



Anchorage

Town Hall Meeting Report



Tuesday March 24, 2015

5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Downtown Soup Kitchen

Background

In 2015, the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) hosted three (3) community food system meetings for the general public, which expanded on the four (4) meetings that were held in 2014. The goals of the meetings include:

1. Increase awareness about Alaska food issues among the general population
2. Increase involvement in local food issues by community members
3. Gain a perspective of local food issues to inform the AFPC and policy makers
4. Recruit new members for the AFPC.

The AFPC is nearing the conclusion of its first strategic plan. Information about the Alaska food system received through the 2014 and 2015 Town Hall meetings will assist the AFPC to evaluate the impact of their current priorities, and will frame key issues for use in developing the next 5-year strategic planning cycle.

This report summarizes information gathered through the Anchorage Town Hall meeting. All of the materials used for promotion and unedited comments gathered are included in the appendix.

Overview

PLANNING

A Town Hall Meeting Committee comprised of AFPC governing board members and local community members met twice via teleconference. The group provided input on all aspects of the meeting from logistics and promotion to implementation and the agenda, including an appropriate public engagement framework. Additionally, the committee provided valuable and relevant contacts in Anchorage to ensure there was a broad representation of attendees at the meeting.

Elizabeth Hodges Snyder represented the AFPC Governing Board at the meeting.

A final teleconference was held about 10 days prior to the meeting to finalize details. This teleconference included the meeting facilitators, AFPC Governing Board representative attending the meeting, and most importantly, critical partners on-the-ground in Anchorage who agreed to assist the team with final logistics and promotion.

PROMOTION

A flyer was created for the event and was distributed and shared via social media outlets including the AFPC Facebook page. The flyer was also shared via the AFPC's action alert email list serve. The flyer was emailed to local partners in Anchorage who posted it on community bulletin boards and local businesses.

The event was added to the Alaska Public Media, Anchorage Press, and Alaska Dispatch News calendars of events, as well as the "What's Up" and AFPC email list serves.

A public service announcement was submitted to the local radio and a press release was distributed.

Press coverage of the event included Alaska Public Media KNBA Morning Line with Governing Board member Danny Consenstein and Anchorage Press.

ATTENDANCE

50 people were in the room; 42 signed in. Attendees were generally made aware of the event through the extensive promotion including Facebook, the AFPC email listserv, the flyer, community calendars, radio PSA, the press release, and word of mouth generated by governing board members and their communication networks.

Meeting Logistics

LOCATION

The meeting was held at the Downtown Soup Kitchen. The staff of the Soup Kitchen generously donated the space and their time to help promote the event and provide food. The venue was very fitting for the topic, the number of people in attendance, and it provided the basic services required (kitchen, power, screen for PowerPoint presentation).

DATE AND TIME

The date and time of the Anchorage meeting was coordinated strategically with local recommendations. Anchorage is a large community with many competing events and activities, however it did not appear that there were any large competing events that evening.

FOOD

A local Anchorage farmer donated locally grown carrots, Alaska Marine Conservation Council donated Alaska rockfish, and a Downtown Soup Kitchen chef donated his time to make a fish chowder with the ingredients. Additional baked goods were generously donated by AFPC governing board members.

Meeting Agenda

Based on feedback from Governing Board members about the 2014 town hall agendas, the town hall meeting committee suggested a slight modification of the meeting agenda and information collection methods in order to increase the call to action aspect of the meetings. The Anchorage Town Hall began with an overview presentation on the AFPC, followed by gathering of individual input then small group discussions on solutions. Public input was gathered using open-ended questions as opposed to framing the issues and driving the discussion toward preset topics.

Participants sat at long tables, each containing 5-10 people. Governing Board members and facilitators were spread out evenly throughout the room and recorded the discussion at each table. During the first half of the meeting, facilitators collected the following information from all participants. Participants were given 5 minutes to answer each question. There were no limits on the amount of answers they could write. Information was gathered using post-it notes which were categorized by the participants into sectors of the food system. The following broad questions were asked:

1. What do you LIKE about the food system in Anchorage? What are the positive things about food in Anchorage? What do you like? What is working? Are there new and innovative things happen-ing that you want to share?
2. What do you NOT like so much about food in Anchorage? Do you face issues, challenges or barriers that you think need to be addressed?
3. If you had unlimited resources, what would be your vision for an ideal food system in Anchorage?

The second half of the meeting was a longer, more in-depth discussion about specific issues. Groups gathered around food system sectors of their choosing from the “short-answer” exercise, and then those groups discussed the issue(s) of that sector in detail and brainstormed potential solutions or actions to improve the issue(s). The groups then reported back to the larger group about their issue and potential solution.

