

Solano Local Food System Alliance
May 6, 2021 meeting minutes

Attending:

Elena Karoulina, Sustainable Solano
Stephanie Oelsligle Jordan, Sustainable Solano
Allison Nagel, Sustainable Solano
Maggie Kolk, Sustainable Solano
Noah Dove, researcher/Mills College graduate
Teri Knight, USDA-NRCS
Priscilla Yeane, Solano County Agriculture Department
Kimber Smith, Rotary Feeds Families
Mike Ioakimedes, Solano County Fair Association
Juanita Fleming, Solano Public Health/CalFresh (SNAP)
Heather Pierini, Food is Free Solano and Solano Gleaning Initiative
Ed King, Solano County Agriculture Department
Paula Schnese, Cultivate Community Food Co-op
Robin Cox, Solano Public Health/VIBE Solano
Kristin Kiesel, UC Davis

Mission: Create an environmentally sustainable, economically viable, socially just and equitable local food system in Solano County.

Highlighted 2021 Goals (discussion in notes below)

- Countywide food rescue program
 - Responding to SB 1383
 - Determine relationship with food access organizations
- Board of Supervisors
 - Summarize priority issues, findings, policy gaps to support significant issues memo
 - Arrange individual meetings with county supervisors
 - Work toward a larger presentation on local food system issues to the Board of Supervisors
- Educational speakers
 - Prioritize topics by interest
 - Schedule at least one speaker this year and make it open to the public
- Charter
 - Draft a charter for membership
 - Outline benefits and responsibilities/commitments of being on Alliance

Logistics

- Plan to meet every other month starting after the August meeting
- Plan for August meeting to be outdoors and in-person and allow more time to meet

- Keep Local Food Bites quarterly
- Draft a white paper on issues/solutions that can be used in city general plan discussions

I. Welcome / introductions: Elena Karoulina, Sustainable Solano & Alliance members

Introduction of Teri Knight, new member of Alliance, district conservationist with NRCS (Vacaville office)

II. Alliance Goals and Strategies (conversations with members) – Elena & all

Elena reviewed the document included at the end of these minutes

Everyone was in agreement Alliance is a central place for all local food system efforts; unique in its nature

Document reviews:

- Networking
- Learning
- Education
- Farms, farmland & agriculture
- Farm to consumer
- Logistics

Discussion:

Countywide Food Rescue

Kimber – Rotary gleaning program has inspired a summit coming up on collaboration for food security

Heather – Food is Free Solano is doing its first school food rescue program starting next week

SB1383 – mandates that edible food go first to human consumption, then animal consumption, then composting facilities. Seeks to curb food waste, but the infrastructure is not in place to make this happen

Working on future funding to set up structures so are resources available to do this process
Food rescue/animal feed operations in the county that already have logistics set up

Stephanie – Hoping to use an app developed by UC Davis grad for a pilot in Vallejo that would create a prototype

Food is Free Solano and Sustainable Solano pursuing an EPA Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program that would fund this

Robin – How does this relate to the county not having a good distribution system for farmers? Could the system rescuing some kinds of food be brought to bear on farm food distribution?

Elena – Vision for food rescue is hyper-local – food is picked up and distributed in the cities where it is available

Moving food from ag regions to cities or food waste from cities to ag (food for animals) is needed

Some funding allows for vehicles, which could be option

Heather – If there was an on-demand transportation system focused on this area

Not just app for moving food donated, but same type of system for moving foods that have been purchased (that's a good overlay)

Have to fund this sustainably – grants are not sustainable long-term – whole process has to support itself long-term

Kimber – food bank has trucks; is there a way to plug into partnering with them? Can we duplicate that model in local farms and local distribution?

Elena –FANNS group dealing with food access and food assistance

Robin help look into role of FANNS and their long-term vision

What would be the best way strategically to work on these issues and who will be representing the Alliance on food policy council

Noah – work with some of the waste /recycling companies – Recology, Valcore

Board of Supervisors

Noah – might find different champions among supervisors with different specialties/interests/expertise

Robin – Opportunity for DPH and Nutrition Services to write a significant issues memo focused on local food/particularly concerns about fast food density

Memo could be starting point for eventually bringing a presentation in front of the board

Elena – Need to emphasize that it is a holistic issue: Can't solve food access without strong farming, can't support farming without demand

Robin – Several members of board know this is not an easy fix

They need to know all the discoveries that have been made — reports, surveys – where work needs to be done; barriers to that

Ed – Back in 2007-08 was an ag future study with UC Davis Ag Issues Center

Ag Advisory Committee has been wanting to see an update to that; timing's maybe not right for that at the moment

