

## **CIRCL Group Meeting #2**

### **January 16, 2020**

Thank you, Town of Winchendon for hosting this meeting in the Town Hall auditorium! Special thanks to Tracy Murphy and Nicole Roberts.

We had a packed room with 23 members of the community present engaging in ideas for implementing the HEAL Winchendon project. Breakout discussions were formed around Healthy Food Access & Distribution, Community Engagement, Nutrition & Cooking Education, and Local Production (including community and home gardens)

See the meeting presentation here: <http://growingplaces.org/wp-content/uploads/CIRCL-Group-Jan-16-Presentation.pdf>

**HEAL Winchendon webpage with more info:**  
[GrowingPlaces.org/ProgramOverview/Heal-Winchendon/](http://GrowingPlaces.org/ProgramOverview/Heal-Winchendon/)

Article published by Doneen Durling in the [The Gardner News](#)

## **EVALUATION OF MEETING**

At the end of the meeting, an evaluation form was passed out that asked:

1. What worked well about the meeting?
2. What suggestions do you have for better meetings in the future?
3. What workshops or field trips can we help organize that would be beneficial to the group?
4. What times of the week are you typically available?

## **WHAT WORKED WELL?**

The responses we got were overwhelmingly in favor of the breakout discussions and the opportunity they provided for open-ended and thoughtful conversation and brainstorming. Because of this response, we will try and incorporate a form of small-group discussion in future meetings.

## **SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

We received a variety of good suggestions for improving meetings going forward:

- Clearer structure and roles for community members, as well as clear actionable next steps. This comment has been made by a handful of members and is an important one. Our goal for CIRCL Group meetings is two-fold. One, Growing Places should transition from being the main coordinator and facilitator of meetings to a supporting role as Winchendon residents step up to take leadership roles in planning, coordinating, and representing their community needs. Second, our goal is to help provide tangible projects that residents can work on. To these ends we are providing a small stipend for a volunteer who gets selected to be a CIRCL Group Administrator. In addition, we are using the notes from the breakout discussions to design projects for each working group that residents can plug into and take ownership of. These items and more will be the focus of the next meeting.
- Vary times of meetings and include evening and weekend options. So far meetings have been held in the morning during the week. This has worked well for some but has left out

some who have daytime family obligations, work during the day, and other conflicts. So, next meeting we will aim for an evening time to be more inclusive.

- Take less time for review. Consider handouts to bring folks up to date. There are several ideas for ways to spend less time for review during regular CIRCL Group meetings. As the Community & Engagement Working Group develops its projects, one key focus will be to raise awareness and education for HEAL Winchendon in the community. In addition to regular CIRCL Group meetings, perhaps the C&E WG will be able to host meetings just for education around the project. We will also continue to improve the way we present information on the project. For the next meeting we will try and dive straight into new topics without lengthy review.
- Other suggestions include better discussion moderation, printouts for attendees to take notes on such as agendas and PowerPoint notes, more focus on the business and financial side of the project, and specific questions to discuss with food producers

## FIELD TRIPS AND WORKSHOPS THAT WOULD BE BENEFICIAL

- Visiting a place that assembles meal kits or similar projects
- Anything in nutrition
- Cooking classes & demos
- Visit farms
- Gardening & cooking workshops at the CAC
- Serve Safe Certification workshop. Could be hosted by the Chapel Downtown

## COMMUNITY MAP

During the meeting we asked you, “what places in Winchendon are important” and “what value do we derive from these places?” These questions will be ongoing and inform the creation of a visual map of Winchendon to help show the connections between place and community, and help working groups form goals and projects. See below the initial answers from the meeting:

PLACES
Winchendon Town Hall
Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Winchendon School</li> <li>- Toy Town and WPS</li> </ul>
Winchendon CAC
Winchendon Health Center
The Senior Center
Clark Memorial YMCA
American Legion
Broadview Assisted Living
Housing Developments (multiple, e.g. Pearl Drive)
Beals Memorial Library