All comments from the three short exercises, the long exercise and the general table notes were collected and have been organized and documented in the appendix. The following provides a summary level recap of the input received through both exercises.

Summary of Anchorage Public Input

What do Anchorage residents LIKE about the food system?

CONSUMPTION

- Local food in local restaurants
- Community around food

DISTRIBUTION

- AMCC Catch of the Season
- Community Supported Agriculture
- Farmers Markets

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

- Advocates
- Traditional foods initiative
- Variety of food programs (assistance, Alaska Grown, Farm to School)

EDUCATION

- Growing awareness of importance of food system
- Community food education (Cooperative Extension, Continuing Ed at UAA)

PRODUCTION AND HARVEST

- Access to wild harvested foods, including fisheries
- Locally grown food sources/farmers
- Greenhouses, year round innovations for greens
- Farm to School Program
- Community Gardens

RESEARCH

- Supported best practices
- Permaculture guild

FOOD SAFETY

- Regulations with respect to hunted game/fish
- Improved food quality and delayed spoilage

What do Anchorage residents DISLIKE about the food system?

CONSUMPTION

- Expensive food, especially imported veggies in winter
- Too much fast food/cheap unhealthy food
- Lack of traceable seafood
- Availability of Alaska Native traditional foods in schools, health care facilities
- Variety of local food is limited

DISTRIBUTION

- No food co-op
- Farmers markets run by volunteers, no business/government assistance
- Cost of food
- Lack of access to local food in mainstream stores
- Not enough storage and processing facilities
- Lack of access in winter

FOOD SAFETY

- Limited regulatory oversight
- No standards/oversight of the food in transportation
- Lack of resources/funding

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

- Policies and permitting/zoning laws required to build greenhouse for personal use
- Root cellars need to be legal
- Inadequate labeling
- High monetary barrier of entry for producing within Anchorage
- Limited SNAP store choices
- Lack of funding for Farm to School Program, school gardens, Farmers Market QUEST
- Subsidized junk food, overabundance of processed food
- No support of expansion for underutilized property for serving low-income fresh food

EDUCATION

- Need more educational opportunities about food
- Lack of skills to cook

TRANSPORTATION

- Cost of shipping
- Poor quality due to long supply lines

PRODUCTION AND HARVEST

- Lack of local, fresh, affordable, organic foods (dairy and meat especially)
- Dependence on imported foods
- Not enough farmers
- Lack of commercial kitchens, prevent start up food businesses

WASTE AND RECYCLING

- Unclear infrastructure for collection, processing, and distribution of food waste

RESEARCH

- Limited local food in time of disaster

Conclusion

The Anchorage town hall meeting was fun, informative and met the identified goals of successfully collecting new information from the largest population center in Alaska about food system issues. The information gathered from the Anchorage Town Hall meeting will be further analyzed alongside the other Town Hall meetings that have occurred. This information will be critical in setting the stage for the forthcoming AFPC strategic planning process.



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Longhand Notes

Tuesday, March 24, 2015
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM
Anchorage Soup Kitchen

Notes from meeting to be used for formal report

► **Participant Input:** *What do Anchorage Town Hall participants LIKE about the food system?*

PRODUCTION AND HARVEST

- Personal use harvest x 4, fisheries (Kenai, Chitina)
- Local food sources, more local farmers
- I like the possibility of a vertical farm taking the place of unused milk building in Anc.
- Entrepreneurs
- Salmon, farmers markets, breweries, bakers, delta meats
- There are a lot of greenhouses in gardens
- Year round innovations for greens – AK Sprouts and new planned vertical farm
- Shops w/ hydroponics and growing supplies x 2
- Increased availability of locally grown foods
- Access to wild harvested/locally grown foods x 4
- Great carrots
- Potential for increased access to local produce
- Abundant & diverse fisheries resources – farm to school programs/NAFS
- More people becoming involved
- Community gardens

DISTRIBUTION

- Local produce
- Many food outlets
- AMCC Catch of the Season
- CSAs
- Spenard, Sears Mall, & music @ Farmers Markets x 12

CONSUMPTION

- Access to wild (subsistence) foods
- Local food in local restaurants x 3
- Farmers markets x 5
- Great quality
- Community around food
- Culture of supporting local food – support AK seafood – many farmers markets
- I like new community gardens
- Hoping to see Spenard Farmers market continue in some form

