



*Advancing Greenwich's food security initiatives by
strengthening & leveraging relationships, knowledge and networks*

Friday, November 21, 2025

9:00 - 10:15am

Zoom

Attendance: Sharon Psychojas Food Rescue & Waste Free Greenwich, Danielle Jean Guillaume Department of Human Services, Rachel Khanna Selectwoman Elect, Julie DesChamps Waste Free Greenwich, Jan DeAngelo, Kim Gregory Audubon & Greenwich Land Trust, Geoffrey Anderson Jewish Family Services, Gery Tobias, Rob Moore Greenwich United Way, Simone Quartey YWCA Director of Equity and Justice, Ali Ghiorse Foodshed, Christian Duborg

Meeting notes

Introductions & status update

Presentation: Food Security Report 2025 by Chrisitan, followed by questions and answers

Friday, September 26, 2025

9:00 - 10:15am

Zoom

Attendance: Geoffery Anderson, Kim Gregory, Bob DeAngelo, Jan DeAngelo, Jodi Trendler, Karen Saggese, Nicole Davidow, Rachel Khanna, Beth Peirson

Meeting notes

Initiative updates:

- **Access + Equity** (Geoffrey) SFMNP huge success, distributed all the cards with 8 on the waiting list, needing to raise money to increase the dollar amount on the card.
- **Food Policy** (Ali) federal policy bills are being created to counter the cuts from the USDA in March and July. See follow up email for several calls to actions.
- **Farm To School** (Beth) NLES's FTS team will launch its Harvest of the Season on Monday, October 6th - celebrating the carrot.

Jodi Trendler

Director of Resilience and Sustainability City of Norwalk

New to the east coast, nonprofit building a local food initiative and food system, taught at local community college in Illinois. Permaculturist: all about the local food.

Ways to think about integrating local food production into our communities using open space for creating local food - creative about integrating local food

Definition of reliable access to affordable nutrition food - one of the key components is food access, **the more food that we can produce directly in our community the more food secure we are** - where do you get your food from? Most people rely on grocery stores. You really aren't food secure unless you have back up food stored, there is a difference between emergency food security - addressing hunger and addressing food

security. Local foods can help do that. There is hunger everywhere, affluence doesn't matter and we need to do a lot more with our local food.

Food policy is critical in order to provide access to farmers markets and preserve farmland and can benefit workforce development, community led initiatives with policies that will back it up. For example: back in Illinois issues with hoop houses, not allowed, can't grow food in your front yard.

Green infrastructure: essentially the key to green infrastructure - it is a way to manage storm water runoff - we are mimicking natural systems, collecting and directing it away as quickly as possible and redirecting it so it doesn't get away.

Different techniques: such as retention ponds, rain gardens, green roofs, gardens, getting rid of lawns, lot of ways to help hold store the water in place - benefits we get the flood control and water quality so we don't have run off into our sound it helps reduce heat island and a lot of co-benefits when we work with nature as nature, one thing that is typically not covered in green infrastructure is food production, this is a **huge opportunity to introduce food into our community using green infrastructure to incorporate the water as an actual resource.**

Primary example is Sponge City: starting promoting this concept in 2007 taken over in China - most want to hold the water in place and store and slow it down and regenerate our aquifer - cleans the water once it is back into our system. Creating habitat - benefitting biodiversity.

Commonly low impact development - development solutions - Sponge City slow, use it where it falls, cleans the water, holds the water and regenerates the aquifer and gives us opportunities to grow: use plants and the green infrastructure will do the work for us.

Multi-problem solving is being employed. This is definitely the most effective way to manage our storm water. There is a lot going on in these types of projects - retention pond as a space to hold water and that is all that is and if we are creative - and start thinking beyond the silo 'this one issue', 'this one problem' there are a lot problems that can be solved with one solution - habitat, wildlife, birds, cleaning the water before it disperses, contaminants, giving urban people in urban areas appreciate nature and fight for and so critical making it a beautiful place to go and interact with nature when you make places enjoyable for people that is what it does, makes it a value to the community who want to preserve and conserve, community building space, a lot going on and the air is being clean - that is the idea behind green infrastructure - we want to

try to solve as many problems as we can - typically storm water management do not do this it also serves as a cooling area.

