

Naturally Meramec Consortium

Regional Meeting

August 29, 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 6:12 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes from the July 25, 2019 meeting:** Deb Kleinheider presented the minutes for approval. Chuck Ray made a motion, seconded by Jordan Ray, that the minutes be approved as presented. Motion passed.

**Staff Report:** Samantha Maddison provided an update to the consortium on the Taste of Gasconade County event that was scheduled on Saturday, August 10, 2019. She also provided an update to the consortium on the 2019 Washington County Farm Tour, Marketplace, & Field Dinner.

Mark Perkins gave an update on the Food Hub Feasibility Study to the group. He let the group know that he has met with hundreds of businesses to discuss both becoming a member and about the feasibility study along with a survey. We will provide information about the survey results as they are compiled.

**Food Hub Feasibility Study SWOC Analysis:** The Meramec Regional Planning Commission Staff and the Naturally Meramec Consortium completed the SWOC Analysis by prioritizing using the dot method from top to bottom (Listed Below).

**Announcements:** The Naturally Meramec Consortium attendees were able to make any announcements about their business and discuss any upcoming events.

**Next Meeting:** The next Naturally Meramec Consortium Regional Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 26, 1019 at 6:00 p.m.

**Networking:** After the meeting, Naturally Meramec Consortium attendees were able to network with other attendees.

**Adjournment:** Chuck Ray made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jordan Ray. Motion passed.

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| **Strengths**   * To have local people help support you * Seeing growth in Missouri made products and access to products at farmers market and local retailers * Strengths of producers and farmers markets – some networking already going on * Good transportation network to larger cities (I-44, 63, 50, etc.) – access to larger markets * Know where/who your food is coming from * Fort Leonard Wood * Missouri Eats program – University of Missouri Extension * A lot of diversity and strength of product * Local * Increase in restaurant chefs/talent in region | **Weaknesses**   * Producers willing to wholesale to retailers * Seasonality - what do you buy in the off-season? * Time * Availability - enough producers to supply? * People giving things away - produce * Loss of local food to larger markets/cities * Fear of expanding business when happy at current level of business * Lack of succession planning * Lack of Cash * Producers don’t always know what chefs and buyers want - what’s the desire? * Farmers markets - boom and bust * Involvement of producers networking with others to promote and resale their products * Lack of trained staff in buyer operations to handle fresh produce and meat * Potential risk of not being able to provide |
| **Opportunities**   * Tourism * Creation of website to streamline access to goods * Cross promotion * Naturally Meramec Label * Succession planning * Consignment * Increase education * More specialty growers (single product) * Ability to advertise local products * Knowing what to grow would provide opportunity… * Diversification of buyers (might already have a food chain, but plan for future) * Advisors for younger generation by existing producers * 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. * 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 * 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 | **Challenges**   * Pre-planning/ordering in off-season so farmers know what to grow * Getting sellers to sell locally at wholesale prices * Trouble getting out to larger market * Lack of commercial kitchens * Lack of face to face time with food hub – producer wants to see the faces of the chefs * Influx of large corporate retailers moving into area * Knowledge of who I am dealing with – buyers * Bad growing season * Insects * Farmers – already sold out/lack of produce – already satisfied with what they are doing * Possibly keeping up with supply and demand * Weather issues etc. * Job growth * Todd Giesert Farms (food hub guy) * Financial challenges * Finding local champions * Getting buyers to get past mindset of customers not willing to pay more for local foods * Legislation * Tourism offices overwhelmed |