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

- Community
- Advocates
- Traditional foods initiative
- Alaska Grown & farm to school program
- Love the seafood – less restrictions on resident usage
- We just moved from Georgia where we were not allowed to keep back yard chickens or attend meetings like this. Both are FANTASTIC changes for us.
- Variety of food assistance programs

EDUCATION

- Community food education for those who know about it: cooperative extension, continuing Ed UAA, etc. x 2
- The encouragement to have gardens
- Food community is growing – growing awareness of importance of food system x 5
- Involved Fairview community council

FOOD SAFETY

- Regulation with respect to hunted meat/game/fish
- Food safety improves food quality & delays spoilage

RESEARCH

- Research supported best practices
- Perfect market for small scale “farmers market style” entry into sale for profit
- Permaculture guild: a community of people working on learning about local food and sharing their knowledge

 **Participant Input:** *What do Anchorage Town Hall participants DISLIKE about the food system?*

PRODUCTION AND HARVEST

- Lack of local dairy (especially cheese!) and meat products – closing of Mat Valley creamery – x 2
- Dependence on importing food
- Hard to start up local food business because of lack of commercial kitchens! Need community kitchen (like community garden)
- Lack of local, fresh, affordable, organic foods x 4
- Not enough farmers x 2

DISTRIBUTION

- No food co-op
- Food deserts- lack of available/affordable produce in many areas
- I don't like that the farmers markets are expected to be run entirely by volunteers w/ no assistance from business/gov't/ etc.
- Cost of food, expense, short supply of food
- Lack of access at grocery stores- hard getting local food at restaurants, schools, grocery stores, Costco
- Farmed salmon in our stores & restaurants- transportation & infrastructure lacking
- Not enough storage & processing facilities
- Limited AK food in AK mainstream stores
- Access to food is difficult during normal off-work times (evenings)
- Local food too far away for me to drive easily (Eagle River) – no public transportation
- Lack of access during winter
- No local milk because Washington State milk industry uses us as a market for their overproduction – being at the end of the line market for industrial agriculture

CONSUMPTION

- cost – food is expensive – expensive imported veggies in winter
- too much fast food x 2 - cheap unhealthy food
- not enough traceable option in seafood
- Availability of AK Native traditional foods in schools, health care, etc.
- Variety of local food is limited and sometimes hard to find

WASTE AND RECYCLING

- Not sure of what the infrastructure is for collection, processing & distribution of food waste is

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

- Policies and permitting required to build greenhouse for personal use
- No support of expansion for underutilized property for serving low-income fresh food
- Not enough production
- Root cellars need to be legal
- Inadequate labeling
- High monetary barrier of entry for producing within Anchorage Muni x 2
- Zoning laws prohibiting greenhouse construction on city lots
- Ridiculously overpriced
- That some EBT ATMS charge fees
- The limited SNAP store choices x 2
- Lack of funding for FTSPs, school gardens, quest farmers market, etc.
- Legislature cutting programs such as Farm to School x 3
- DNR game fish prohibition
- Unable to reimburse for use of traditional foods (school meal on wheels)
- Condition of perishable greens by the time they get to Alaska
- Subsidized junk food, unsupported good food
- Overabundance of processed food
- That local production is given lip service at the political level and little action
- Lack of time to cook
- Politics – lack of knowledge and participation – too many cooks spoiling the soup

EDUCATION

- Ignorance (people who don't understand the benefits of local)
- Kids don't know where they're food comes from
- Food understanding – what is food
- Needs to be more educational opportunities about food
- Poor access to nutritious food and the skills to cook it for lg. part of community
- Not enough oversight if Fairview Lions Community Garden

TRANSPORTATION

- Cost of shipping. Hydrocarbons in shipping
- Poor quality due to long supply lines

FOOD SAFETY

- Transportation not safe – bypass mail
- Lack of resources/funding
- Limited regulatory oversight
- Only important when something happens – creates a reactive program
- No standards – no oversight of the food in transportation

RESEARCH

- The inevitable food shortage in time of disaster – freshness of food – limited local food

Participant Input: *If you had unlimited resources, what would be your vision of the ideal food system in your community?*

PRODUCTION AND HARVEST

- Unlimited resources – could offer traditional foods everyday to healthcare, long term care, schools – meal program
- Wild harvest fish - farm production
- School gardens across state
- Grass fed (when appropriate) meat products
- More agriculture greenhouses to grow food
- Huge indoor/outdoor site to rent sections of kitchen/ garden – would help small food start ups
- Buyers, growers & fish harvesters have the same values and work together
- More local produce available x 3
- More indoor & hydroponic facilities
- Ideal food system: 100% locally available and sustainable (i.e., all weather growing opportunities)
- The ideal scenario: incentivized farmers producing highly cost-competitive produce available throughout the year
- Nutritious, fresh, preferable locally grown produced food available to all @ affordable prices
- Less than half of AK food would be imported