Why isn't it being done? Our cities operate in silos - is our health department working with our DPW, and there needs to be ways to connect these different departments - Jodi started an internal Green Teams w/ department heads: but the team has grown to 50 people there was so much interest - bringing people together to collaborate and think collectively.

Swales - your basic level green infrastructure - you see them everywhere - retention around roads typical water management strategy - fancy word for a ditch - collection water - uncontrolled areas but if we can be more intentional about how we design these swales we integrate these systems beyond storm water management.

Really great opportunity for growing food - permaculture - permanent systems that support us as humans. Creating swales is the easiest way to serve human needs, **residential scale disconnecting your gutters**, so all your water stays on your property - one goes to underground rain barrel, another goes to rain garden, and slowly disperse throughout the garden the system takes care of itself, direct the water out - there are holding areas and then food is planted throughout the parameter - swales and holding areas - water is caring for your soil - keep water on property the water is being held on site and the water helps build your soil. The more we can hold it on our own properties - keeps the water from downstreams and improves the water quality.

Rain water is a problem, treated as a waste, not treated like a resource just like food scraps - they are a huge resource.

Connected the water to the garden, built a swale system - included a rain garden at the top to help slow down the water even more and as the water is held in the rain garden it is going to slowly direct it down hill, disconnect the gutter and redirect to somewhere of use. Better than rain barrels.

Public park - native edible species, fruit trees, fruit shrubs, perennial veg, pollinator plants set up as an ecosystem so it all works together - put in a swale and piped it in the ground, raised garden bed, foundation is wood and as it decomposes - **taking something that is causing a problem and making it a valuable resource** - flood zones are optimal for this -

Super scale we can do this on a much larger scale - China is a coast city – here we have harbors, estuaries, put in trees, storm water management trees **why not put in trees that benefit people** - as the water come down off the slope, clean and out to the coast - we have all these resources, this a huge project and could easily be an economic opportunity - and other things like vegetables, beehives, chickens, and make it a true community resource and still have the benefit for the community.

Village Homes neighborhood filled with food, not a new concept but our zoning codes do not allow - a lot needs to change policy wise in order to make these things possible. Barriers: education, green infrastructure is starting to percolate but it is not the norm to do these projects. It adds complexity – concern over maintenance – but there is maintenance that is needed for storm water management anyway.

Policies: **psychological perspective** - departments have to take a risk, complicated and cost more initially and cities are not high risk entities the idea is be as risk free as possible lots of perception that needs to be financial risk - mechanism.

Public gardens and community gardens and typically a cringe for public works and parks people, **we need systems thinking we have to think in terms of systems because we are integrating more systems we are not just addressing flooding it can becomes an ecosystem: human system + environment system there are a lot things that we need to plan for and we have to plan for the management for all the systems** that go beyond the department which involves many departments - if growing food maintaining and managing and using that food – fruit dropping feed birds.

Have to get the buy in from all the departments – to make sure that all the systems are being maintained and cared for – ex. 200 fruit trees prune, harvest and manage. A lot of work needs a plan. Best way to start is a pilot project - one simple garden: City Hall, food banks, schools other public spaces

Envision certification program. Working with Norwalk Food Alliance meeting with the health department and talking about figuring it out.

Prepared by Ali Ghiorse 9.30.25

Friday, July 25, 2025

9:00 - 10:15am

Zoom

Attendance: Rachel Khanna, Sharon Psychojos, Kelley Tomlinson, Karen Saggese, Demetria Nelson, Ali Ghiorse and Jess Anderson

Meeting notes

- Introductions + initiative update
 - Waste Free Greenwich will host its first fundraiser on October 16th at Saint Catherine's Church: 4 chefs, 4 courses, handmade napkins, trays donated to the school - going to be a great event!
 - DHS convening event for Youth Corps
 - Kelley Tomlinson, Norwalk Food Alliance [presentation](#).
 - Consensus on the need for a casual but organized statewide entity that convenes the different municipal food alliances.
-

