

Healthy Foods Minutes – August 18, 2022 – Virtual meeting

Attendees: Mary Zirkle, Jeanell Smith, Heather Dooley, Tracey Dixon, Mary Jo Boone, Betty Easter, Amanda Armstrong, Susan Prillaman, Sarah Ramey.

The next meeting will be September 8 @ 9:00am. (It's one week earlier than the regularly scheduled meeting.) It will be both in-person & virtual, so that gives more folks a chance to attend. Mary will make a reservation for the conference room at the Town of Bedford building.

The focus of today's meeting is for Amanda Armstrong to let the group know more about the planned event at the Elba store in Bedford, with cooking demonstration, using ingredients that people can buy at Elba.

While waiting, Jeanell advised that she has signed up Bedford County Headstart set up to teach LEAP, a nutrition program. They are an extension of LynCag in Lynchburg. Jeanell will be training all the LynCag teachers on LEAP – Literacy, Eat, And Physical activity.

Mary Zirkle updated the group that she is still awaiting information from Lauren DeSimone from Virginia Community Capital.

Amanda talked to Wendell (owner/operator of Elba grocery store.) He's on board with the event that we're planning for October 8, a Saturday. That date is coordinated to be when most SNAP payments are paid. And, this will help with the grand re-opening that had originally been planned for 2020. Amanda will be doing food demonstrations, healthy recipes (based on what he has available in his store), and having other agencies there, so that it's not just a food demo. This would help spread information about services that are available, such as Meals on Wheels. Amanda will keep Wendell informed about the plans, so that he's part of the process. Amanda wants to invite him to one of our meetings before the event, so that he's aware of the logistics that we talk about.

The group had agreed on the October 8 date, as SNAP benefits/cards are reloaded on the 1st, 3rd, and 7th of each month. This way, they would have the funds to do any healthy food purchases. However, a specific time of day has not yet been set.

Susan Prillaman informed us that the Farmers' Market is still up and running on that date, too. Mary Zirkle added that October 8 is the last day for the Farmer's Market. The Farmers' Market hours are from 8am to 1pm; but that the prime time for attendees is 9:30/10 to 1pm. The crowds start thinning out around noon, as that's lunchtime. Based on this information, the group agreed on the Healthy Foods event to be from 10am to 12pm.

A question was asked if the grand reopening would be a ribbon-cutting event, with the Chamber of Commerce being there? Mary Zirkle said that Pam Bailey may know about that. Mary also mentioned that we need to be sure that it's ok for us to use the county's part of the parking lot for the event. That would be the most level area for setting up tables.

Jeanell mentioned that she wants to make a list of all the marketing opportunities. SNAP is our target audience. She also wanted to see what the status of Virginia Fresh Match. She was aware that Mo and

Sam had talked to Wendell, as they found funds for him to update his POS software. That had been the issue with him having trouble getting the VFM (Virginia Fresh Match). VFM is where people can get 50% off of their fresh fruits and vegetables. She's not aware if that has taken place yet.

The question for the group is what agencies that we can help with marketing for this event. Jeanell mentioned DSS and WIC. She asked for a contact through the schools. Ryan Edwards' name was provided, as someone who could approve flyers. She asked about a list of the low-income housing areas or apartment complexes in Bedford.

Tracey Dixon advised that on Wednesdays, they provide meals to Raintree Village and Salem Court. She said she would be happy to take a flyer to pass out about Elba's reopening. The discussion moved to the consideration of having a small sign, rather than flyers, to put in some locations. Jeanell said that Amanda could check with Morgan Greg, who is the marketing person for Cooperative Extension. There's a need for speed in order to get this type of thing prepared.

Jeanell said if she has the lists, she can take care of the marketing area. Jeanell will create a google doc to send out to our group, and folks can add the pertinent agencies.

Mary Zirkle changed the topic to discuss potential complementary agencies who may want to set up a table. The group began discussing possibilities. Amanda said we need first to look at the parking lot logistics to see what we have available, and size. And, she said Denny had some ideas at the last meeting. Tracey Dixon asked if the Free Clinic to do blood pressure checks. The group was in favor of this. When asked if blood sugar tests could be done, Tracey advised that blood & body fluids are more "iffy."

Amanda agreed that agencies that promote health & wellness would be good. Other recommendations to see if they would like a table included Centra. Johnson Health Center, Community Access Network (Christy Lucy's group), Horizon Behavioral Health. Susan Prillaman offered to help Mary with the vendors. Tracey asked if any of the agencies could do Covid shots. The group responded that they could check with Virginia Department of Health (VDH).

Addendum to the minutes: Tracey Dixon informed via email: The Free Clinic is happy to participate on Oct. 8 at Elba. They will have 3 staff, an info table and offer blood pressure screenings. They are looking in to other options, as well. Let me know if Health Dept declines covid/flu shots, and we can try Free Clinic.

Mary Jo Boone said that if Wendell is part of the Chamber of Commerce, then there could be a ribbon cutting, along with media coverage.

The discussion moved toward social media. Bedford Community Events is the FB group; and info about this event could be included on that site.

Mary Jo Boone was asked about their recent announcement for child care and her Chat question about whether Jeanell could teach the LEAP program there. Right now, their program is run at the church next to the YMCA while the new child care center is being built.

The conversation moved to other topics.

Another topic of what can be done in the event of rain. If vendors prepare with their own canopies, then its good rain or shine. And finally, the discussion moved toward what would be available for the kids who would come. Susan Prillaman offered some activities that focus on apples.