

Vancouver Food Policy Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 20, 2013
6:00-8:30pm
Town Hall Room, City Hall



Chairs: Brent Mansfield and Trish Kelly

Council Members: Maria Burtlehaus, Robyn Carlson, Kimberly Hodgson, Ilana Labow, Emme Lee, Tara Moreau, Ross Moster, Helen Spiegelman, Paul Taylor

Liaisons: Aaron Jasper (Park Board), James O'Neill (Social Planning, City of Vancouver), Kim Sutherland (BC Ministry of Agriculture), Theresa Duynstee (MetroVan)

Regrets: Jason Apple, Joanne Bays, Claudia Chan, Zsuzsi Fodor, Peter Ladner, Pat McCarthy, Nicholas Scapillati, Shelby Tay, David Wilson, Chris Thoreau, Heather Deal (City Council), Claire Gram (Vancouver Coastal Health), Rob Wynen (Vancouver School Board)

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Round
Members introduced themselves, and twenty-eight guests were present.
2. Motion to Accept Agenda and previous minutes
Moved by Paul, seconded by Kim, carried unanimously.
3. Staff Report - James O'Neill
Food Strategy - passed in Council, is now posted online. Website will be updated to provide more prominence and easier access. Some printed copies will be available for FPC members. Internal outreach is continuing to update departments, seeking synergies with relevant projects. Social Planning staff (Thien) is participating on Park Board Food Assets Task Force, ensuring further connections are made.
4. Upcoming consultations and events:
 - Conference Board of Canada's Canadian Food Strategy Consultation on February 25, 8:30am-11:30am
FPC members (Brent, Emme, Dave) will attend. CBoC is an ideas-group with projects related to economic development in Canada. Many groups have been attempting to create a national strategy (Food Secure Canada - Peoples Food Project, Canadian Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute, etc.), and there are concerns about CBoC's strategy being too focused on industry with not enough participation of civil society. Event will be an opportunity to become informed of industry's needs, and while FPC participation is not an endorsement, it is unclear how input will be used. MOTION: Using information from the primer, that FPC write an open letter in response to the primer and consultation, to be posted in the days following the consultation. Moved by Brent, seconded by Emme, carried unanimously. Brent will circulate by email for input. If no response, passive consent will be assumed. Brent will circulate link to an online survey.
 - Meeting with Federal NDP
A meeting was requested to discuss a food strategy. They are interested in national barriers to FPC work. Trish and Brent will meet with them; members invited to send Brent any discussion items.
 - Report Launch of UN Canada Mission on the Right to Food March 4, 9:00-11:00am
UN special rapporteur to food has written report on food in Canada, will present report to UN human rights council in Geneva, then will participate in a live feed to 20 communities in Canada, including Vancouver. Food Secure Canada will then host Q&A. Graham Riches, Dawn Morrison, Aart Schuurman Hess, and Fraser Stuart will be on a short panel followed by open dialogue. The open letter will be used to inform public and media about the meeting, as a platform for larger discussions.

- Agriculture Advisory Committee Workshop March 13, 9:00am-4:00pm
Since 1998, MoAg has been developing the Strengthening Farming program, focused on land under municipal control, and responsible development and consideration of agriculture. Every two years, three representatives from each Agricultural Advisory Committees meet in every region to discuss experiences, and three spaces have been made available for FPC members. Currently there are five FPC members interested, contact Brent if interested. Will be decided by email. Update to come at next meeting.
5. Update on proposal for Food Activation on Granville - Jason Apple
Opportunity with Viva Vancouver, Jason will be asked to send follow up email.
 6. Presentation by Tony Beck from the Society for a GE Free BC
GE Free BC supports sustainable agriculture, and is against GE crops and animals. They go to communities and bring together groups, giving options to set up GE free zones. Nationally, three new GE products are awaiting approval - salmon, alfalfa, and a non-browning apple. In BC, ten municipal GE free zones exist, and ten more are in progress. UBCM has endorsed resolution against the GE apple. Concerns revolve around safety (pollen drift, contamination) and lack of independent testing, as well as ownership of seed companies.

Resolution requested from Vancouver, similar to one passed in Richmond:

- That the City of Vancouver hereby opposes the cultivation of genetically engineered plants and trees in the City of Vancouver, and that from this Resolution forward, no further GM crops, trees, or plants should be grown in the City of Vancouver. This also includes GM fruit trees, all GM plants and shrubbery, GM vegetables, GM commodity crops and any and all field tests for medical and experimental GM crops;
- That letters be sent on behalf of Council to the Prime Minister, Premier and leaders of the Federal and Provincial opposition, and copied to relevant Ministers in the Federal and Provincial governments, Vancouver MPs and MLAs, Metro Vancouver, UBCM, the LMLGA, and the FCM, advising of these resolutions and requesting strengthened management of genetically modified plants, more transparent assessment procedures and enhanced communication with the public

Three of five goals in the Vancouver Food Strategy touch on GE crops: access to healthy affordable food, food as a centerpiece of green economy, advocacy for a just and sustainable food system.

Discussion

- Risk in Vancouver - despite lack of large-scale agriculture, community and backyard gardens and municipal plantings would be at risk. The prohibition of shipping GE canola through Vancouver may also be examined.
- The Park Board is interested in exploring the issue, as the number of fruit trees in the City may be increased, and the tree farm in Langley could be affected.
- The resolution is symbolic and not enforceable, but it does give pressure to exclude GE crops.

A group of FPC members (Brent, Trish, Ilana, Kim, Ross, Emme) will be formed to make recommendations on operational items to bring back to FPC at the next meeting.

7. Presentation: Sustainable Diets, with a focus on controversial 'hotspots' for policy-makers and consumer - Eleanor Boyle
Eleanor began by emphasizing the importance of the 21st century context when attempting to define a sustainable food system. Internationally, the definition needs to focus on *ecology*, and beyond satisfying nutritional requirements. The standard food pyramid is the opposite of the

environmental impact pyramid (foods recommended to eat most of generally have lowest environmental impact.)

The issue of meat consumption has been framed as vegetarians vs. meat-eaters, but should be seen as a spectrum. The huge number of livestock on the planet means that meat production and consumption as currently done require large amounts of resources and generate large amounts of pollution. The goal is to work toward sustainable food systems, but reduced consumption is sometimes seen as a threat to culture or identity. A shift to eating less but better quality meat is needed; consumers must be willing to pay more, and can lobby government to encourage sustainable production.

Food waste, encouraged by plentiful cheap meat, must also be minimized through cooperation. Many suggestions exist including international treaties on reduction, and 'meatless Monday' campaigns, although some barriers with free trade agreements have been noted.

8. Roundtable and Small Group Discussion

Attendees broke into small groups to discuss impressions from the presentation, and potential ways forward. Suggestions included:

- Proclamation of a 'meatless Monday' by councilors or mayor with press release.
- Increasing transparency of abattoirs
- Conducting more life-cycle analysis for informed choices
- Exploring value shifts regarding meat

9. Motion to Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm