Minutes - Draft


1. Call to Order. Meeting was called to order at 11:05
2. Minutes. N/A
3. Introductions - All
4. Greenwich Food Alliance (GFA) organizational framework - Ali
5. Ideate - All
   a. Why + How + Who
   b. Leverage inspiration, knowledge and networks

We need to focus on growing food locally - we need a shift in mindset and grow food over roses and flowers - have a service and start growing food on private property. Allow people with land to hire farmers and grow food on their land/lawn, we need less lawns.

How do we make a change? Children are the future - eating a beet so much better. Affecting change on a macro level, Clients come into the restaurant and ask for tomatoes in January; they don’t understand why they can’t have a tomato salad. I started serving sustainable cuts of beef, and educated my clients on why.

Education - we need to educate people. There was a question about whether we do need to educate people? There are really intelligent people in Greenwich. There was agreement that there is a lack of education on food systems.
Food service directors — hard to get them to comply with basic nutritious, good quality food — Food served in school is often out of reach to the community.

Kiss the Ground screening is happening on November 9th at PAC — spread the word.

We have three days of food availability; if there was a catastrophe we’d have three days of food. There are a lot of weaknesses in the food system.

There is a lot on people’s mind; a lot of clutter, how do you get a clear focus? How do we make it simple for people?

Eating food that you grow is no longer the norm, how do we build out regional and local?

Cooking demos, and classes — teaching people how to prepare their own food — helping them understand what real food looks like.

Greenwich Pollinator Pathway is creating edible gardens — outside full beds of vegetables in front of Rosina’s — edible gardens can be anywhere; it is a real tool for education — teaches passers-by what an eggplant looks like …

Edible gardens are an example of creating a network between organizations — it is a hands on experience: direct experience, a show and tell.

At Sam Bridge; Mary Jo would host educational seminars and over the years the numbers have dwindled, as a kid Nick remembers Mary Jo having up to 50 people.

All goes back to starting with the younger generation – kids are so eager to learn and understand and watch something grow — change the culture, on how people understand — that has to start from a young age, a change in culture has to start with kids.

Summer, fall crops coming in — Boys and Girls Club — training with kids —

New Lebanon 4th and 5th graders filled the garden with 40 yards of dirt, and taught science == seed. Looked through catalogs, the kids picked out what they wanted to grow, and they bought the seed — one
full year, these kids were so excited — watering their garden, harvesting the lettuce, bringing it in — eating it …

The politics within GPS make it hard to change lunches served. (Bring Local to Your Tray — CT Farm to School … )

Food justice availability of SNAP at our local farmers market and access to a plot of land where low income families can grow their own food (farmers markets and GCG)

Kids grew plots at GCG. NWG — run by volunteers hard; but an important garden.

Food insecurity - individuals low to moderate - DHS had access to 10 plots and only 2 families participated in Armstrong Court garden. DHS will try again this spring — social media gear up for upcoming season … and spread the word.

Increase in food prices - how do you anticipate your client’s basic needs being met with such high food costs… Increase our food budget supplement: eligible 3.3% receiving SNAP and 9% is in need.

St Paul's garden — grows food, all volunteer — we can’t forget about our Seniors and their food access and nutritional needs.

Consider asking P+Z to join a meeting and speak about the zoning for growing food in Greenwich.

We have talked a lot about land but we need to also consider aquaculture and our sea. Shellfish Commission, Ed the clam man — sea floor bed … and Kelp as a food source.

Next meeting in January TBD.

Prepared by Ali Ghiorse

“Food is our most intimate and powerful connection to each other, our cultures and to the earth. To transform our food system is to heal our bodies, transform our economy & protect our environment.”

HEAL Food Alliance