DISTRIBUTION

- Cooperative style distribution hub & growing space for winter gardeners
- No one would go hungry – healthy local food would be available in all areas
- Growing from a local level – people aware of their food possibilities
- More locally grown, affordable foods
- High quality food that is accessible to all members of the socioeconomic spectrum
- Infrastructure to support food systems (storage facilities, roads, processing, etc.)
- Access to preferred foods by all folk
- Farmers making a living and affordable local products at every store, which are community owned and environmentally conscious
- Privately funded food hub – storage- distribution- processing – community kitchen- cooking school facility
- Central farmers market in each neighborhood x 2
- Bringing igloos/domes back to Alaska feeding the Bush
- Access to a variety of different, fresh, local food located in one place (produce, protein, etc.)
- Affordable local food with the recipients involved in the processes – more hands-on and accessible
- I want a future of food independence where Alaska meets most of our own needs
- Small groups of local producers growing affordable food for their own communities – open channels for trading and little gov't interference
- A map of local food sources....eggs from backyard hens, goat milk, veggies fish....you name it! Just like a park map.

CONSUMPTION

- Try to reduce freight/shipping costs through creative policy making – try to bridge cost gap – possibly tax imported/processed foods – incentives on local foods
- Educated consumers growing and eating quality fresh food – highly taxed junk food to pay for healthcare
- Lots of readily available local food and prosperous food business and farmers
- Local food available every 3 blocks and a frictionless Uber like transaction for purchasing

WASTE AND RECYCLING

- A community compost heap in every community – a greenhouse and root cellar in every community – fresh milk delivered to every door from local dairies and a good bakery in every community and fresh food in every school – food to feed the poor that tastes good and is Alaska grown
- Community compost with business model
- Education on safe backyard composting – muni grants funded by landfill
- Terminal use food outlets compost service – “match making” service
- Divert non-sale quality, edible food to donation stream

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

- A very easy way to give people food tokens to redeem for food
- The ability to create a small farm that provides local produce and is economically feasible for a farmer to comply with policy
- Subsidized healthy food and taxed (heavily) junk food
- Protected farm land
- Cooperation between state, farmers, and residents to develop a system of farming year round
- Alaska (local) grown starches, grains, veggies of all varieties and locally raised livestock available seasonally but year round x 2
- Farm on all the vacant lots in anchorage
- People of all ages signing up for green badge through public education that means from age 6-18 they have served their community garden for 1 year – the gardens would supply local needs
- Anchorage local food lab – huge indoor/outdoor space centered around local food – commercial kitchen space and garden plots to rent – food/gardening/cooking education for youth and adults
- Our many existing ethnic food production and gathering and preparation knowledge be spread
- A community garden in every neighborhood – farmers market in each area of town – school gardens so kids learn about food
- A full time organizer for each market

EDUCATION

- Scholarships for folks to learn to grow food in the muni
- Agriculture education standards
- Better public education on nutrition for health – in schools x 3
- A community that values and appreciates the benefits of a healthy food system that serves all
- A non-profit teaching farm that produces milk, eggs, veggies, etc., all while educating school children and adults – all products could be donated
- Increase in awareness of local food
- Local food and gardening classes
- Save our farm to school program x 2
- Need the message to come from more than one place
- School gardens – involve after school programs
- Pay an educator for community councils to help each area have a community garden
- Map/website of where to find local foods
- Victory garden campaign
- Involve campfire – yardacopia

FOOD SAFETY

- Clarify regulations
- Create more public awareness
- More education
- More local oversight

RESEARCH

- Aquaponics systems for residential small scale production 365 days a year
- Robust food production in the valley to support many more small farms
- Every person would have resources to easily acquire nutritionally adjust diet – enough producers/harvesters to supply local diet – sustainability of ongoing farm/ ocean to plate
- Incentives for entrepreneurs & producers, i.e., land & money
- Utilize existing research facilities
- GIS/food systems map
- Collaborate w/ other northern countries – communication: social and electronic media
- Sharing “ethnosphere” multi-cultural food growing
- Sharing – business help for farms
- Evaluation – best practices
- Nutritional diet components – food security – food waste- how much food is imported – soil analysis – sales data



The Alaska Food Policy Council
Invites you to attend the

ANCHORAGE TOWN HALL MEETING

WHEN: Tuesday, March 24, 2015 – 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Downtown Soup Kitchen, 240 E 3rd Ave
FOOD: Light refreshments and beverages will be provided.

