



## **Austin/Travis County Food Policy Board**

## **MEETING MINUTES August 12, 2024**

The Austin/Travis County Food Policy Board (ATCFPB) convened on Monday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at the City of Austin Permitting and Development Center, 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Dr, Room 1406, Austin, TX 78752.

### **Board Members in Attendance:**

Andrea Abel, Lisa Barden, Marissa Bell, Mark Bethell, Joi Chevalier, Beth Corbett, Hilda Gutierrez, Kacey Hanson, Matt Simon, Andy Smith

### **Board Members Absent:**

Larry Franklin, Rosamaria Murillo

### **Staff in Attendance:**

Edwin Marty (City of Austin), Angela Baucom (City of Austin)

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Joi Chevalier called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

### **PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**

Carlos Soto, Community Advancement Network – Language Access Project and CAN Community Resource Guides. Resource Guides available in 10 languages and across several topics: Know Your Rights, Health, Food, Staying Safe, Managing Your Money, Navigating the Education System. Guides are also available in video form.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Board Member Mark Bethell motioned to approve the meeting minutes from the Regular Meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup>, with Board Member Marissa Bell, seconding the motion. Minutes passed on a 10-0 vote.

### **STAFF BRIEFING**

None

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

2. Presentation by Tracy Ayrhart from Central Texas Food Bank on plans for a Travis County Community Needs Assessment and the development of a Central Texas Food System Council to support collaborative work across county lines.
  - a. Why CTFB for Regional Food System Council planning?
    - i. The Food Bank thinks of food insecurity as a result of the food system. The role of charitable services is a downstream response to be able to get food on people's plates if they can't access it themselves through other means.
    - ii. CTFB launched a regional Data Advisory Group and the Central Texas Food System Dashboard (2022), and has been conducting county-level Food Access Community Needs Assessments since 2023.
    - iii. CTFB already serves 21 counties, has existing relationships across the food system and across sectors, has access to infrastructure, builds on existing work on regional

data network, the work aligns with the strategic vision of the organization, and has a willingness and a desire to invest, including the buy-in of leadership.

- b. Regional Food System Council
  - i. Purpose: assess the food system, build strategic partnerships and connections, cultivate greater awareness of the food system, and determine strategic opportunities and priorities.
  - ii. Scope: Counties with existing food system momentum, with plans to expand to 21 (starting with 5 County MSA and expanding outward over time TBD) – Clarified that CTFB will hire someone to focus on outreach and engagement of those new areas over time, but all 21 Counties have not yet been engaged in the planning process. Andrea Abel, Beth Corbett, and Kacey Hanson expressed concerns related to Austin being positioned to hold tensions of moving forward without all Counties without them being fully informed and invited, regardless of their capacity. There is a need to come in from a support angle, not an angle of telling others what to do.
  - iii. Hub and spoke model that will not interfere with local councils
  - iv. Council Makeup will include some permanent and some potential specific workgroups, with representation on the council from County-level Food Councils, Food System Business Associations, Government (COGs), CTFB as a backbone organization
- c. Interaction with Local Council
  - i. Emphasis on two-way communication, with acknowledgment of common goals already existing
  - ii. Regional infrastructure can support local council priorities, such as the food hub infrastructure that has been discussed on the local level already
  - iii. Can support the launch of new local councils in counties that do not currently have existing infrastructure
- d. Anticipated Timeline
  - i. Council Development Group planned for October 2024 with anticipated launch of Council in July 2025
- e. Progress and Partners
  - i. Applied for USDA Grant to build a council alongside committed partners, but will pursue the plan regardless of funding from this source.
- f. Travis County Food Access CNA Kick-Off will take place Thursday, September 12, 10 am – 12 pm. Invites will go out week of August 19
- g. Not trying to duplicate the Austin/Travis County Food System Plan, but rather understand day to day navigation of food access with geographic specificity\
- h. Discussion:
  - i. What sort of Equity tools are being applied?
    1. Community Participatory process to avoid preconceived notions in favor of lived experience and community perspective on what is needed
    2. Ensuring language accessibility
    3. Working with community partners to administer surveys and seek feedback
  - ii. Joi Chevalier recommends establishing an Equity toolkit to ensure engagement of potentially invisible communities
    1. CTFB is working with Dream Together in Travis County and aims to continue to employ partners who reach deep into communities and reach beyond those who already have access to information and resources

2. Kick-off will be an opportunity to engage those community partners

Andy Smith left the dais at 5:59 pm.

- iii. Needs assessment sounds very similar to the processes that was undertaken for the Austin-Travis County Food Plan. How does this needs assessment process differ?
  1. The Questions being asked in engagement differ – the survey gets at additional information like economic trade-off, drivers of food access, and more information about coping strategies, and focus groups held later will dig in deeper on topics related to how they get food. It's more focused on the richness of deep data to inform specific solutions with geographic specificity.
  2. This is data to inform planning and not a plan itself. The CNA is about compiling information that planning groups can use in implementation. The Waco report is currently available on the CTFB website to see an example of what kind of data can inform actions.
- iv. Kacey Hanson highlighted that there is a need to identify what the common problems are across regions, which highlights the need to identify who the players are now and start conversations and relationship building and at least ask each county to participate in the CNA and work towards common ideas together.
- v. What are the needs of counties regarding data and existing data? Is there a need for capacity building?
  1. For the CNA, there is a standard existing toolkit that can be adapted to the unique features of each community. It's a template for the community to participate in refining and implementing.

Beth Corbett left the dais at 6:20 pm and returned at 6:30 pm.

3. Presentation by Edwin Marty in place of Yaira Robinson providing updates on Austin-Travis County Food Plan adoption and implementation.
  - a. The Food Plan is a collective vision made up of goals and strategies.
  - b. Many people and organizations have been a part of the planning process, including various City of Austin and Travis County departments, as well as community members, private and public sector organizations.
  - c. Over all engagement, we heard that the priorities were around access and affordability, and local food production and agriculture, and that what was needed to make the plan successful was a movement that would continue to engage people.
  - d. The Issue Area Groups developed the 9 goals and 62 strategies
  - e. Next Steps:
    - i. August 20th – Presentation to Travis County Commissioners Court
    - ii. August 27th – Voting item for Travis County Commissioners Court
    - iii. August 29th – City Council meeting, Request for Council Action to Adopt the Plan
    - iv. TBD – Community Advisory Committee meeting to discuss Implementation scenarios
    - v. The challenge on this final stage is looking to officials for what they feel like is the biggest priority and needs immediate resources and attention.
    - vi. Collaborative grant writing would be a valuable next step to fund implementation
    - vii. The City Council did not include funding in the Budget for the coming year for any items related to the Food Plan
    - viii. By the next month's meeting, there will be more certainty of budgets and it will be easier for this Board to come up with a work plan and action items, so it would be

helpful to wait until then to describe how people and this group can get involved in implementation.

- f. Joi Chevalier invites all Board members to reach out to Council Members and Commissioners about this plan.
4. Presentation by Edwin Marty on context building for Austin Travis County Food Policy Board strategic planning.
  - a. Orientation for new Board Members – invitation for feedback, as well as preparing for next month’s strategic planning meeting.
  - b. Food Policy is the laws and regulations that govern the food we grow, raise, produce, transport, buy, sell, distribute, share, cook, and eat. Policies can exist at a variety of levels and have a range of enforceability. It’s the place where regulations and the actions of the private sector meet. Recommend the Harvard Law School Good Food Good Laws resource linked in the slides that will be emailed after this meeting.
  - c. Food Policy Councils were founded around bringing together a range of regulatory bodies to let them know what the others are doing and working on to create a more functional system and break down silos.
  - d. This Food Policy Council is unique because it is tied to City and County government, while most are generally outside of the local government mechanism. The intention was to create this body with power to reach local officials, but not to direct a specific organization as the title Board might suggest.
  - e. There are checks and balances in place between the City and County appointments to ensure a Board with balanced representation of members.
  - f. Annual strategic planning turns into working groups, develops recommendations, and by the end of the year tries to pull a formal recommendation together to the full Board. Recommendations go to Council Members for consideration through the City Clerk as a bundle. Recommendations depend on advocacy and follow-up on the part of board members to get results.
  - g. The County generally works on public health and public safety, and the City is responsible for everything else. There is some overlap, but lots of issues related to the work of the Board fall under the jurisdiction of one or the other.
  - h. Update: Emily Ackland with Travis County has moved to a new position and the Travis County liaison role has passed to Yaira Robinson.
  - i. Board members should review the bylaws. Additional information can be found on the Board’s Google Drive.
5. Discussion of Joint Sustainability Committee meetings held on June 26, 2024, Larry Franklin.
  - a. Skipped due to absence
6. Discuss Annual Internal Review which was due July 31, 2024.
  - a. Review completed and submitted. Included a summary of activities completed over the year, presentations received, working group accomplishments, etc.
  - b. Had three activities: Food Plan, food in all departments working group, and resilience hub working group.
  - c. The report will be emailed out following the meeting.
7. Review Board Member Assignments (Note for Chair: take item out of order and discuss at end of meeting).
  - a. Joi Chevalier to reach out to Carlos Soto regarding a presentation from CAN.
  - b. Joi Chevalier will prepare an update from Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Hub Working Group

- c. All board members engage in advocacy, with an emphasis on Districts 6 and 9, if you have connections, as well as County Judge and County Commissioner Ann Howard. It doesn't hurt to talk to people multiple times. Review the table in the drive.

### **DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

1. *Staff liaisons will arrange presentations:*
  - a. *HSEM*
  - b. *Economic Development Department – Community-Owned Food Retail*
  - c. *Public Health Commission update*

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Discussion and scheduling of future agenda items

Next month's meeting is the strategic planning meeting.

What do you want to do and accomplish in the next meeting?

- How to formulate questions for those who come and present? Possibly ahead of presentations to make the presentation more aligned and thorough along the lines of the Board's interests. Ideally a standard set of questions to provide in advance.
- Facilitation in the past has been done via hiring an outside party or through Travis County staff who are qualified facilitators. The County has offered it again free of charge. City staff will meet with board Chair and Vice Chair to coordinate structure and requests.
- Questions will be provided ahead of time for consideration that will be returned to staff in advance.
- The meeting will include some regular procedures at the start and be completed inside a regular meeting, but the only item will be strategic planning.
- Facilitators will provide follow-up on results and key working areas to inform next year's work and timeline.

Carlos Soto, CAN to provide a presentation to the board on CAN Resource Guides

Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Hubs working group updates

HSEM will be invited to speak at a future meeting

Community-Owned Food Retail update presentation requested from Economic Development Department

Add a standing agenda item for Imagine Austin updates from Board Member Marissa Bell.

Request Dr. Wallace to present on the goals and intended work of the Public Health Commission, especially how it relates to nutrition.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Joi Chevalier adjourned the meeting at 7:47 pm.

**Minutes were approved at the September 9, 2024 full board meeting on Board Member Lisa Barden's motion with Board Member Marissa Bell seconding. Minutes passed on a 9-0 vote.**