VALUES
Service
Social Gathering
Information Source
Referrals
Storage
Site for growing
Distribution space
Meeting space
Family services/education
Central communication
Facts Meeting (e.g. memorial school)
Refrigeration (e.g. Health Center potential?)
Kitchen and prep area (health center potential)

Not Just Produced
Winchendon Cultural Center
Churches: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unitarian Universalist</li> <li>- Immaculate Heart of Mary</li> <li>- United Parish</li> <li>- Bethany Bible Chapel</li> <li>- Cornerstone Church</li> </ul>
Farms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Murdock Farm (future of Community Garden also)</li> <li>- Sunset View</li> <li>- Noonday</li> <li>- Charlies Redhouse</li> <li>- Meadowcroft</li> </ul>

## NOTES FROM BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS

Breakout discussions were formed around the four working groups which are:

- Healthy Food Access & Distribution. This group will focus on designing and implementing CSA Meal Kits (to be re-named), managing volunteers to help prep produce, determining appropriate distribution “spokes,” supporting local farmers.
- Local Production. This group is focused primarily around supporting community and home garden networks. Work will involve constructing and maintaining community gardens, managing and recruiting volunteers, coordinating gardening classes, determining logistics of delivering community grown produce to the hub.
- Nutrition & Wellbeing. This group will focus on designing recipes for meal kits with the help from dietitians, assembling nutrition education, organizing cooking classes & demos, and more.
- Community Engagement. The focus of this group is to raise awareness for HEAL Winchendon and tell stories. The group will help determine locations and times for the Mobile Market, help promote market surveys, and coordinate events for people to tell their stories around Winchendon’s food system and share these stories with the broader community.

## HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS & DISTRIBUTION

Need better explanation for how producers will get paid.

Volunteers

- Fitzwilliam District Nursing Association -> under the radar, large volunteer list. They [have worked with Tracie’s Community Farm](#) collecting vegetables and distributing to residents in need.
- Look into other already existing volunteer groups
  - Churches
  - Senior Center
  - Schools
  - Parole Board

- Kiwanis
- American Legion
- Winchendon Cares
- Use the scale of volunteers to base the size of the pilot
- Give recipients and purchasers of meal kits the chance to be volunteers
- Create a process around volunteer scheduling that is clear and predictable, and shows when positions have been filled
- Consider the ratio of Safe Serve Certified people needed for each volunteer session.

#### Support Mechanisms

- Have a variety of scales the farmers can sell to (e.g. Mobile Market versus Hub versus institutions), because not every producer will have wholesale capabilities
- Education on the source of produce and a list of where it's coming from

Processing is a niche opportunity for farmers; not everyone has the capacity to process or sell small-scale/wholesale value-added products.

#### Necessary Roles

- Volunteer Manager(s)
- Distribution Manager(s) to deliver meal kits to spokes
- Market Manager (part time paid) role would coordinate sales, markets, and produce pickup

### **LOCAL PRODUCTION**

Connect with Winchendon Home Gardeners networks through:

- Perennial Patch
- Sunset View
- Horse & Buggy Feeds
- Agway (Gardner)
- Garden Club
- Senior Center

Survey home gardeners to determine:

- Interest with HEAL Winchendon opportunities
- Ways to help one another
- Business potential of purchasing veggies

Group Gardening vs Solo gardening.

- Education & Motivation
- Wholesalers -> Sunset View Farm -> picked that day
- Livvy will reach out regarding if we can collaborate on flyers & postcards.