Why is food important to you?

The Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) invites you to attend a community town hall meeting to gather your ideas and opinions about local food. The AFPC is interested in hearing input from local community members on local food system issues.

The purpose of these meetings is to increase awareness of Alaska food issues, promote involvement in local food issues by community members, and gain a perspective of local food issues to inform AFPC and policy makers.



photo credit: Susan Sommer and The Center Market

What is the AFPC?

The Alaska Food Policy Council works to strengthen Alaska's food systems to spur local economic development, increase food security, and improve nutrition and health. The Council serves as a resource for information on local and state food systems, and works to identify and propose policy and environmental changes that can improve the production, processing, distribution, health, security and safety of our food.

For more information, visit akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com or call **907.575.8583**



PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release
March 23, 2015

Media Contact: Holly Spoth-Torres, 907.223.0136

**The Alaska Food Policy Council to Host Anchorage Town Hall Meeting:
Information gathered from Alaskans will guide statewide food policy.**

Anchorage, March 23, 2015 – The Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) is hosting statewide town hall meetings to gather information and ideas from Alaskans about food in their communities.

The purpose of the meetings is to increase statewide awareness about Alaska food issues, promote involvement in the local food system by community members, and gain a perspective of local food issues. The information gathered will be used by the AFPC to inform institutions, organizations and policy makers to improve and strengthen the Alaska Food System.

The first four meetings were held in Nome, Juneau, Fairbanks, and Bethel in spring 2014. Other meetings were held in Palmer in February, 2015 and Homer in March, 2015. Reports from the first four meetings can be found on the Alaska Food Policy Council website. The Anchorage Town Hall meeting details are as follows:

- Anchorage: Tuesday, March 24, from 5:30-7:30 PM at the Downtown Soup Kitchen (240 E 3rd Ave). Donations of peanut butter and jelly to support the Downtown Soup Kitchen are encouraged.

The Alaska Food Policy Council is an independent, statewide organization with a vision for a food secure, healthy Alaska. The AFPC works to strengthen Alaska's food systems to spur local economic development, increase food security and improve nutrition and health. The AFPC serves as a resource for information on local and state-side food systems and works to identify and propose policy and other changes that can improve the production, processing, distribution, health, security and safety of food in Alaska.

For more information about the Alaska Food Policy Council, please visit <http://akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com/> or LIKE the Alaska Food Policy Council on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/akfoodpolicy>.

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Our Community 4:26 PM TUE MARCH 24, 2015

Our Community - Alaska Food Policy Council!

By [DANNY PRESTON](#) /PEOPLE/DANNY-PRESTON/ & JOHN SALLEE



AFPC Logo
Credit https://akfoodpolicycouncil.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/logo_full-color.jpg

Listen
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Our Community segment 03/24/15

KNBA keeping you in tuned with Our Community! In today's segment, Danny Preston speaks with state executive director for the U.S department of Agriculture and a governing board member of the Alaska Food Policy Council, Daniel Consenstein! The AFPC is a group of Alaskan's who have gotten together because they care about food being consumed. Problems arising with bad food consumption includes diseases such as obesity and diabetes. The ACPC is a group of Alaskan's from all across the state that takes a peek into our food system and where it initially comes from. Tonight they will be hosting a town meeting at the Downtown Soup kitchen from 5:50 to 7:30 PM. For more information, visit: <https://akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com/> (<https://akfoodpolicycouncil.wordpress.com/>)

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Alaskan Food Systems

MARCH 26, 2015 - 3:13 PM

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Town hall meeting gathers input on local food



(http://www.anchoragepress.com/sites/default/files/images/2015/03/26/3.26.15_new_community_image_web.jpg)

Photo by Elissa Brown; Town Hall participants brainstormed successes, challenges and visions related to different components of the local food system.

Colorful sticky notes dotted the walls, some positive, some negative, some visionary—all related to Anchorage food matters: “Farmers’ Markets are awesome!” “Fresh food is so expensive and hard to get in winter,” “What if there were more community gardens, and every school had a garden?”

In the Downtown Soup Kitchen last Tuesday evening, a diverse group of gardeners, farmers’ market vendors, educators, policy-makers and general community members gathered to discuss the local food system. What works well? What are the challenges? What radical changes could contribute to an ideal food system?

