



Tuesday, April 25th, 2023

12pm lunch | 1-2:30 pm meeting

Piedmont Triad Regional Council | 1398 Carrollton Crossing Drive, Kernersville NC 27284

Attendees: (s) technical support staff; (v) visitor

Gary Williams, Eunice Calderón, Michael Banner, Pearl Dowell, Cori Lindsay (v), Tonya Pennix (v), Courtney Alston Wilson, Jan Jones, Rhyne Cureton (v), Daniel Johnson, David Allen, Sophie Farlow, Jennnifer Bedrosian (s), Samira Dahdah, Jose Colon (s)
(Sheneka Foskey, LaShauna Austria joined virtually)

1:00 Welcome

- Check in & Intros

LaShauna Austria (co-chair) kicked off the meeting via Zoom.

1:15 Guest Speaker

- Piedmont Progressive Farmers Co-op (PPFC)
 - Cori Lindsay & Tonya Pennix

Jennifer introduced Cori and Tonya as guest presenters on behalf of the Piedmont Progressive Farmers Cooperative (PPFC). Cori was also an original founder of the Piedmont Triad Regional Food Council. Tonya owns Mourning Dove Farms and explained the history of how she acquired the farm and how they are using it currently. Host farm days, explain conservation practices, and ultimately teach people how to hold on to the land so many people worked so hard to acquire. Tonya explained the origins of the Piedmont Progressive Farmers Cooperative, which started as a non-profit serving the region. The goal was to help and support farmers on their needs (acquiring farm numbers, wells, etc).

Tonya and Cori shared that Caswell County has the highest number of African-American farmers in terms of land ownership in the region. Cori has also been with the organization since the beginning.

PPFC is an African American led cooperative that has a majority membership of under resourced farmers. Currently producing eggs with a goal of offering other locally grown foods at a fair price to our members and customers. Eggs are not certified organic, but members use best practices. Maintain long term, mutually rewarding relationships with our customers, partners and members. Customers who buy our products, it is important for them to understand how farming works. We are also helping to build an equitable and sustainable food system. Cori also clarified

that the bylaws state that their membership must consist of at least 75% African American farmers. Members can be outside of Caswell County.

We offer supply boxes, labels, crates as part of the membership. An egg washing station is also available on a farm near Yanceyville in Caswell County. Weaver St is one of our retail markets, as well as Elon University. Production goal is currently 1500 dozen eggs/week, and they would like to double that. There is a market for at least 3000 eggs per week. The goal is to recruit new members and increase production of existing members to meet that goal. On average, our new members have around 50-200 birds. We have the ability to subsidize 50 birds to start with, we are looking for new members.

Membership benefits include markets & marketing, equipment availability, and bulk purchasing. The goal is to set up the farmers and cooperative to be successful and sustainable in the long term.

Courtney asked what the membership fee? Cost of membership is a one-time fee of \$500, or \$100 annually for five years. Courtney suggested for the Cooperative to reach out to African American financial institutions given the focus of organization. Attendees discussed relationships and accountability with African-American financial institutional.

Rhynne gave kudos to the Cooperative in creating economies of scale for farmers, as well as reducing the burden on the member farmers. Tonya reiterated that their goal is to reduce the loss of farming and educate the younger generations on farming. Future goals include addition of produce sales and GAP Certification of Coop Members to expand markets.

Courtney asked what they are doing in terms of marketing the Cooperative? Cori stated presentations to groups such as this as well as having farm days. Tonya and Cori stated that the Cooperative was a non-profit originally before adopting a different business model, however the nonprofit still exists under a different group.

Jennifer stated that if anyone has any contacts that can connect with the Cooperative, please make those connections. Jennifer will also share the presentation along with meeting notes to the full council.

1: 40 Opportunities and Updates

- Social Media posts- Check out socials! Subcommittee is starting interviews. Please add to the list, if you have suggestions. Let me know if you'd like to help with interviews.

Jennifer reminded the group to follow and share the social media accounts. Jennifer also stated that she is amazed by all of the great work from all of our partners and would like to share that great work to our social media accounts. Jennifer would also like to interview members, as well.

- PTRC Grant Readiness Workshop on May 4th (10 am – 3 pm)

Jennifer shared the Grant Readiness Workshop. However, there is a waiting list at the moment. Jennifer shared an overview of the training (local case study, funders panel will answer) We will get feedback on the meeting, and will have it again if it is highly requested. Jennifer will also share takeaways from the meeting.

- Triad Food System Symposium – Jennifer shared ongoing efforts to host an event that highlights food in our region. This will include breakout sessions. High Point is also hosting a local food event on September 13, more specific to the Guilford County region. We are in communication with them to avoid overlap. There is a lot of work and planning to be done in the coming months. The Winston-Salem Urban Food Policy Council would like to be part of planning and hosting the event. NC A&T will host the event, possible dates are September 19 and September 26. Jennifer provided an overview and goals of the event. LaShauna reiterated that we need some help to plan this event. Rhyne asked what type of tasks or duties do you need help with? Jennifer stated being part of an advisory group to come up with the event. Other decisions, what are the break-out sessions, food and catering, day of set-up/break-down. Courtney suggested to reach out to NC A & T students to assist with the event. (Eunice, Michael, Courtney, Rhyne, David, Sophie, and Samira raised their hands to assist with the event- in addition to Jennifer and LaShauna). Jennifer will reach out with a poll for the first meeting.

2:05 Council Member Updates

- What's happening in your county: Any success stories around local foods work with your organization that you would like to share? Any pinch points or resources that are needed?

Eunice Calderon, Davidson County Local Food Council, shared that Piedmont Fresh food hubs are adding another pick up location in Winston Salem in May and High Point in June. June 24 – 25 are the dates for the farm tours.

Jan –Second Harvest Food Bank, Farm Fresh Nourish program will begin soon, we work with local growers to connect them with local pantries. We are seeing numbers increase in households requesting food assistance, it's gone up 40%+ since April of last year. We are also advocating and reaching out to local representatives for the Farm Bill.

Courtney- Glow House Society, emphasized being proactive vs reactive in terms of addressing food insecurity in our local communities. Jan stated that studies and data that is soon being released on the national level is showing numbers from 2021 with all the COVID emergency supports in place that have now gone away, but in the coming years the data will show the increase in need of food assistance. Jan shared that there are some recordings of the farm bill discussions if anybody is interested.

Gary, from SHARE Harvest Market, we need more people to come through the door and shop. The address 645 Peters Creek Pkwy. Gary also shared the website. Gary share updates on the market, including a new deli with prepared foods.

Michael recognizes all of the wisdom and knowledge in the room and would like to communicate further with our partners to move efforts forward.

2:25 Council Business

Jennifer

- Approve March Minutes

Minutes approved unanimously.

2:30 Adjourn

LaShauna

- Next Council Meeting: May 23rd at 1pm on Zoom