



**RAPPAHANNOCK-RAPIDAN FOOD POLICY COUNCIL**  
**Meeting Minutes – August 30, 2016**

**Members Present:**

Michelle Edwards	Chair and RRRC Liaison Member
Clyde Firman	Consumption Sector Technical Advisory Member
Jessica Palmer	Farmland Preservation & Conservation Technical Adv. Member
Ray Pickering	Fauquier County Representative
Rebecca Sheffield	Culpeper County Representative

**Members Absent:**

Linda Blair	Orange County Representative
Kirsten Dueck	Health Sector Technical Advisory Member
Jill Jefferson	Processing and Distribution Technical Advisory Member
Kenner Love	Rappahannock County Representative
Taylor Richardson	Education Sector Technical Advisory Member
Ken Smith	Production Sector Technical Advisory Member

**Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Michelle Edwards, chair, and introductions were made. Ms. Edwards noted that a quorum was not present, therefore voting could not be conducted.

Kirsten Dueck of the Path Foundation notified Ms. Edwards that she was unable to attend the meeting, necessitating a change to the agenda. Instead, Ms. Dueck's presentation on the results of the Path Foundation's further research of regional branding efforts will be delivered at a future meeting.

**Madison County Member Vacancy Update**

*Michelle Edwards, RRRC*

Ms. Edwards informed the Council that Susan Vidal of Brightwood Vineyard and Farms has accepted her appointment as Madison County's representative to the Food Council. Brad Jarvis, Cooperative Extension Agent, worked with the County Administrator to fill this vacancy. Ms. Vidal will be officially joining the Council at its September meeting.

## **USDA Grant Update**

*Michelle Edwards, RRRC*

Ms. Edwards provided an update on the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant application submitted by RRRC in May 2016. The Council voted to support the application during its April meeting. Ms. Edwards began by providing highlights from the application's narrative, focusing mainly on the section dealing with the regional local foods marketing campaign (see attached handout), which the Council will oversee. Approximately \$95,000 of the \$250,000 funds requested would be dedicated to the campaign. The grant period is three years, with the first year devoted primarily to development of the logo, messaging and marketing materials, year two focused on marketing within the region and year three expanding marketing to nearby metro areas.

Additionally, in-person consumer surveys will be conducted in spring 2017 to guide the process and at the conclusion of the project to gauge success. Ray Pickering asked whether information on sales will be collected. Ms. Edwards responded that the consumer surveys conducted for the marketing campaign will provide limited information on consumer sales. The Culpeper and Madison Farmers Markets, Buy Fresh - Buy Local, Farmer-Chef Express and Tween Rivers Trail will each track their own metrics, including sales in the form of percentage change, not dollar figures.

Ms. Edwards was notified by USDA in early August that the grant application had passed through the Initial Qualifying Screening and Peer Review and was undergoing Step 3. Federal Assistance Regulations Review, which is the final step prior to grant award. Only the review panels' top ranked projects receive this final administrative evaluation. The USDA will announce grant awards in September.

## **Path Foundation Grant Application**

*Michelle Edwards, RRRC*

As discussed during the Council's previous two meetings, RRRC plans to apply for a Make It Happen grant to fund a local food branding effort for the region. This grant program is provided by the Path Foundation (previously Fauquier Health Foundation). The vast majority of the funds will go to a consultant to lead the Council in development of regional food brand name and tag line/slogan. This process will involve a great deal of stakeholder engagement and community meetings to gain input.

The Regional Commission intends to ask for \$20,000 for the six-month project. On the advice of several council members with marketing experiences, the Council decided to seek expert advice on brand development, and this grant will allow us to follow through with this decision. This grant project will complement the larger USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant.

Ms. Dueck informed Ms. Edwards via email that turnaround for Make it Happen grants is a maximum 30 days to decision. The fund for this grant is almost exhausted for the year. Therefore, the soonest the grants team could possibly fund a request of this size is October. RRRC can apply now but the earliest possible grant date would be October 1.

During the Council's July meeting, Ms. Dueck had agreed to put together a list of the Council's preferred regional marketing campaigns and contact the advertising agencies involved to request a scope of work for the regional brand development. This research has not yet been completed. While the scopes of work would have provided further detail on potential costs, timeline, and process, Ms. Edwards expressed concern in delaying the application by an additional month or more due to the likely award of the USDA grant in September. Brand development must happen prior to development of the logo and marketing materials called for in RRRC's USDA grant proposal.

Ms. Dueck had provided basic information on cost, timeline and process based on her experience. Ms. Edward stated that she believes this is sufficient information when combined with her own research to write the grant proposal and put the project out to bid. She has requested that Ms. Dueck provide the research results when completed to further inform the Council's efforts.

Since the Council is one member short of a quorum, Ms. Edwards noted that voting on the Council's support of RRRC's Make It Happen grant application must be conducted via email. She agreed to poll members following the meeting, with one week to respond. She will then need to seek the approval of the RRRC's Executive Committee prior submittal of the application. Further information on the Path Foundation's Make It Happen Grant Program can be found at [www.pathforyou.org/Make-It-Happen!-Grants](http://www.pathforyou.org/Make-It-Happen!-Grants).

### **Future Meeting Scheduling and Agenda Development**

After discussion, Ms. Edwards stated that the next meeting will be held on Monday, September 26, 2016, at 6:30 pm in the RRRC Conference Room. Food Policy Council meeting materials will be available on RRRC's food system webpage at [www.rregion.org/foodsystem.html](http://www.rregion.org/foodsystem.html).