The town hall meeting was the seventh and last of a series hosted across the state by the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC) to gather Alaskans’ ideas and opinions about local food. A non-profit with the core values of health, self-reliance and prosperity, the AFPC’s goal with the meetings was to increase awareness of Alaska food issues and promote community involvement, while also hearing perspectives on concerns and desires relating to local food issues. The meetings began in Nome in January 2014 and have continued through Juneau, Fairbanks, Bethel, Palmer and Homer.

“Everyone, whether or not they realize it, is part of the food system,” said Dr. Liz Snyder, a co-chair of the AFPC. “With these town hall meetings, we want people to feel like they have a voice and what they’re concerned about matters, because it does matter.”

Let the meeting commence

In a typical town hall meeting, the loud and confident people speak and the meeker ones stay silent. For this event, the AFPC opted for a more democratic process: sticky notes. Following the three prompts about local food systems—what’s working well, what are challenges, vision for ideal system—participants jotted ideas on sticky notes, and then categorized each on sections of the wall with headings for different components of a food system, like “Production,” “Policy,” and “Education.”

“This gives a voice both to people who feel comfortable talking in large groups and to those who may feel more comfortable just scribbling down their thoughts and sticking them on the wall somewhere,” Snyder said. “We want to encourage wide participation because that reflects actual participation in the food system.”

The evening’s facilitator was Holly Spoth-Torres, project manager with Denali Daniels and Associates (DDA), an organization providing strategic problem-solving to nonprofits, government agencies and businesses across Alaska. Through funding from the State Department of Health and Social Services, DDA was hired to help AFPC with planning, outreach and data. Ultimately, the compiled research from the meetings will go to inform AFPC’s priorities, strategic plan and policy recommendations.

Alaskan food systems: what’s the big deal?

The following is a selection of issues and ideas discussed at the town hall meeting, relating to different aspects of the food system:

Production/Harvest:

People appreciated the strong tradition of wild foods in Alaska but identified a need to increase production and access to local foods, especially in winter. Many wanted more community gardens, innovative indoor gardening solutions and policy reform for urban agriculture. They recognized a need to protect farmland in the Valley and create incentives so people are motivated to produce and process locally.

Distribution:

Farmers' markets were considered successful because they serve as centralized food hubs and community spaces. There could be more food hubs, including ones with space for storage, processing and sales. What about an online interactive map showing where people are growing food or selling locally grown food?

Consumption:

Farmers' markets, again, were popular; also, people appreciated the increasing number of restaurants using and highlighting Alaska-grown ingredients. Still, cheap, unhealthy foods are common, contributing to health problems.

ADVERTISEMENT



Waste and recycling:

Participants suggested introducing a large-scale composting business model and also encouraging backyard composting. They brainstormed a “match-making” service between pig farmers and people with extra food waste.

Education:

There is a solid selection of food and gardening courses offered, but there could still be more. School gardening programs and Farm to School programs are always threatened by budget cuts, but many participants felt they were vital.

Policy:

Urban gardeners noted the various municipal ordinances that make commercial agriculture in Anchorage a costly endeavor. Policy reform could make it easier to construct high tunnels and greenhouses.

Research:

Participants suggested that research could help fill out an online GIS interactive map with all sorts of assorted food-related resources. It might be interesting to collaborate and learn from other northern countries about their food system successes and challenges.

Different communities, all Alaskan

In many ways, Alaskans across the state share similarities. “We are geographically removed from the Lower 48. We all experience long winters, a lot of us engage in collection of wild food,” Snyder said. “But we obviously also recognize that there are vast differences between urban and rural Alaska.”

Each of the seven town hall meetings followed the same specific agenda, according to Spoth-Torres, who facilitated them all. “I know instinctively that each community has its own character and is different,” she said, “but it’s very rewarding to actually see the different characteristics of each community come through in what they talked about.” For example, in Nome

several local reindeer herders attended, and discussion steered toward how to bring meat to market and navigate the permitting process. However, in Anchorage, there was more emphasis on policies related to urban agriculture.

And yet, Spoth-Torres, has seen some overarching trends. “People want more options all around,” she said. “When they go to the store, they want more options for healthy foods, especially outside of Anchorage and Fairbanks,” she said. “All over Alaska, people care about supporting local, Alaska-grown farmers’ markets.” Another trend is a recognized need for creating food storage and food processing facilities.

The Anchorage town hall meeting was a lively event, largely bent toward opportunities, problem-solving and potential collaborations. It was punctuated often by applause, and participants lingered after the meeting ended, exchanging contact information and planning new projects.

“People here are clearly engaged and knowledgeable about their food system,” Spoth-Torres said. “They want to make a difference.”

