

Nechako Valley Food Network Meeting, Wednesday September 16th, 2009

Meeting Commenced 7:15pm

12 members present: Lisa Burgener, Valerie Pagdin, Michelle Roberge, Shelley Funk, Tristan Bondett, Peter Rodseth, Susan Armstrong, Denise Dowswell, Debra Montgomery, Susie Blattner, Maya Sullivan, Devin Lindsay

Chaired: Michell Roberge

Minutes: Devin Lindsay

[See also: pre-meeting agenda and notes.]

Michelle to coordinate meetings for the next 3 months

Minute-taker for next meeting TBD at next meeting

Overview:

1. Lisa: The Healthy Community Alliance is an incorporated non-profit which was formed as an administration body for groups currently including the Nechako Valley Food Network and the Nechako Waste Reduction. The board is currently looking for tri-city representatives in order to better collaborate with groups and initiatives including that include the areas surrounding Fraser Lake and Fort St. James and Vanderhoof.

2. Lisa: The Nechako Valley Food Network organized two successful "Food Events" this summer:

a) The "Local Foods Potluck Supper" which involved greenhouse tours including Sensenig, Blattner, Pagdin and Klassen greenhouses and culminated with a potluck at the Klassen residence.

b) The "Community Supported Agriculture Tour" which involved a carpool to and tour of the Borno community supported agriculture farm.

[these were attended by several members and much knowledge was gained and shared by those present]

3. Shelley: Despite the "Kids Container Program" at the "Vanderhoof Fall Fair" having only four entries this year, it will not be scrapped. Shelley will be ending her term as president of the Nechako Valley Exhibition Society, but will continue her role of coordinating the fair next year. The direction for the society will be to promote local agriculture (such as the Farmer's Market) and hobby farms. Although the first year was tough to some extent, we know better what to expect for next year.

Discussion (Fall Fair):

- Container Gardens

-The Nechako Valley Food Network should be available to teachers to provide mentors and containers at the right time. The space will be available at the fair for next

year.

- How did the fair do? This was the first year it just broke even or lost a bit. Money was down, but attendance was up. Expenses for entertainment exceeded the revenues they generated.

- What about the date? This year the date was changed, but did not make much difference. It was chosen to allow one more year "on our own". Next year the fair will be head to head with PG.

- Saturday (Kids) was busiest day by far - 2/3 of weekend. Sold more day passes last year (hot) and more weekend passes this year (even weather).

4. Lisa: Talked with Elsie, and Ken who had tilled the garden a number of times, There was significant discouragement with the "Community Garden" because of issues such as the fence being taken down and greenhouse parts being stolen which prevent the erection of the greenhouse as-is. Ken had some questions for the Nechako Valley Food Network:

Is it too remote?

Is there enough interest?

Are there any visions: other places, inter-agency garden?

[These are topics for community visioning process - see additional discussion in new business below.]

5. Susan: Nechako Valley Organics was a great success. The crops have done very well and all have gone to neighbourlink which is facing increasing needs beyond what could be provided. The program did have a tremendous impact on the amount of fresh food being provided. They [NVCSS} are very pleased with the method of distribution at neighbourlink (based on trust) which worked extremely well. There are some struggles being worked out with the district [no details]. The funding covered initial costs and, in general, finding funding for ongoing costs. NVCSS is actively "looking for links" for ongoing funding. It provided very successful employment opportunities for people with certain needs and made a very significant difference in these respects for three individuals. There has been absolutely no problem with vandalism (save a handful of tomatoes on the road one day).

6. Suzie: The "Farmers' Market" has done "really well". The last day is tomorrow. Next year they will be staying with Thursday which worked very well. The hours will be extended to be from 11am to 3 or 3:30pm. Farmers' Market to link with NVCSS on coupons: Susan comments that anticipated funding for this is shaky at this point but they are looking for alternative funding. They will be able to begin work in coordinating with the Nechako Valley Exhibition Society earlier next year as this year was a busy learning year.

