

MDI Tomorrow – Local Food Meeting

May 7, 2003

Present: Natalie Springuel, Kipp Quinby, Setha Davenport, Zachary Davis, David Dunton, Dustin Eirdosh, April Boucher, Nellie Wilson, James Houghton (Howdy), Heather Albert-Knopp, Lucian Smith, Suzanne Morse, Kati Freedman, Zack Steele

Looking at barriers and opportunities for local food production & consumption

- Update on agriculture site plan review that was supposed to go before last town meeting, the vote was moved until some time in November?
- Not sure if there were enough people to follow the agenda, more people filtered in so it was decided that we would try to get through as much of the opportunity/ barriers analysis that we could.
- We split into two groups: fisheries and agriculture

Fisheries session notes

Present: David, Natalie, Howdy, Kipp and Nellie

What are barriers to local seafood production?

- Federal and state licensing and permit system
- Regulations
- Retail and direct sale access
- Restaurants not buying locally
- These barriers make it very difficult to sell seafood locally, instead these regulations and retail practices make it easier to sell to buyers in Boston, Portland, etc.

What are the opportunities for local seafood production?

- Community based fishing groups, NAMA
- Community clam garden, local small scale aquaculture
(It is actually easier for a town to get an aquaculture lease than an individual. The garden would be located in an area that was "dead" to revitalize it and could protect the area)
- Creating/ encouraging demand for restaurants to buy locally (this pertains to agriculture just as much as seafood)
- Get dealers to sell locally

Vision:

- Long-term- reactivate unavailable fisheries and promote local fisheries that are already selling locally.
- Have all seafood sold within a 60 nautical mile.

- Short-term- get restaurants to purchase more local seafood starting this summer season.

Strategies for the Summer Project:

- Get an inventory of restaurants on the island and find out when local food festivals, such as lobster festival, are happening
- Set up competitions between restaurants to see how much local food they can sell.

People interested in working on restaurant project:

David, Natalie, Howdy, Kipp, Heather, Kati, Dustin, Zack Steele

Restaurant project will meet Wednesday, May 21st at 8:00 pm at Healthy Acadia, 11 Kennebec Street, 2nd floor.

Agriculture session notes

Present: Heather, Kati, Suzanne, Zack, Zachary, Lucian, April, Dustin, Setha

Barriers to Thriving Local Agriculture

- Geology
- Land cost
- Zoning: definition of agriculture, roadside stands; site plan review, districts – what's permitted where?
- Conservation easements?
- Interest/education
- Labor
- Land availability
- Taxation – land is taxed at its capacity for development rather than its current use
- Groundwater availability
- Rich people
- Suburban/rural land use conflicts

Opportunities for Thriving Local Agriculture

- Conservation easement
- Interest/education
- Wealthy landowners making productive use of that land
- Market for locally-grown exists and there is room for it to grow
- Tourism/restaurants
- Ag-tourism
- CSA

Barriers to Local Markets & Consumption

- Competition with cheaper, trucked-in foods

- People don't know how to cook veggies and local foods
- Cost of locally-grown foods can be exclusionary
- Organics is a niche market, appealing to a certain audience

Opportunities for Local Markets & Consumption

- Schools and local institutions as markets (Jackson Lab, Hospital, etc.)
- Consumer markets (Graves Shop n Save, Alternative)
- Co-op farmstand/market (like HOG co-op in Blue Hill)
- Collaborate with dry goods co-op idea that has come out of the winter economy group
- Youth – link up with the MDI Tomorrow youth group
- Expand food pantry, community gardens
- Restaurants
- Senior farm share, WIC program?

Barriers to Local Foods and Gardens in our Schools

- Schools given lots of USDA commodities
- School calendar doesn't coincide with farm calendar
- Labor (with commodities, things are already sliced, etc.)
- School kitchens have internal design limitations (they're built to handle commodities, often processed and already prepared foods)
- State learning results
- Liability issues with kids on farms

Opportunities for Local Foods and Gardens in our Schools

- School nutrition team – food service people seem interested
- State learning results
- School nutrition policy being drafted by school health coordinator – there is a locally-grown element
- Kids working on farms
- School gardens
- School curriculum
- Maine Ag in the classroom program
- 4-H
- Caleb Davis
- Healthy Acadia's Youth Action Grants
- Interested high school teacher – Jennifer Riefler
- Howard Colter, superintendent, interested in food/nutrition issues

Barriers to a Biocide-Free Island

- Information
- Who are the users: DOT, golf courses, village green, public schools?, rec centers?

- Lawn use – education of general public
- Easy access to biocides – on island and off (Home Depot, etc.)

Opportunities for a Biocide-Free Island

- MDI Water Quality Coalition – they’ve done water quality testing on the island, some other work on this issue
- MDI Tomorrow Watersheds/Habitat group as allies
- Salsbury Hardware, other local stores
- Seattle has all-organic golf courses – it’s been done and models exist
- Asticou gardens are biocide-free
- Could organize the estate gardeners, have an educational forum
- Institutions could set examples for other
- National Park could be an ally in this effort

Back together as a large group

Criteria for our deciding on initial projects:

- People want to work on them
- They are short-term and achievable
- They are strategic

Looking at the list of barriers and opportunities and the project ideas that have been generated, the following three areas seem to be our initial priority areas:

1. Markets & local consumption:

Restaurant/festival project group (to perhaps also include large institutions?) will meet again on Wednesday, May 21, 8:00-9:30PM, at Healthy Acadia office, 11 Kennebec Street, 2nd Floor. People interested in working on this: David, Natalie, Howdy, Kipp, Heather, Kati, Dustin, Zack Steele

2. Ag & Schools:

Project still to be determined. Group will determine a meeting date and notify everyone else. People interested in working on this: COA students from Community Development class, and Seta, Heather, and Suzanne

3. Removing Barriers/Creating more Opportunities for Production:

Zoning Issues group will meet Wednesday, May 21, 6:30-8:00PM, at Healthy Acadia office, 11 Kennebec Street, 2nd Floor. People interested in working on this: Lucian, Heather, Zack Steele, Caleb Davis?

4. Suzanne will also be working on a COA class for this coming fall to do institutional food system footprint analysis and will be looking for feedback from this group as she develops her syllabus