Snyder agreed that the meeting held exciting potential. “People came full of ideas and energy and now we just need to harness it for tangible end products. We’re at a good jumping-off point.”

Our state’s food system certainly has challenges, but with a hearty dose of Alaskan can-do-attitude and frontier spirit, the jump can be exhilarating.

Tags:

FOOD (/TAGS/FOOD) FARMERS MARKET (/TAGS/FARMERS-MARKET) FRESH FOOD (/TAGS/FRESH-FOOD)



Anchorage Town Hall Meeting

March 24, 2015

Downtown Soup Kitchen

5:30-7:30pm

Agenda

- 5:30 pm The Alaska Food Policy Council welcomes you! Come on in, find a seat, grab some food, we're so happy to have you!
- 5:40 pm Who is the Alaska Food Policy Council? What are we here to accomplish tonight?
Presentation by Alaska Food Policy Council Governing Board Member
Liz Hodges Snyder
- 6:00 pm Group Exercise #1
- 1: What are the positive things about food in your community? What do you like? What is working? Are there new and innovative things happening that you want to share?
 - 2: What do you NOT like so much about food in your community? Do you face issues, challenges or barriers that you think need to be addressed?
 - 3: If you had unlimited resources, what would be your vision of the ideal food system in your community?
- 6:15 pm Group Exercise #2
- In depth discussion about the issues identified in Exercise #1. Talk about the issues in detail and brainstorm potential solutions or actions to improve the issue. If describing a positive issue, explain why it is working.
- 7:00 pm Groups Report Back
- 7:15 pm Alaska Food Policy Council Governing Board Member(s) continue presenting, including call to action based on Ken Meter recommendations. Open the room to questions/comments/discussion.
- Closing: What happens next? Did we miss anything important that you want to tell us?

TOWN HALL MEETING



Alaska Food Policy Council
Anchorage, Alaska
March 24, 2015



Did you know?
Alaskans spend \$2.5 billion dollars
on food each year at grocery stores
and restaurants.

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Did you know?

It's estimated that 95% of Alaska's food is imported.
That makes Alaska vulnerable in times of disasters.

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Did you know?

Alaska's food system creates a lot of jobs.
About 115,000 jobs are food-related.
That's 1 in 7 jobs in Alaska.

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Did you know?

For each dollar invested in local Alaska food, \$3-6 circulates in local economies of our own food supply.

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Did you know?

Rates of chronic disease related to lifestyle choices are escalating in Alaska.

That means high healthcare costs borne by the state.

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Did you know?

\$459 million annual medical care costs are attributable to obesity in Alaska.

The State of Alaska pays one quarter of those costs.

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Did you know?

Chronic diseases—such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes— are related to unhealthy eating and physical inactivity. These are among the most prevalent, costly, and preventable of all health problems.

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Did you know?

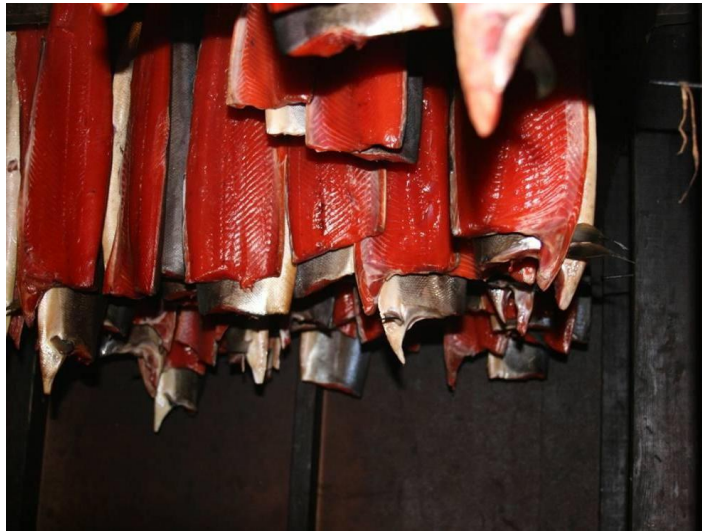
Increasing everyone's access to fresh, healthy food through programs like Farmers Markets or Community Supported Agriculture can reduce rates of chronic disease.

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Our Food System



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Salmon in Hydaburg Smokehouse

Credit: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

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Farm field in Palmer

Credit: Alaska Division of Agriculture

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Communing with cauliflower, Palmer

Credit: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture

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Vendors at Sitka Farmers Market

Credit: Sitka Local Foods Network

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Serving burritos from Taco Loco

Credit: Anabel Galindo, Taco Loco

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Gathering sea greens, Aleutian Islands

Credit: Gary Ferguson

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Ice fishing in Dillingham

Credit: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

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What is food policy?

