

**Suffolk County Food Council's Public Hearing
October 14th, 2014**

9:15am: Welcome/Introductions

PUBLIC COMMENT - Gemma Saylor - Mather Hospital/ "Rethink Your Drink"

9:20am: Food of poor nutritional value is too readily available to low income people, which is why, ironically, poverty is associated with obesity. US spends \$11 billion annually on obesity related healthcare costs. She commends Suffolk County for passing the "Healthy Food Standards" law and she is pushing for hospitals to make vending machine changes to feature healthier options.

Vivian Vilorio-Fisher - Suffolk County Food Policy Council

9:25am: How healthy is the food at local soup kitchens? A lot of unhealthy foods is given to soup kitchens, including unwanted foods due to its poor nutrition value (cakes and sodas).

Gemma Saylor - Mather Hospital/ "Rethink Your Drink"

9:27: Vending machine revenue will decrease at first, when healthier food options are introduced, but usually regain their value. It takes time for people to respond positively to changes such as healthier choices in vending machines. Mather Hospital meets all healthy vending policies.

August Ruckdeschel- Suffolk County Food Policy Council

9:30: Cafeterias in schools should not be looked at as a profit generator. They should be seen as an additional classroom to help teach students about healthy eating.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Karyn Kirschbaum - Western Suffolk BOCES/Healthy Schools NY

9:33: Healthy Schools NY is about obesity prevention and increasing nourishing foods and physical activity. It should not solely be up to only the food service department to teach about healthy eating. School districts should work it into their overall curriculum. Her schools are already implementing some of the "Smarter Lunchroom" frameworks developed by behavioral economists. She also points out that many schools on long island are passing up a lot of federal dollars to assist the food programs. Breakfast programs in particular are substantially under-subscribed.

Vivian Vilorio-Fisher – Suffolk County Food Policy Council

9:37: What makes changes in school districts easier?

Karyn Kirschbaum - Western Suffolk BOCES/Healthy Schools NY

9:39: Comprehensive buy-in across departments and curriculum eases change. A good example is Brentwood School District where a walking club and fitness trail was developed by staff other than physical education teachers. Coalitions must also be built outside of the education system.

Vivian Viloría-Fisher - Suffolk County Food Policy Council

9:42: All school districts must have a wellness committee by next year. How do you ensure policy implementation? Are there structured guidelines to follow? If evaluation policies are not in place, the people involved tend to “lose heart.” A rubric should be created so there is structure for policies to be implemented and ultimately evaluated for effectiveness. What, if anything, is the state doing to follow-up on implementation and evaluation?

August Ruckdeschel - Suffolk County Food Policy Council

9:54: We are finding that calorie counts on menus are not really changing eating habits. But other methods seem more effective – such as measuring food choices in terms of “miles walked” or “length of time needed to walk.” How can we integrate these lessons into classrooms and across the curriculum – into math classes, and physical education, and science, and marketing/communications.

Erin Thoresen - Suffolk County Food Policy Council

9:58: A good strategy is to identify and explain successful policies adopted elsewhere so that we can offer school districts additional options and examples that may be helpful.

PUBLIC COMMENT - TJ Franzone- Stony Brook University Dietetic Intern

10:05: There are other non-dietetic students who may be interested in getting involved. How do you suggest they get involved? Students interested in agriculture, political science and sustainability may want to be included in these policy meetings.

August Ruckdeschel - Suffolk County Food Policy Council

10:07: Our meetings are posted on the legislative website and are open to the public. Interested parties should begin by showing up to our meetings. The food banks, community groups, and government agencies that make-up the Council are always looking for volunteers and can be contacted directly. You can also e-mail the Chair at august.ruckdeschel@suffolkcountyny.gov.

Erin Thoresen – Suffolk County Food Policy Council

There are also opportunities for students to get involved in the work of the subcommittees, such as with outreach in communities associated with the Healthy Corner Stores Project.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Deanna LaGreca- Stony Brook University Dietetic Intern

10:10: Vending machines options in schools and hospitals were mentioned previously, but do you feel a need to work with long term care facilities? In previous rotations, she noticed the abundance of high salt, high fat foods given to residents.

Gemma Saylor- Mather Hospital/“Rethink Your Drink”

10:15: At long-term facilities, individuals are viewed as residents, not patients, and influencing food choices are more problematic under this lens.

10:20: Adjournment

Food Policy Members Present:

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