Discussion:

- Lisa: Was there a meeting among vendors to discuss the success? Yes, Everyone

was very happy and they are all thinking about plans for next year and are excited about it.

- Pete: Is the picnic area available still? Yes, the municipality is very liberal in allowing the space to be used. The vendors prefer the tents/umbrellas as they are more dynamic and provide a look and feel that is very important.

- ?: Will there be a paid market manager? Yes, Actively looking for funding. They have decided to raise table and membership fees,

- Lisa: There was discussion about doing a community survey: Is that needed? Not this year. But next year, yes. The experiences of this year will allow enough feedback to work out the bugs encountered by the vendors and bringing in public scrutiny at this point would be counter-productive.

7. Lisa: The bulletin board has gone without updates this month due to lack of time and a computer crash. The hope is that a "Katimavik Volunteer" which will be providing services to the Food Network one day per week (shared with the Nechako Waste Reduction Initiative) will include updating the bulletin board as one task of responsibility.

Discussion:

- Devin: Is it helpful to consider delegating responsibility for different sections of the bulletin board to different individuals for a longer period of time rather than the whole thing to one individual for a shorter time? Some consensus.

8. Michelle: The website is being used. There are activity spikes after events such as the fall fair.

Discussion:

- Susan: How much is it being used? Not as much as we would like, but about 15 times/week. (Susan: that's good).

- Debbie: It is hard to find on google: can that be addressed with keywords? Michelle: keywords have been added. It requires time. Devin: Links from other websites help. Debra: CNC could link. Susan: NVCSS too.

- Suzy: Do you link back? Michelle: Yes, wherever relevant. Suzy: What about producers? Devin: Yes this could be possible via the messages section as there is a field for URL but some work needs to be done. Michelle: the links section could also address this.

9. Devin: The database has been maintained as-is and there have been a number of registrations at the fairs. There are a number of people who have registered but not verified.

Discussion:

- Lisa: Could we get a list of those people so we could follow up? Devin: Yes.

- Michelle: Could we make it easier to use? Devin: Yes, there is much that could be

done, but time is a constraint.

[10: Missing notes on CNC courses] Devin: Nechako Valley Food Network sent letter of support for three courses to be offered at CNC, The funding was granted.

Discussion:

Debra: Three courses First course cancelled. To try to move funding forward to March when presenter is available (less busy time). CNC is promoting via many channels.

Devin: Or could you look at using funding to subsidize other two courses.

Lisa: Nechako Valley Food Network will be sending one member.

Upcoming:

1. Maya and Susan will be attending the B.C. Food Systems Network conference next Thursday:

- Maya: We don't know a lot. There will be a lot of grass roots representation and lots of government presence. We haven't received agenda topic. Bioregionalism is a key concept. There should be lots of networking opportunities and my get some indication of what works, and what doesn't. It will be a learning experience,

- Susan: Will be looking for sources of funding.

Discussion:

Michelle: Will we get report on what was learned: Yes.

2. Seniors Health event on November 4th. Do we want to be there?

Discussion:

- Deadline for reply was end of July, but there is probably flexibility if we are inclined.

- Pete: Being the senior here, I could join that committee.

- Question of who would have time then during the day and concern that focus was on getting flu shots.

- Consensus: table it for next meeting.

3. Recreation and Leisure Fair on the 26th: Do we want to be there?

Discussion:

- Lisa: Nechako Healthy Community Alliance has paid the \$20 and Nechako Waste Reduction Initiative will be there. Kathy Russel will do the set-up for that and Lisa will ask her about doing it for The Nechako Valley Food Network as well.

- Lisa: Perhaps a reduced booth with just the display boards? General consensus.

- Lisa: Who will man the booth? Michelle 1-2, Pete 2-3, Denise 3-4.

