

BRIEF HISTORY OF RI FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

- Nov 2010: Southside Community Land Trust (SCLT) received funding from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation and the Rhode Island Foundation to facilitate the collaborative efforts of the Rhode Island Food Policy Council Design Committee
- Feb 2011: Design committee convened. It served as a high-functioning planning group that met regularly over the course of the next year to: a) develop a vision and mission for the future RI Food Policy Council (RIFPC) and b) determine the Council's structure, membership and by-laws.
- Apr 2011: Design Committee retained Karp Resources to conduct a comprehensive Community Food Assessment of Rhode Island to lay the groundwork for the work of the RIFPC and specifically to: 1) Provide a baseline assessment and description of the current state of Rhode Island's food system; 2) Identify priorities for the RIFPC and other stakeholders working to increase community food security; and 3) Describe the potential economic, social, and environmental impacts of increased community food security in Rhode Island.
- May-Oct 2011: Vision, Mission, Goals, By-laws, Structure, Committees
Discussions and decisions re: whether the RIFPC should exist inside or outside of local government; how many members would serve on the RIFPC; how many years Council members would serve for; who should be invited to serve on the RIFPC for its first term; and how the work of the RIFPC would get done.
- Sept 2011: Executive Summary of RI Food Assessment completed. Design Committee reviewed and submitted comments to be considered in creation of final Assessment.
- Oct 2011: Launch of RI Food Policy Council at the State House, October 24th.
Morning event: speeches by RI's First Lady, Stephanie Chafee; Janet Coit, DEM Director; Dr. Michael Fine, Health Dept Director of the RI Department of Health; Andrew Schiff, Chief Executive Officer of the RI Food Bank; Jummy Olagundoye (a CCRi student and graduate of the Environmental Justice League's Environmental College) followed by a keynote presentation by Hank Herrera M.D., one of the founding members of the national Community Food Security Coalition. The morning event had nearly 100 attendees and ended with Governor Chafee's proclamation, read by the First Lady, declaring October 24th Food Day in Rhode Island. The morning event was followed by a special lunch attended by RI political and governmental leaders, RIFPC funders and Council members and featured additional comments by Dr. Hank Herrera. Later in the afternoon, community gathering event was held where Karp Resources presented the RI Food Assessment, followed by stakeholder breakout conversations facilitated by RIFPC members. The afternoon event had nearly 75 attendees.

- Nov 2011: Final RI Food Assessment Report created and distributed. It includes sections on the current landscape of each sector of the RI Food System: consumers, production, processing and distribution, food access, resource recovery/waste management and food policies and regulations with a focus on community food security. It also includes a section that highlights supply chain case studies including farm-to-school programs; RI milk to supermarkets; locally caught fish to restaurants; and fresh affordable, local food directly to consumers. Finally, and most importantly, the report identifies leverage points (low hanging fruit) and gaps that need to be addressed to achieve our vision.
- Dec 2011: First meeting of the RI Food Policy Council. We reached a shared understanding of the purpose of the RIFPC; a projected process for the Financial and Fund Development consultant and a proposed process for launching Work Groups. We also reached agreement on the Council's By-Laws, the shared staff support structure for the Council, as well as identifying additional members who would be invited to join the Council.
- Jan 13, 2012: Nominations for leadership positions (Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer) were made and agreed upon and those nominated were given time to think about whether they would accept the nomination. We brainstormed possible ideas for the structure and focus for Work Groups. It was agreed that a small group would create a proposal for presentation and discussion at the Open Meeting of the RIFPC on January 30th, 2012.
- Jan 30, 2012: First Open Meeting of the RIFPC. Findings of the RI Community Food Assessment were presented and discussed with input from the public. Nominations for RIFPC Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer were made and accepted. A proposal for possible Work Groups was presented and discussed and the public was invited to share their areas of interest with the Council, which they did in writing and by email after the meeting. An email mailing list was also established at this meeting
- Mar 8 2012: Closed meeting of the Council. Finance and Fundraising Committee presented a proposed budget and requested feedback from Council members. It was agreed that, for now, Southside Community Land Trust would continue to serve as the fiscal sponsor for the RIFPC. Staff reported on the status of interviews for the Communication staff person and a small group agreed to assist with the interviewing process. A March 28th meeting date was established for the Policy Committee to meet with Health Director, Dr. Fine, to discuss how we could best work together with key State Officials moving forward. Discussions held regarding opportunities for Council members to testify regarding pending legislation and hearings regarding: a) the Local Agriculture and Seafood Act, which would create a State Interagency Council to coordinate food issues for the state as well as a restricted receipts account (currently unfunded) and b) the Open Space Conservation Bond, which would include an allocation for farmland preservation. There was also a report on a meeting that Grow Smart RI had convened with the Ag Partnership to discuss ways in which the RIFPC and Ag Partnership could work together without