Friday, May 30, 2025

9:00 - 10:15am

Mazza Room | Greenwich Town Hall

Attendance: Martha, Lillian, Beth from JFS, Leslie Patrick, Kim, Nick, Rachel, Karen, Rebecca, Ali, Patricia, and Jan

Meeting notes

- Note GFA email communications: federal cuts around food systems and ways to get involved
- Christian DuBorg - survey out for data collection at the state level
- United way needs assessment
- Grant for Food Rescue for food fridges
 - Fairgate farm fridge placed
 - Healthy Mind Healthy Body
- The Foodshed Network in the process of onboarding with Third Sector New England (nonprofit based in Boston)

- TSNE holds the 501c3 status and manage funding
- Moving forward there will be public disclaimers
- Established an Advisory Board - Rob Moore is the Chair
- Hold infrastructure, HR, Legal, contracts, Benefits

Comms

- Past events follow up and web access expansions

Working Groups

Food and Ag Policy

- Webpage dedicated - currently meeting on a biweekly basis
- Submitted testimony on farm to school
- Solid waste bill in the state - having trouble due to the food donation requirement for large producers.
- Move to encourage municipal programs for composting
- 7013 - contact your representative. Still needs to go to the senate

Access and Equity

- Dissolved
- Ali, Karen and Geoffrey from JFS are piloting the Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- JFS will be assisting in issuing cards
- Farmers markets needs to have a buy in - working on it
- Communicate with PTA and Martha about FMNP for advocating for the parents and sharing the information. Ken for first selectman.

Farm to School

- Application for the Northeast Farm To School Institute in Shelburne, VT on behalf of New Leb was accepted
- They will be headed there this summer
- Classroom, Cafeteria, and Community
- Dan Ruso, Beth Peirson, Martha, Ali, and 2 teacher
- The team will come back with an Action Plan

CoP 2025 meetings

- Jan: Farm bill

- March: Nourish Bridgeport and GVI
- May: Council on Soil and Water Conservation
- July: Food Policy Councils (possibly norwalk and milford)
- September: ?

CONTACT:

www.ctcouncilonsoilandwater.org

ctcouncilswc@gmail.com

Lillian Ruiz

CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation - Lillian Ruiz

- Institutional level presentation
- "Connecting partners, protecting resources"
- Advise and assist the Commissioner of DEEP (Sec. 22A-314 of general statutes)
- Facilitate communication and collaboration of the 5 conservation districts in CT that are organized by watersheds
- SW conservation district - Chris Sullivan
- Chair is Denise Savageu
- 5 cons districts, NRCS, DEEP, DoA, ag ex. Station, Uconn Extension, FSA, Non profits
- Part of a national network
- NASCA
- Inform and advise farm bill
- Watershed health, soil health, sustainability, partnerships, outreach, administration
- State Soil Health Action Plan
- State Food System Plan - possibility
- Sponsor Envirothon - schools
- 95% of all funds raised go to programming
- 9 voting members (5 are conservation districts)
- Watershed operations plans
- Technical outreach through NRCS
- Source Water protection project
- Forester training in the state - DEEP Climate Smart CT: Forest Resilience Program
- NACD Technical Assistance Grants
- Share conservation plan

- Soil Health Action Plan
- Question on water quality:
 - Grassroots
 - One water
 - Starting an educational campaign

Prepared by Rebecca Poirier

April 11, 2025
Bridgeport
nOURish Bridgeport Reservoir Farm

January 31, 2025
Mazza Room | Greenwich Town Hall

Meeting notes

Attendance (in person): Ali Ghiorse TFN, Karen Saggese Food Rescue-FC, Rebecca Poirier Greenwich Conservation Commission, Devan Healy Greenwich Conservation Commission, Meg Zimmerman End Hunger CT, Kim Gregory Audubon Greenwich, Martha Ramekellawan Food Service Director GPS, Gabby Rattner Barbara's House, Brent Hill Neighbor To Neighbor, Rob Moore Greenwich United Way, Sharon Psyhos Waste Free Greenwich and Food Rescue, Beth Jabick Jewish Family Services, Geoffrey Anderson Jewish Family Services, Rachel Khanna