May come about with update to the general plan

Use the opportunity of significant issues memo as lead-in; build up to individual meetings with supervisors; lead to presentation to the board as a whole

Here's a link to recent BOS significant issues memos for reference:

https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/county_admin/significant_issues_memo/default.asp

Robin – Have to answer questions about retail food density/ restaurant fast food density, but opens up opportunity to say the whole food system is broken in Solano County
Give them enough that it piques their interest

Heather - small level distribution (connecting farms to buyers), quality food available (food quality desert), fast food density as a result of dearth of access to good food

Elena, Robin, Ed, Mike commit to pursuing individual supervisor meetings

Ideas/outline for memo will be sent out to Alliance for input, then can be expanded for meetings

Networking

Kimber – need those side conversations

Meetings are often catching up, so harder to move the needle

Meet every other month and then once a year have a 4- to 5-hour meeting

Elena – next meeting in August could be in person and longer

Kristin – Could have a discussion board for capturing quick needs, requests, exchanges of information

Education

Elena – Will circulate topics and have members vote on interest level, then work to find speakers

Will identify and hold at least one session this year and make it open to the public

Stephanie – Possible to have a spotlight in the Local Food Bites newsletter

Robin – a lot hinges on what we're trying to do: How often meet, whether bring in speakers, needs to be guided by major thrusts of what trying to move

Having meetings more often makes it more of a working group pushing things forward

We really want to move the agenda forward, meet more frequently than quarterly

Charter

Robin – Need to have conversation about how the group as a whole feels about people speaking on behalf of the Alliance
Hope would be OK as individual members to try to advance that (if aligns with mission and vision and values)

Elena – How to become an Alliance member came up in conversations
Don't have a charter – needs to be a formal document on the benefits and responsibilities/commitments

City General Plan

Robin – Have opportunities at the city level -- if get things in Fairfield General Plan, could become policy of a sort
Sense the group would like me to try to incorporate some of the wishes and goals in general plan update

Mike- For county and city general plan updates, it was helpful to have a white paper – what our basic message is and what think important elements are want incorporated in the general plan
While comments can be captured for an individual meeting, a paper has a longer shelf life and will be part of public record; you can reference back to that document
It would be a written statement can all agree on – issues and solutions – and how what is being asked for interacts with the existing general plan elements

Other agenda items that were not addressed above will be addressed at the next meeting

III. County farming update: Bounty of the County – Stephanie Jordan, Sustainable Solano

IV. Community Awareness & Support:

- Key stakeholders:
 - 1) Presentation for the Board of Supervisors – Robin Cox, Public Health
 - 2) Working on the city levels; general plans update – Robin
- General public: Cooking classes, youth cooking class pilot - Stephanie

V. Equity / Food Access: comprehensive county-wide food waste prevention and food rescue program developed (Sustainable Solano and Food is Free Solano partnership), did not receive the CalRecycle grant, applying for EPA Environmental Justice grant for the same vision

VI. Policy Updates

VII. Children and Youth

Around the table & wrap up

Next meeting: August 5, 2021

Time and location to be determined

First Thursday of every other month (August, October, December, February, April, June)

Solano Local Food System Alliance Roles

Central place for all local food system efforts' players; unique, meaningful and long-term; cross-sector; shared vision & collective impact; mutual support; casual & beneficial

Networking:

Sounding Board
Mutual support (e.g. red tape removal)
Amplifying each other efforts

Suggestions / needs:

- Know each other, bios / profiles; social time
- Understanding of each member' sphere of influence; bringing new *relevant* members; willingness to help
- Public outreach capacity of each member; ways to coordinate promotion

Learning:

Members need education on various aspects of a local food system (e.g. regenerative ag; farmland protection)

- Capture learning needs and wishes during the meetings
- Schedule guest speakers
- "Bites" newsletter content?

Education:

For general public & key stakeholders

- Public - crucial part of the efforts; done by some members; role of all members to support this
- Stakeholders – need to find a position where seen as an "asset"; find "voice" and leverage points; *communicate collective impact*
- Need BOS champion
- City level?

Farms, farmland & agriculture

- Need to integrate the efforts / coordinate with other agencies and organizations (Ag Advisory Committee, Farm Bureau (?), NRCS, Land Trust, ag associations)

Farm to consumers

- Unique set of challenges and opportunities for each venue (CSAs, farmer markets, retail, restaurants, farm stands, agritourism); case by case basis by some members, support from other members when needed

Logistics of the Alliance

- Meetings' frequency and length; how to do guest speakers?
- In-between meetings: strategy committee?
- Formal way of joining the Alliance (application, benefits, commitments)
- How to communicate "asks/needs"? -"Bites" newsletter – public?
- Ready for in-person meetings?

