

June 24, 2010

Minutes

Land, People, and Natural Resources Subcommittee

Of
North Carolina Sustainable Food Advisory Council
June 22, 2010
Brickhaven Building, Raleigh, NC

Meeting time: 2:00 pm

Attending: Chair, Dr. Ed Jones, Randall Patterson, John Day, Dania Davy, Linda Harris (phone), Dewitt Hardee, Jim Cummings

The Chair, after introductions, presented specific sections and definitions in the enabling legislation for the Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council (Chapter 106, Article 70) and offered to the subcommittee the opportunity to determine its charge based on the purpose and duties assigned the full Council.

Article 70. North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council.

§ 106-830.

(a) Purpose. – It is the purpose of the North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council to contribute to building a local food economy, thereby benefiting North Carolina by creating jobs, stimulating statewide economic development, circulating money from local food sales within local communities, preserving open space, decreasing the use of fossil fuel and thus reducing carbon emissions, preserving and protecting the natural environment, increasing consumer access to fresh and nutritious foods, and providing greater food security for all North Carolinians. Recognizing the positive contributions of North Carolina's agricultural sector to the State's economy and environmental quality, it is the intent of the General Assembly that the Council consider and develop policies regarding the following subjects as they relate to North Carolinians:

- (1) Health and wellness.
- (2) Hunger and food access.
- (3) Economic development.
- (4) Preservation of farmlands and water resources.

(b) Definitions. – As used in this Article, the following definitions apply:

- (1) Sustainable food. – An integrated system of plant and animal production practices that have a site-specific application and that over the long term are able to do all of the following:
 - a. Satisfy human food and fiber needs.

- b. Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends.
 - c. Sustain the economic viability of farm operations.
 - d. Enhance the quality of life for farmers and the society as a whole.
- (2) Local food. – Food grown within the borders of North Carolina. (2009-530, s. 1.)

Three of the eight duties as listed in the General Statute were presented as immediately recognizable charges for the Subcommittee, with acknowledgement that there could be overlap between the three Council Subcommittees:

(3) An in-depth analysis of the possibility of promoting urban gardens and backyard gardens for the purpose of improving the health of citizens, making use of idle urban property, and lowering food costs for North Carolina urban dwellers during times of economic hardship.

(6) Issues regarding the identification and development of solutions to regulatory and policy barriers to developing a strong sustainable local food economy.

(7) Issues regarding strengthening local infrastructure and entrepreneurial efforts related to a sustainable local food economy.

Although a specific duty was not assigned (in 106-832) to the Council, the Subcommittee members brought attention to the General Assembly's expressed intent that the "Council consider and develop policies regarding ... (4) Preservation of farmlands and water resources (106-830)." and, that this must be a top priority in the activities of the Land, People, and Natural Resources Subcommittee.

Dewitt Hardee was requested to give an update on funding for the NC ADFP in the current budget discussions:

- House = \$ 2 million
- Senate = 0 \$
- Governor's recommendation = 0 \$
- Conference Committee still has the opportunity to hold the \$ 2 million

The Chair requested that Dewitt provide the Subcommittee a brief report on the activities of the ADFP program.

Discussion by members pulled together the many different topics and items that could become focal points for the Subcommittee:

- Farmland Preservation as a top agenda item

- VAD ordinances and inconsistencies county-to-county (Dewitt/Jim will check with Ted Feitshans, NCSU on a map of counties and VAD policies)
- Present use value issues for smaller operations
- Profitability is bottom line ... how is this impacted by GAP certification, land preservation, VAD policies, etc
- Value-added, commercial grade kitchens
- One-size fits all regulations
- Information technology and transfer
- Tracking of policies and regulations – environmental, land, etc, in lay language for general dispersal
- How do farmers get access to land
- Farming issues often based on scale, can we define the levels
- Costs of goods, fertilizers, labor (and access to labor), paperwork, staff to manage ever increasing regulation
- Eminent domain
- ETJs – municipalities that impede or prohibit agricultural practices
- Getting all agencies on same page ... adhering to the General Assembly's goals on sustainable local food economy ...
- Is there a means to determine intervention points in government programs and activities at which point the Council might bring notice to the General Assembly
- Farm Transition ... "Always have one foot in each generation which creates difficulty in farm transitioning programs ... how do we bridge the gap?"
- Land ... access, costs, government intervention, utilities, regulations, water availability
- Air quality issues around local/regional processing

It was consensus within the group that the list of topics be circulated back to the Subcommittee members and each member select 5 items for further elaboration in hopes of developing at least 3 items to full policy recommendations to the Council.

4:30 pm The meeting adjourned