Food policy is any activity that addresses, shapes or regulates the food system.

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Who is the Alaska Food Policy Council?

Over 200 individuals and agencies across the state – driven by the need to strengthen our food system.

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How do we impact Alaska's food system?

Through collective action targeting policies that impact Alaskan's health, self-reliance and prosperity.

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Alaska Food Policy Council Vision:

A healthy, secure food system that
feeds all Alaskans.

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AFPC's Core Values



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AFPC Goals

Goal 1

All Alaskans have access to affordable, healthy (preferably local) foods.

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QUEST accepted at Spenard Farmer's Market

Credit: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

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Farm to School Program at Chugiak High School

Credit: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture

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AFPC Goals

Goal 2

Alaska's food-related industries have a strong workforce and operate in a supportive business environment.

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Adjusting a fishing net in Bristol Bay

Credit: Gigi Marcantonio, Alaska Marine Conservation Council

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Making Salmon Wraps at Taco Loco, Anchorage

Credit: Anabel Galindo, Taco Loco

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School chef in Nenana

Credit: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

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AFPC Goals

Goal 3

**Food is safe, protected and
supplies are secure throughout
Alaska.**

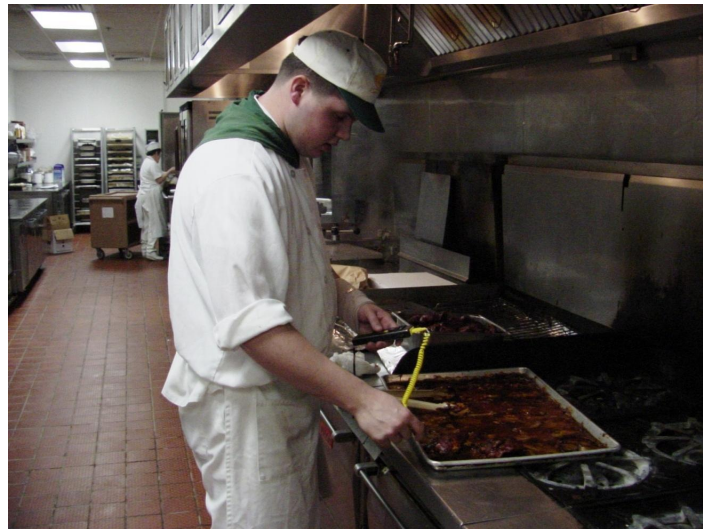
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Insulated Delivery Boxes

Credit: TEDS Box

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Checking Food Temperatures

Credit: Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Food Safety and Sanitation Program

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Environmental Health Officer Inspecting Crab

Credit: Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Food Safety and Sanitation Program

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AFPC Goals

Goal 4

Alaska's food system is more sustainable.

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Sitka Farmers Market

Credit: Sitka Local Foods Network

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Fish to School Program in Kodiak

Credit: Kodiak School District

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AFPC Goals

Goal 5

Alaskans are engaged in our food system

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Food in the classroom, Sitka

Credit: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture

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Division of Agriculture Chef at the Market Program in Sitka

Credit: Sitka Local Foods Network

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AFPC Organization

- Governing Board
- Locally Grown Workgroup
- School Programs Workgroup
- Emergency Preparedness Workgroup
- Research and Information Workgroup
- Public Engagement Workgroup
- Legislative Workgroup

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Organizations Represented on the Governing Board

- USDA Farm Service Agency
- Alaska DNR, Division of Agriculture
- Alaska DHSS, Obesity Prevention & Control Program
- University of Alaska, Fairbanks
- UAF Cooperative Extension Services
- Alaska Farmers' Union
- Sitka Local Foods Network
- Fairbanks Community Cooperative Market
- Rosie Creek Farm
- Taco Loco
- Ugashik Wild Salmon Co.
- Alaska Center for the Environment
- Alaska Marine Conservation Council

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How you can get involved?

- Learn more about your community's food system
- Advocate for municipal policies that improve your community's local food system
- Share your food priorities with legislators, local and tribal government representatives

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Girls wielding Alaska zucchini, Palmer

Credit: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture

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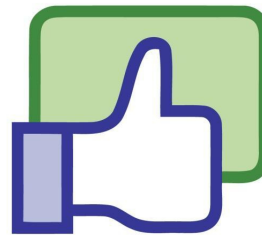
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Contact the Food Policy Council

akfoodpolicycouncil@gmail.com

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Anchorage Town Hall Meeting Report