Attendance (zoom): Maraiah Popeleski Mansfield School District/Food Service Director for Region 19 (Part of the F2S Fellowship/Steering Committee for CT Schools), Seanice Austin Fresh New London, Sarah Lopez Senator Murphy's Office / 4th Congressional District Outreach Christine Dzujna, Reggy Saint Fortcolin Sovereign Land Trust, Samantha Cave National Family Farmers Coalition.

Meeting called to order: 9:05am

Legislative Updates:

- Legislative sessions have begun. Ali will send emails with sample testimony/templates and bills to advocate for
- Community Solutions to Advance a Sustainable Food System: in-person event on February 5th at Town Hall.

Farm Bill Discussion:

- Samantha Cave | samantha@nffc.net
 - Samantha works with NFFC and has extensive outreach experience.
 - The Farm Bill is a comprehensive federal policy governing food and agriculture programs, with 6.5% dedicated to conservation.
 - Farm Bill Priorities + PLATFORM
 - A vibrant food system and rural communities (including dairy, land access, and agriculture credit).
 - Milk pricing: Dairy farms lack control over pricing, leading to consolidation (e.g., Earl Butts' "get big or get out" policy since the 1970s).
 - **Farmland for Farmers Act** (S. 2583): To stop corporations from purchasing farmland for investment purposes, and address the high cost of farmland, which is a barrier to beginning farmers and farmers of color.
 - **Fair Credit for Farmers Act** (S. 2668 and HR 5296): Improving accessibility to loans for small farmers, who rely on credit for almost everything.
 - **NFFC Toolkit**: Available for those interested in learning more or getting involved.
- Reggy Saint Fortcolin | fridgeport@gmail.com
 - Bridgeport Nonprofit groups
 - Liberate A Land: Focuses on marginalized farmers
 - New CT Farmer Alliance's Farm Bill Representative.
- Why the Farm Bill Matters:
 - Covers 12 sections, including SNAP, WIC, school meals, and emergency food programs like TEFAP.
 - SNAP/WIC: In CT, more than 50% of eligible families don't utilize WIC.

- Organic farming programming is being phased out.

Executive Orders 2025:

- Frozen SNAP benefits (now unfrozen).
- DEI initiatives include disability, veterans, women, etc.
- Environmental Justice policies can limit funding, especially for climate-smart practices.

Bill 6089 An Act Reducing Barriers to Food Security

- Built off the “State of Food in CT” research paper.
- Key Focuses:
 - Universal free meals for all.
 - Increasing SNAP benefits.
 - Medicaid for purchasing healthy vegetables.
 - Regional food hubs in CT.
- Press Conference: February 5th, 9 AM, Hartford Room 1B.

Land Access and Urban Farming:

- **Land Access Challenges:**
 - Even if you can afford it, access to farmland is nearly impossible unless you know someone.
 - The Farmland for Farmers Act aims to stop corporate farmland purchases (e.g., Bill Gates being a major landowner).
- **Urban Farming and Zoning:**
 - Many CT communities don’t have zoning for urban/community farming.
 - Local representatives should be involved in zoning changes.
 - Fresh New London focuses on food justice and local zoning policies.
 - Right to Farm: State constitutions are changing to protect local farms, as federal policies can’t override local rules.

Advocacy and Action Steps:

- Farm Bill Advocacy Timeline:
 - Summer: Begin discussing Farm Bill priorities.
 - September: The earliest deadline for action on the Farm Bill.
 - Immediate Focus: School meals and SNAP.

- The importance of consistent messaging and ethical storytelling in advocacy efforts.

Upcoming Resources and Events:

- Ali will send out reports and updates discussed in the meeting.
- Stay informed and participate in upcoming advocacy events to help shape the Farm Bill.

Adjourn 10:20am

Prepared by Rebecca Poirier