

Naturally Meramec Consortium

Regional Meeting

July 25, 2019

Meramec Regional Planning Commission, 4 Industrial Drive, St. James, MO

6:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

**Call to Order:** Deb Kleinheider called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes from the June27, 2019 meeting:** Deb presented the minutes for approval. Tara Peters made a motion, seconded by Greg Harris, that the minutes be approved as presented. Motion passed.

**Staff Report:** Brayden Owenby gave an update on his progress on the Food Hub Feasibility report to date. He provided the consortium with a copy of the completed “What is a Food Hub” section and asked for feedback.

Samantha Maddison provided an update to the consortium on the upcoming Taste of Gasconade County event that is scheduled for August 10, 2019. She invited the consortium to attend the event as it is no cost to the current members of the consortium. Samantha let the group know that there are currently 11 vendors signed up for the event.

**Food Hub Feasibility Study SWOC Analysis:** Consortium attendees completed a SWOC analysis (listed below)

**Announcements:** Members was able to make announcements about their business and discuss any upcoming events.

**Next Meeting:** Next meeting in scheduled for August 29, 1019 at 6:00 pm.

**Networking:** After the meeting, attendees were able to network with other business owners.

**Adjournment:** Greg Harris made a motion to adjourn. Marilyn Lackiner seconded. Motion passed.

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| **Strengths** | **Weaknesses** |
| * Good transportation network to larger cities (I-44, 63, 50, etc.) – access to larger markets
* Strengths of producers and farmers markets – some networking already going on
* Fort Leonard Wood
* Seeing growth in Missouri made products and access to products at farmers market and local retailers
* Local
* To have local people help support you
* Increase in restaurant chefs/talent in region
* Know where/who your food is coming from
* Missouri Eats program – University Extension
* A lot of diversity and strength of product
 | * Producers don’t always know what chefs and buyers want – what’s the desire?
* People giving things away – produce
* Farmers markets – boom and bust
* Fear of expanding business when happy at current level of business
* Involvement of producers networking with others to promote and resale their products
* Producers willing to wholesale to retailers
* Time
* Lack of succession planning
* Lack of Cash
* Seasonality – what do you buy in the off-season?
* Availability – enough producers to supply?
* Lack of trained staff in buyer operations to handle fresh produce and meat
* Potential risk of not being able to provide
* Loss of local food to larger markets/cities
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| **Opportunities** | **Challenges** |
| * Creation of website to streamline access to goods
* Knowing what to grow would provide opportunity…
* Diversification of buyers (might already have a food chain, but plan for future)
* Succession planning
* Advisors for younger generation by existing producers
* Consignment
* Continue educating producers and resellers of the opportunities available through Naturally Meramec. Possibly survey of potential members to see what aspects would prompt them to become more involved and what would entice them to engage.
* Tourism
* More specialty growers (single product)
* To see how other people approach growth
* Akin to Hermann Wine Trail Business Model (how to replicate)
* Commercial kitchens to deal with leftover or aging items – identify kitchens already in our region (research commercial kitchens more!!!!!) Various community resources – senior centers, etc.
* Work with local schools to buy local
* Ability to advertise local products
* Increase education
* Filling gaps/needs with new businesses
* Farmers markets accepting food stamps – Columbia, MO/O’Fallon, IL example
* Educate students on where food comes from – University Extension, Community Gardens, local FFA chapters – linking whole system
* Naturally Meramec Label
 | * Farmers – already sold out/lack of produce – already satisfied with what they are doing
* Lack of face to face time with food hub – producer wants to see the faces of the chefs
* Possibly keeping up with supply and demand
* Weather issues etc.
* Influx of large corporate retailers moving into area
* Job growth
* Insects
* Trouble getting out to larger market –
* Pre-planning/ordering in off-season so farmers know what to grow
* Todd Giesert Farms (food hub guy)
* Financial challenges
* Finding local champions
* Lack of commercial kitchens
* Knowledge of who I’m dealing with – buyers
* Bad growing season
* Getting buyers to get past mindset of customers not willing to pay more for local foods
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