

Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative
Winneshiek County Planning Team
February 18, 2009
Decorah City Hall
Meeting Minutes

PRESENT: Brenda Balk, Dan Beard, Tom Beard, Lorraine Borowski, David Cavagnaro, Donella Darrington, Rick Edwards, Lindsay Erdman, Karen Foster, Stephanie Hughes, Bill Ibanez, Jim Lage, Lyle Luzum, Sue Luzum, Ann Mansfield, Michelle McLain-Kruse, Emily Neal, Eric Nordschow, Janelle Pavlovec, Betty Ransom, Brenda Ranum, Kelsey Wettach, Krista Vanden Brink.

OPENING: The vision statement was read aloud, “Northeast Iowa is a unique place where all residents & guests experience, celebrate and promote healthy locally grown food with abundant opportunities for physical activity and play EVERY DAY. Healthier people make stronger families and vibrant communities.” Brenda Ranum said this meeting marked the two-year mark since we were all pulled together for our first meeting at WMC. She said we’ve come a long way and have completed some great research, have accomplished many tasks and have engaged over 500 people in the planning process since 2007.

REGIONAL TEAM: Team member, Rick Edwards encouraged everyone to visit the website for details on the regional team meeting discussions. Because the planning time has been extended by five extra months, they now have some extra funds to work with. The group will decide what the best way to spend those dollars. After March 30th RC&D will no longer be the fiscal agent. This role will be taken over by the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque. Allamakee and Clayton counties have a current relationship with this organization so everyone is excited for this new partnership to begin. The built environment group met with the Winneshiek County supervisors to educate them about what projects are currently happening. They encouraged them to think regionally and do everything they can to partner with our surrounding counties. Rick said they were very receptive and already do work extremely well with the other counties.

Youth Group – Ann Mansfield spoke about the progress for the youth group. She reported that 13 of the 18 public schools are involved. Three full-day sessions have taken place to get these people caught up on the initiative. She said school systems are very important to have on board because that is where most of our concern lies. She said obesity problems and other health care issues are very easily seen at schools. Ann reported that a paid youth coordinator has been working for the group as well as almost 80 volunteer students. One project they have completed was a concession stand survey. A conference is also being planned for April 1 for youth engagement. Brenda added that working with isn’t easy. They have a culture and policy that’s set in place and find any sort of change difficult. The ironic part is that teachers, staff and students are all in agreement that a change is what is needed.

NIFF Coalition – Brenda Ranum reported for NIFF. She said that a common link needs to be made between schools and farmers markets. Production needs to increase, distribution needs to improve, storing methods need improvement - - all this will hopefully increase selling. The fact is schools are actually looking for farmer’s “seconds.” (For example, schools don’t have to have the finest looking apples – they can have blemishes because they will be chopped up into slices or cut up for dessert.) Community gardens are also a hot topic. Beginning March 14 a series of classes will be available for the community to learn more about these gardens and how to get involved.

Built Environment Team – Lindsay Erdman reported. He said they did a massive inventory of what is available in our county for parks and recreation and who we can maximize on what we already have instead looking to “over build.” Kellogg has complimented our region because we already have a lot of great things set in place – things many communities only wish they had.

Group Discussion: In place of the typical group discussion, Brenda Ranum went over the Request For Activities (RFA) process. A full list of details and the application form can be found at www.iowafoodandfitness.org.

The Northeast Iowa FFI’s work is organized into three strategies:

- 1) school food and physical activity
- 2) food systems
- 3) physical activity and built environment

RFAs should be submitted with at least one of these three strategies in mind, but may perhaps include all three. Kellogg currently has funds to financially support these projects. That total amount at this point has not been determined due to our fluctuating economy. The score RFA score sheet was also reviewed. The deadline is April 1.

Conclusion: Again, Brenda encouraged everyone to visit the FFI website, www.iowafoodandfitness.org.