

MINUTES

NEK food cycle coalition

Tuesday, December 11, 2018, 10:00 | *NVDA Offices, St. Johnsbury*

In Attendance

Carly Monahan, Salvation Farms; Shannon Choquette, NEK Waste Management District, Alison Low, NVDA; Lallie Mambourg, NEK Council on Aging; Colleen Moore de Ortiz, Vt Department of Health; Corey Hennessey, Farm Connex; Deb Bach, Vt Department of Health, Jennifer Griffith, Northeast Waste Management Officials' Association

Recap of Food Recovery and Donation Summit

The event drew somewhere between a dozen and 30 people, some of whom were new faces. The feedback was that it was well organized, and that there was interest in doing a series of smaller screenings of the film throughout the area (which can be a challenge, given the vast size of our region). Colleen commended Shannon for her work, noting that “the people who needed to be there were.”

Action:

- Make sure that Ed Sunday Winters, co-chair of the NEK Hunger Council and liaison to Northeast Kingdom Organizing Committee, is invited to next meetings.

School Outreach and Sharing Tables

There seems to be some misunderstanding regarding share tables at schools and how they should be managed. Newport City is not doing this (nor are they composting). There are guidance documents developed by Agency of Natural Resources Waste Division. Some of the nutrition guidelines in the schools force students to take foods they don't eat, which ultimately get wasted. Some schools are taking innovative measures like cutting up fruit so that students will only take what they will eat, but this measure eliminates the possibility of creating a sharing table. A multi-faceted outreach campaign that involves schools, supervisory districts, and the general public (e.g. press releases, social media) is needed.

Action

- Reach out to Agency of Natural Resources to review materials and identify a new strategy for distributing materials. This needs to occur before next regularly scheduled meeting (maybe a conference call). Participants: Shannon, Anne, Colleen, Beth Fauver (Colleen's counterpart in Caledonia), Alison, who else?

New Faces at the Table

Carly Monahan, at Salvation Farms since July 2018, was introduced. While SF operates out of Lamoille County, they have done some work in the “Greensburywick” area. They are now looking to expand by identifying new recipient sites and working with farms in the NEK. Potential groups that could benefit include nursing homes, preschools, childcare, as well as cooking and outreach demos.

Corey Hennessey is the new business manager at Farm Connex, which strives to provide low-cost point-to-point freight shipping for food producers. She is working to identify gaps in the distribution challenges. Farm Connex already moves quite a bit of food around the state, and there may be some opportunities for moving recovered food, especially through backhauling. Lallie shared her frustration over her ability to get fresh food to the meal sites. Transportation and distribution always the sticking point, and site operators gravitate toward canned and processed foods. The group revisited the unsuccessful grant application to study the feasibility of a distribution network. The project summary has not changed. There might be opportunities for revisiting this in 2019.

Actions

- Connect Carly with Jane Edwards of the Upper Kingdom Food Access and make sure that she is invited to the next meeting.
- Distribute project summary from unfunded grant application to Corey and Carly.
- Make sure both are invited to subsequent meetings.

Next meeting: WORK PLANNING SESSION

We need a work plan for 2019, and the next meeting in January 8, in St. Johnsbury, can be dedicated to that. We'll have some guidance from review of outreach materials on food sharing tables, review of grant project, and introductions of new participant throughout the year. Also, Katherine Sims will be joining us. 10:00 in the usual plan.

Action

- Have a happy holiday!