duplicating efforts. It was agreed that the most pressing goals and priorities of the RIFPC were establishing Work Groups and a final infrastructure for the Council and that small group meetings would be held prior to the next meeting of the RIFPC to clarify the roles of Committees and Work Groups and to begin developing measurable goals, objectives, indicators, strategies and work plans for the RIFPC.

- Mar 30, 2012: Closed RIFPC meeting to review the draft documents and to develop a plan for presenting the above to the public at the next Open Meeting. Reached agreement on the long-term goals for the Council; Committee functions; Committee Chairs; Work Groups' , function and focus; identified short-term Council members to serve as 'anchoring facilitators; to facilitate and coordinate the Work Groups and their meetings until permanent Chairs were elected. A table of Proposed Strategies was presented that would possibly be shared with the Work Groups as a jumping off point for discussion at the next Open Meeting, as well as a proposed process for moving forward. Finally, the RIFPC reached agreement on a plan for presenting all of the above to the public at the next Open Meeting of the RIFPC.
- May 8, 2012: Second Open Meeting of RIFPC in Providence. Presented Vision, Mission, Goals, thoughts about Work Groups, who broke out and met for the first time with RIFPC Council members facilitating. The goal of this first Work Group meeting was to generate interest and excitement and to engage the public in participating in RIFPC's work. Evaluation results indicated great interest among attendees in remaining involved in RIFPC's work, as well as a feeling that the Open Meeting was both informative and well-organized.
- Jun 2012: Northeast Regional Food Solutions Summit: RIFPC members attended the summit held at the University of Vermont on June 28-29.
- Submitted funding proposal to Van Beuren Foundation with input from several Council members.
- July 2012: Submitted funding proposals to the Kendall Foundation and RI Foundation. Solicited input from Council—several Council members weighed in and reviewed and commented on proposal drafts.
- Sept 2012: Closed meeting of RIFPC held in East Greenwich. Discussed process and next steps for nominating and electing new Council members; list of policy ideas/priorities developed and shared as well as next steps for the Policy Committee; discussed whether RIFPC will coordinate a capstone event for Food Day in RI; formed an ad hoc Planning Committee for Food Day; timeline and resource materials for Work Groups were shared and discussed; timeline for election and orientation of Work Group Chairs and process for integrating them as Council members
- Oct 2012: The first 'Soup and Substance' educational, food conversation event was held at St Paul's Church in South Providence in October 2012. Over 50 people attended and shared in a delicious African meal prepared by a Southside resident and participated in an inspiring presentation by Ellen Kahler, Executive Director of Vermont's Sustainable Jobs Fund

Nov 26, 2012: Closed Council Meeting: An update on the Soup and Substance event, agreement on who we would invite to become new Council members; update on RIFPC finances and shared understanding of fiscal sponsorship proposal; reactions to, and discussion about next steps re: Policy Committee recommendations; agreement on our agenda for the November 29th meeting

Nov 29, 2012: Open meeting of RIFPC in Warwick, RI. Announced new Council members; agreed that the Open Meeting format will stay the same for this final 2012 open meeting, but that we would discuss the format/usefulness of Open Meetings at the first Annual RIFPC retreat in January or February.

Feb 1, 2013: First RIFPC Council retreat