, 2013, Worcester Union Train Station

Legislative language relating to enabling MDAR to be able to receive funds for a strategic process was reviewed, that will be included in an amendment to the house budget. A draft Food Plan RFR was developed, as well as recommendations for the composition an RFR Review Committee. A suggested timeline focused on July 1 as the RFR release date. Food Day was discussed. The importance of knowing the details of the Open Meeting Law was also discussed. The RFR was given to MDAR to add procurement language.

June 7, 2013, Worcester Union Train Station, prior to the FPC meeting

The RFR was reviewed and updated, in anticipation of presenting to the FPC members at the meeting that followed.

**July 2, 2013, RFR Subcommittee, MDAR conference room, Boston**

Katie Millet, Commissioner Watson, Jeff Cole, aide to Representative Kulik Sean Connolly, and MDAR staff Bonita Oehlke, Michael Rock and Jessica Burgess met to finalize the RFR. The RFR was released on August 4.

**September 20, 2013, FPC RFR Review Committee meeting, Worcester Union Train Station**

The nine-member FPC RFR Review Committee met to discuss the proposals and make recommendations for up to three of the applicants to be presented at the next FPC meeting. A discussion about the procurement responsibilities of the Committee was held prior to the review process. The Review Committee included: FPC members Jeff Cole, Direct to consumer marketing; Michael Hunter, Undersecretary MA Dept. of Housing and Economic Development; and Vivian Morris, Community based nutrition and public health expert; FPC Advisory Committee members Christa Drew, MA Food Policy Alliance and Cris Coffin, American Farmland Trust; Members of the stakeholder community represented by Brian Donahue, Brandeis University and Betsy Johnson, Consumer advocate; Philanthropy: Courtney Bourns, Kendall Foundation and MDAR legal staff, Jessica Burgess. The group voted to advance **Changing Tastes** <https://changingtastes.net>, **Metropolitan Area Planning Council** and <http://www.mapc.org/> and **Dialogos** <http://dialogos.com/> to the FPC meeting.