



Mission: Promote a sustainable food system that is equitable, profitable, resilient, and health-promoting in the County of San Luis Obispo.

Vision Statement: San Luis Obispo has a thriving, sustainable, and local food economy, and every resident has access to fresh, nutritious food without compromising the ability of the system to meet the needs of future generations.

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

9:00am – 10:30am

Copeland Health Education Pavilion
1911 Johnson Ave, San Luis Obispo

Present: Dayna Ravalin, Linda Baggett, Kayla Rutland, Ellen Burke, Claire Tuoheymote, Melissa Donehey, Jeff Wade, Allegra Roth, Faith Carlson, Ashley Nuetzman, Felisrace Mtande, Li Wasambo, Sandra Dunn, Blake Fixler, Karen Worcester, Torrey byles, Dylan Jones, Aimee Wyatt, Kylie Hensley, Lisa Miller, Erica Thatcher, Lisa Jouet, Tim Jouet, Mike Manchak, Rob Barnett, Lisa Nicholson, Andrea Keisler, John Giacinto

I. Introductions & Announcements

- Small Farm Conference, February 27-29, Cuesta College North County Campus, Paso Robles.
- Community Food Project grant update for 2019 Quarter 4 now available.

II. San Luis Obispo County Food Atlas

- This document was the product of three years of research by Ellen Burke (Cal Poly, FSC Steering committee member) and her team. Through several community workshops and farmer interviews, the document maps the production, distribution and access of food in SLO County.
- Production: farms, community gardens

- Distribution: retailers' warehouses are up to 200 miles from SLO County
 - Farmers' Markets - Small farmers have difficulty getting accepted at local markets and sales at these locations are often not sufficient
- Access: Shandon and California Valley both constitute food deserts by national measurements
 - Real cost-of-living measure - SLO county is higher than others meaning that even when families reach median income, they struggle to meet all their needs (i.e. rent, bills, food)
- Solutions: educational campaigns, buy local campaigns, support of community gardens especially in North County

III. Panel Discussion: Economic and Environmental Resilience in the Food System

Panelists:

1. *Alegra Roth, Community Environmental Council* | cecsb.org

For nearly 50 years, CEC has incubated and innovated real life solutions that directly impact climate change. Their programs lead to clean vehicles, solar energy, resilient food systems and reduction of single-use plastic. CEC is taking steps to pursue a sustainable food system that balances the carbon equation to mitigate climate change. These include work on the Santa Barbara County Food Action Plan, carbon farming and regenerative agriculture, and food waste reduction.

2. *Torrey Byles, Applied Economics*

An economist specializing in regional development, Torrey has a masters in economics and environmental studies from Southern Oregon University (SOU), and a bachelor degree in economics from UCSD. After 20 years as a technology analyst in Silicon Valley and East Asia, Torrey has spent the last 15 years working in Oregon helping business owners, investor groups and public officials develop local food, manufacturing, finance and other sectors. He was a board member of the area's Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) chapter, as well as head of the Market Research Institute of the Oregon Small Business Development Center (SBDC). In 2016, Torrey moved back to his "home" state of California and today lives in Morro Bay.

3. *Karen Worcester* | creeklands.org

Creek Lands Conservation works to bring balance between nature and natural resource utilization. The rugged beauty of the Central Coast is beloved by millions around the globe, but people also depend on these lands and waters for agriculture and other economic interests. Creek Lands Conservation is

dedicated to helping Central Coast communities find sustainable balance between human activities and healthy ecosystems.

Discussion:

Allegra Roth: Food Action Plan

- Integrates goals of economy, health & wellness, investment in community (food access through social justice), and foodshed (agricultural management practices)
- Beginnings : partnership with the Santa Barbara Foundation gave seed funding for various projects:
 - Veggie prescription project
 - Food waste recovery
 - Scale up of regenerative agriculture
 - Tackling food insecurity on college campuses
- Evolution: The plan has been converted into a network with 15 representatives from various organizations on the steering committee
- Special project highlight: carbon farming
 - Step 1: Pilot carbon farming practices
 - Step 2: Research benefits
 - Step 3: Network development
 - Step 4: Policy changes

Torrey Byles: Food and Economy

- Social vs. Financial Capital
 - Social = networks, organizations, relationships
 - Example - Conventional strawberries - profitable, but chemical spray damages soil/environment and human health - What is the *true cost*?
 - Financial = money flows, spending incomes, accumulations
 - Two approaches to economic development = TINA (there is no alternative) & LOIS (Locally owned import substituting)
 - LOIS = circular economy where productivity is determined by players' relationships and interactions
- Recommendations: distribution development, access/boost in Farmers Markets, grow relationships

Karen Worcester: Food and Water

- Importance of looking at the watershed as a whole when determining best practices
- Proper care of upper watersheds leads to improved overall health:
 - Controlled fires and move grazing to lower areas of watershed
- Natural systems vs. pumping systems
 - Pumping dries creeks, rivers and swamps
- Creek Lands: actively researching ways to increase ground water recharge
 - Work with landowners to slow water flow, spread water and store water

- Recommending that growers recharge flood plains (i.e. allow farm land to flood)
 - This technique can be especially effective in winter when growing slows
 - Find crops that can tolerate this
- Local groundwater basins: Paso Robles, Los Osos and Cuyama are all overdrafted
- Sustainable Water management mandate - SLO County required to produce sustainable water plan by 2020 to restore watershed

Next meeting: May 20, 2020, 9:00am - 10:30am: Copeland Pavilion, French Hospital
1911 Johnson Ave. San Luis Obispo