4. Katimavic: What kinds of tasks -- looking for input and possibilities.

- Tristen: There are 11 participants through three rotations, The first rotation will be from Oct 10 - Jan 20 (the longest rotation) and there will be different groups in each rotation with some overlap. The third rotation will end June 20th. There is much flexibility for group work or adjusting dates with the agreement of all work partners. The community gardens will be a big thing after January and they are available to do surveys through the community, Between January and June one day per week will be dedicated to work of all 11 participants at one task. Tristan will send his contact information to bytes@nvfoodnetwork.ca

Discussion:

- Devin: Who are the work partners: They will be changing - the list is still being compiled.

- Susan: Work Partners required to find 9 days for billets.

- Pete: Private land - Bublitz, Reider, Martens - location for great big garden with tremendous history. Would have to work out a deal.

- Susan: Welcoming Party for Katimavic participants: Oct 15th at 7pm @ the Bean on Burrard.

5. Lisa: Learning Initiatives for Rural Northern Communities - Susan is also on the steering committee. There will be a Sustainable Planning Workshop of approximately 3 hours on Oct 18-24 (specific date TBA). Consensus that evening would be preferred over Saturday morning, We need a list of people to specifically invite and there will be a pre-registration process. Katimavik will be providing child-minding, Lisa will help to "Green" the event. In addition to representation of the food network (Maya, Susan, Lisa) suggestions included the Cattleman's Association President, the Mayor. The intention is to extend the invitation to the public after the pre-registration process, Kathy LeForge will be providing a press-release at some point and Lisa will send this as a mass-mailout then. There was some funding for a "Local Harvest Lunch"

Discussion:

Denise: Because of involvement with food network they are now selling local meat in stores (Scott Foods) and have interest from local restaurants, They are excited as producers and suggested a Baron of Beef on buns.

?: What about a supper? 5-6 supper, workshop to follow? Consensus - great idea. Other suggestions: local produce - Borno's, Bread with local flour. Local Chef - OK Cafe.

Comittee: Lisa, Pete, Tristan, Susan (Maya, Devin)

New Business:

1. Michelle: Anonymous donation to send a member to each of the CNC courses (Marketing and Food Processing). CNC needs to know numbers two weeks ahead of time and Michelle will send out two emails (one/course) requesting interested individuals to put their names forward. Participants will be drawn from a hat. Consensus.

2. Michelle: Need a Nechako Valley Food Network Communications Person?? for a 6 month term. Shelley Funk put her name forward. Thank you.

3. Michelle: Buletin Board Theme needed: Turkeys? Consensus.

4. Michelle: Newsletter: Is there a need for a more formal newsletter akin to the very informative summary email sent by Lisa?

Discussion:

- Pete: The village has a two-page mailout - what about a page in between?
- Susan: If not already, send her (via bytes@nvfoodnetwork.ca) information to include in the chamber's newsletter.
- Devin: what about the Nechako Healthy Community Alliance website? Susan posts chamber entries there.
- Devin: what about delegating different pieces to decrease the size of the job?

5. Michelle: Food Event Protocol: Intended to turn your food "interest" into a "thing" (food event). The protocol will allow the food network to support you in this. Read by Michelle: Consensus.

6. Lisa: CSA - Borno's did 12 bins/week which need to be picked up and paid for at the farm. Next year they are looking to do 20 bins/week with a waiting list but they would still want people to come out rather than getting into delivery. They did it this year from the end of June until about the end of September.

Discussion:

Next year it might be good to organize pick-up/storage. Suggestion of Farmer's Market, Donating left-overs to Neighbourlink. Needs to be paid for when picked up at the farm.

7. Maya: What about a festival? Other communities have Garlic Fests? Savour the Flavour?

Discussion:

Pete: Saskatoons? Our task is of utmost importance.

Maya: Huckleberries? Mmmm....

8. Harvest Dinner and Dance? Church groups have dropped this for the Pancake Supper. Perhaps We should take it on?

9: Michelle: Send agenda items to bytes@nvfoodnetwork.ca

10. Regular meetings to be held at 7pm on the third Wednesday of the month. Location suggestions? Arts unlimited, CNC, Access Building, W.L. McLeod - summer?

11. Send content (pictures, articles, recipes, events) to bytes@nvfoodnetwork.ca

Meeting ajourned 9:00pm