

Food Justice Committee Meeting Minutes February 7, 2018

In Attendance:

Caitlyn Ashton, Brittany Barbato (chair), Howard Bilofsky, Eric Borgstrom, Joan Brookshire, Amelia Duffy-Tumas, Flo Gelo, Sheila Incognito, Mimi Kahn, Seth Lerman, Jack Malinowski, Catherine Martin, Megan McCrea, Jon Scaffidi, Tamara Sepe, Lauren Todd, Norman Weiss

1. Approval of January 2018 minutes

The minutes were approved.

2. Safe Space/Inclusiveness Activity and Discussion (Brittany)

At the January meeting Brittany put up a large paper banner with the question “What makes you feel safe in a space?” and people wrote responses on the banner. Brittany reported that the activity was met with a range of reactions, including, “Why are we doing this?” “Thank you for doing this” and “But our meeting space is safe.” Based on these responses, it’s clear that we cannot assume that everyone sees things the same way or feels the same in our space.

Thus, at this February meeting we followed up with another activity. Brittany handed out sheets with two illustrations and we were asked to say what we saw in each of them. One was the “rabbit” / “duck” image (depending on whether you saw the image facing left or right) and the other was the “faces” / “vase” image (depending on whether you looked at the black space or the white space). For each case, about half the attendees saw one thing and half saw the other, reminding us that not everyone sees things the same way.

We then discussed “what goes into making a space safe?” Brittany first asked if anyone wanted to share personal knowledge related to the topic. Amelia mentioned that in her yoga teacher training there is an element of confidentiality that all participants agree to support. This includes not sharing personal information that is not ours. For example, if a member shares in the context of our meetings or events, we don’t pass it along without their permission.

Brittany had hung four pieces of paper in the room, each with a different phrase (or “bucket”). They were “Equalize the Space,” “Check your Assumptions/Privileges,” “The Right to be Human,” and “Consensual Dialogue.” We discussed these buckets and then read people’s comments on the paper banner from the last meeting, and considered which bucket(s) each might fit into.

Following this, we broke into smaller groups and discussed additional responses that could have been on the banner. The following were voiced. Geography matters in equalizing space, for example, we should meet in Ambler (Jon); Diversity is key, for example, consider the staff and leadership at the Co-op, or the pricing of items (Jack); Gender dynamics play a role and also there is a trade-off between building safe spaces and engaging in activities moving forward

(Amelia); How do we learn about hunger from people who experience hunger, without using them in a “show-and-tell” manner, and getting to know people beyond their name tag by engaging in food justice activities together (Joan).

3. Committee Vision (Brittany)

Brittany reviewed the many recent accomplishments of the Food Justice Committee, which include the following:

- Producing a survey about members’ interests
- Having a large number of people attend the meetings
- Having monthly “Hunger 101” presentations
- Organizing a very successful summer food drive that included fresh produce
- Co-hosting the Health Fair with Health Center #9 in Germantown
- Getting EBT stickers on the co-ops’ front doors
- Developing a website and other social media platforms
- Holding elections and filling leadership positions
- Extending “Food for All” benefits to people who are veterans or are on SSDI
- Establishing Philly Foodscapes
- Having ongoing discussions of safe space criteria

However, as a committee, we now need to figure out where we want to go and see where we can improve, especially in the area of getting more people involved in publicly faced action. On the survey people indicated that they were very interested in short-term solutions to hunger. Yet, when opportunities arise, such as the food drive or the gleaning project, very few (or no) people have stepped up to get involved. How can we improve this situation? Do we prefer to organize smaller recurring projects rather than fewer large projects? Do we want to set aside time that we currently devote to the meeting and instead provide help somewhere for that amount of time each month?

4. New Committee Chair

Brittany said she is ready to pass the baton and announced she is stepping down from chair. Amelia has agreed to act as interim chair for now. Brittany will be at the March meeting to support the transition and co-facilitate if necessary. After that she will put her efforts into supporting Joan and the education subcommittee.

5. Philly Foodscape

We did not have enough time to get to this agenda item. For the Philly Foodscape update, please see the paragraph in the email that accompanies these minutes.

6. New Business

Eric shared information about this year’s Natural Eating, Natural Health Fair. It will be on August 25, 2018, roughly 12-6 PM, at 131 E. Cheltenham Avenue. Committee members who are interested in getting involved should get in touch with Eric at Borgstrom@hotmail.com or (610) 999-5428.

There are two immediate needs in terms of attending meetings; namely, a planning meeting at the Co-op on February 13th at noon, and another meeting with the Health Fair organizers on March 1st at 2 PM.

Eric also reminded people that produce rescue for Philabundance takes place every Friday. Eric will be helping with this on Friday March 2nd and welcomes others to join him. For more information about the weekly Produce Rescue and how you can sign up to help, see this link. <https://philabundance.volunteerhub.com/?format=List&filter=24811>

Amelia and Howard mentioned that they attended the FPAC meeting and suggested that another way in which people can help is with advocacy around the proposed cuts to SNAP. They will also share information in an upcoming meeting about planned changes to the Farm Bill that may also require advocacy efforts.

NEXT MEETING

Wed, March 7, 2018, 6-7:30 PM

Location TBD