Policy Work

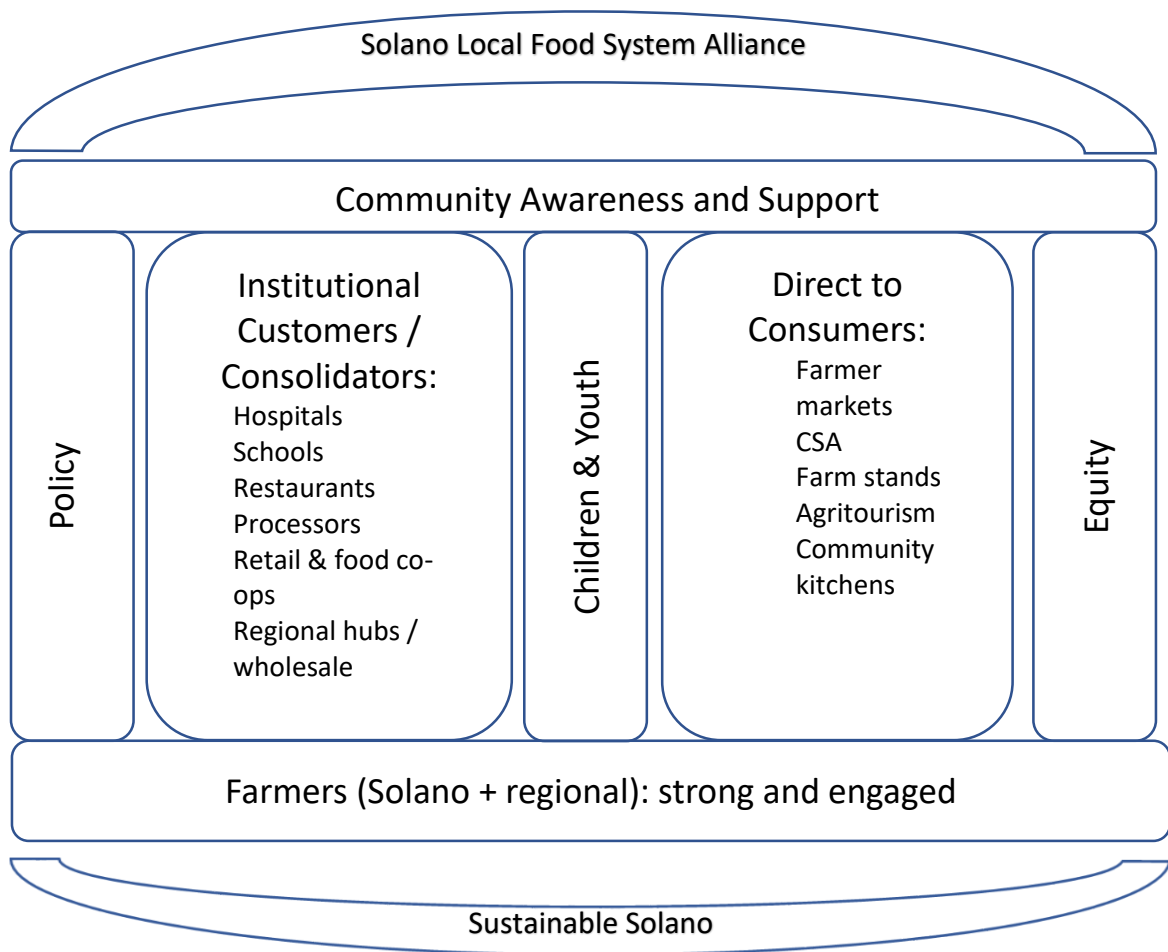
Farm to institution; "5 by 25"

Food waste and rescue

Good food access

- Four important, but least developed or even understood areas; the most challenging; need focused efforts and funding for non-existing areas (food rescue & farm to institution) by some members; coordination with other agencies (good food access; FANNS role?) *and work of all relevant members on policy change*

Solano County Local Food System



*A **local food system** is a collaborative network that integrates sustainable food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic, and social health of a particular area.*

***Vision:** To diversify, expand and safeguard a local healthy food economy that will preserve farmland, its integrity and biodiversity in Solano County, and ensure food access for local communities.*

***"5 by 25" GOAL:** To substitute 5% of food spending on all levels with locally-sourced food (Solano and neighboring counties)*