

Fieldnotes

Project: AFC Archie Green Project/VFC2014-0005

Interviewee: Diane Imre/AU2014-1003

Interviewer: Andy Kolovos

Interview Date: October 13, 2014

Interview Location: Fletcher Allen Hospital/University of Vermont Medical Center, Burlington, VT

Was referred to Diane Imre during our meeting with Chuck Ross. His suggestion that two of the major forces that enabled local agriculture to survive in VT are large institutional buyers (school districts, colleges/universities) and export intrigued me and I decided to focus my initial line of inquiry for the project on the network of producers/growers that supply the University of VT Medical Center (still called “Fletcher Allen” at the time of my interview) and learn a bit about Diane Imre’s efforts to reorient the hospital’s food service around locally grown and produced foods.

Diane was very gracious and accommodating as we attempted to establish a good time to meet. On the day of the interview I found her in her office (cinder block, no windows as I recall, but I could be mis-remembering) in one of the administrative units of the hospital. She was great. Prior to the interview I reviewed a few videos of her lectures—in part to get a better sense of what she looked like so I’d recognize her and in part to learn about more about her. She’s an extremely eloquent speaker, and this eloquence on the stage translated itself to the interview context as well. Additionally any concerns I had about what this eloquence might mask (superficiality? Etc.) quickly vanished—she’s down to earth, warm and forthright and it was a pleasure to meet and interview her for this project.

Her perspective was extremely interesting—focusing on the health benefits of fresh foods and fresh preparation for patients and staff at the hospital. The health perspective provides the justification for a larger project that Imre is also invested in regarding local food production, but in her institutional context having health as the primary rationale makes perfect sense.

Her interests have gone beyond sourcing and cooking to include establishing a weekly farmers market at the hospital and gardens on the hospital roof as well as CSA pick ups and fresh produce pick up via Colchester Family Practice.

I found her an intelligent, visionary person dedicated to improving health outcomes and seeing the role of local food (both nutritionally and economically) as important to that.