

## Naturally Meramec Consortium Meeting

February 21, 2017

### Meeting Notes

**Attendees:** Penelope Beache and Dennis Woodhouse from Vintage Homesteader; Mike Bottom from Knee Deep Farm; Donna and Jordan Ray from CDR Naturals; Jyoti Ishaya from Old Towne Antiques; Serena and Fred Stuart from Stuart Farm; Phyllis Perkins from Steelville Arts Council; Todd Geisert from Farm to You Market; Julie Schrope from Swiss Meats; Tammy Bruckerhoff from Sugar Momma's; Joan Strong from Lucas Farms; Charlotte Wiggins from Bluebird Gardens; Eric and Pathoumma Meusch from Meusch Farms; Mike Delashmit from Fidelity Broadcasting; Amy Smith from Gentle Shepherd Homesteaders; El Willman, Deb Kleinheider from Marketplace Café; Brenda and Jimmy Story from Blue Hill Company and Deb Rogers, Nelly Roach and J. Michael Roach from Caledon Virtual.

**MRPC Staff:** Connie Willman

**Call to Order and Introductions:** Chair Brenda Story opened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from the Dec. 20, 2016 meeting were presented. Julie Schrope made a motion, seconded by Joan Strong, that the minutes be approved as presented. Motion passed.

**Farm to You Market:** Todd Geisert presented information on the market, located in Washington, MO. The Geiserts transformed an old factory building located about ½ mile from their farm into a retail store, commercial kitchen, café and distribution center. They feature regional agricultural products produced in a sustainable manner. The doors opened in April of 2016 and currently employ 10-12 people. Todd has also been able to build a very successful food hub for the area. Farm to You Market features products from several of the Naturally Meramec Consortium members. More information may be found on the website at [www.farmtoyoumarket.com](http://www.farmtoyoumarket.com).

**Featured Business—St. James Marketplace Café:** Deb Kleinheider presented information on the business, located on Seymour Street in St. James. The café features soups, salads, sandwiches, desserts and other delicious items. Deb opened the business in December 2013 and has since added catering to her offerings. The business is to be featured in Missouri Life Magazine in the near future.

**Trip Advisor:** Nelly Roach and J. Michael Roach with Caledon Virtual presented on The Anatomy of an Effective Website. Participants heard about what makes a good website homepage design, easily identified brands, knowing the target audience, optimizing for multiple devices and many other aspects of websites. Caledon has offered to put together templates customized for NMC members at reduced rates. MRPC staff will work with them to notify members when these are completed.

**Collective Marketing:** Kim Jones, Kill-Kim Foods, LLC, has suggested that NMC members work together to have a booth at the Missouri State Fair and possibly market to Silver Dollar City. Members were asked to volunteer to discuss and present ideas. Julie Schrope volunteered to work on the sub-committee.

**Staff Report:** Connie reported the following:

1. The application for funding to Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education for \$30,000 for Entrepreneurship Training was not funded.
2. The application to Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority for \$16,500 for a food hub feasibility study was not funded.
3. An application was submitted to the Louis and Dorothy Coover Charitable Foundation for \$20,000 to do "Taste of (County) Events, collective marketing and regional trails was submitted on 2/17/17.
4. Connie is currently working on:
  - a. A grant for \$425,000 for three years to USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program for marketing, Taste of (County) Events, Speed-Date Events; Entrepreneurship Training and other training.
  - b. A grant for \$25,000 for 18 months to USDA Local Foods Promotion Program for a food hub feasibility study.
  - c. A grant for \$25,000-\$30,000 to USDA Rural Business Development Grant for Entrepreneurship Training, product placement and collective marketing.

NMC Members may be asked to submit partner or collaborator letters for some of these grants.

**Networking:** Attendees were invited to network. Cookies were provided by St. James Marketplace Café and port snack sticks were provided by Farm to You Market.