Other considerations

- Many older adults are scaling back gardening to match family size
- Fewer young people are gardening, many too busy

- Utilizing youth gardeners might require compensation, either food or \$\$

## NUTRITION & WELLBEING

Some tangible ideas:

- 1) Free community workshops for residents to get them ServSafe certified to help increase participation in the Hub and Spoke food system and provide them skills
- 2) Engaging homeschooled kids via field trips to assist with the project
- 3) Creating an incentive system for volunteering to assist with the packing and delivery of the CSA Meal Kits
- 4) Build internship opportunities into local higher ed. (MWCC, Franklin Pierce) and secondary schools (Monty Tech, public schools, TWS) to complement the project (e.g., marketing, culinary, business etc.)
- 5) Making the CSA Meal Kit recipes accessible electronically (Pinterest and/or an App) to reach more residents and increase knowledge/skills about healthy eating on a broader scale
- 6) Engaging residents in a recipe contest to create the recipes for the CSA Meal Kits
- 7) Cooking classes for kids through afterschool programs, SPED, and Murdock Academy

Nutrition guidelines should target Calories, Sodium, SUGAR, Fat, and Fiber, with info about each nutrient (e.g. not all fat is created equal) on recipes. WIC can help with this.

Partner with:

- WIC
- Chefs, e.g. from Carriage House
- Churches. The UU Church highlights nutrition education on their community dinner placemats, including how to cook certain food, how it's good for you, and games for kids to play
- MWCC -> build internship opportunities for students, such as marketing, business, etc.
- Monty Tech -> Culinary program
- Franklin Pierce -> Culinary program

[Community Harvest Project](#) in North Grafton, MA is a good example of opportunities

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“We need places we can congregate” and share stories

- Find different places at different times where people can come and share their **stories** and film it. Bring food, and get intergenerational discussions going.

Get the major players of important organizations in the community together to participate in a concerted awareness campaign:

- Murdock HS is starting up a broadcast program we could tie into
- Clark Memorial YMCA might be interested in the way this project reaches many sectors of the community
- Beals Memorial Library has an interest in doing more outreach and incorporating film. They also host Beals Con, an event which is picking up steam
- Murdock Academy
- Winchendon CAC

- Facts Meetings
- All names and contacts compiled in a database for working group to track

We can learn from the [Monadnock Center in Peterborough, NH](#) which convenes community meetings to welcome people, share information, and provide ways to gather.

#### STORIES:

- It is important to interview young people. Young people lack social outlets in Winchendon. How can we create structures they can plug into?
- A good story prompt at an event is “Why is this important to you?” because a healthy food system has multiple and diverse outcomes, and it’s important to know and express what resonates with people
- Need a VIDEO of the project. Work with other working groups like Nutrition to film a cooking class for instance.

#### Outreach opportunities:

- Material for the Winchendon Courier to publish
- Murdock HS Blue Devil Weekly newspaper
- Gardner News, Doneen Durling was in attendance
- Winchendon Town cable news channel

#### Branding

- Facebook is key. Set up a *new* Facebook page specifically for HEAL Winchendon. Share with the Town (Nicole will help promote), and with other partners.
- Branding needed to appeal to higher-income demographic to support business model. Rename CSA Meal Kits to something more appealing.

To help with education, we should create a “Frequently Asked Questions” webpage and source of information to go with outreach material.

- Start with questions to help imagine something better, such as:
  - “what is healthy food?”
  - “what is a healthy food system?”
  - “how does this benefit my community?”
  - “how does healthy food lead to a healthier community?” (knowing this connection is *why* people are here in the first place)

Organize meetings into two different categories.

1. CIRCL Groups which meet monthly and have specific projects and goals
2. Community Engagement meetings to educate new people and provide space for open-ended and free-form discussion

## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

Come to the Farming Beyond Borders meetings! The next meeting is on February 7, 6:30 PM at the Westminster Senior Center. There will be a potluck.

The next meeting will focus on:

- Breakout discussions of our individual gifts & talents so we can best utilize what we each bring to the table
- Breakout discussions of working groups again with specific project proposals and roles

Notes from the “seed bank” to be revisited

- GALA – Gardner Area League of Artists
- Creative thinking needed around advertising/visuals
- How/when should B of Health be part of planning?
- Community Awareness: have a booth at both the Summer Solstice and October Fall Festival with examples of meal kits to “taste” and see