

Vancouver Food Policy Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 19, 2014
6:00-8:30pm
Town Hall Room, City Hall



Chair: Zsuzsi Fodor

Council Members: Robyn Carlson, Anna Cavouras, Peter Ladner, Emme Lee, Brent Mansfield, Pat McCarthy, Ross Moster, Helen Spiegelman, David Wilson

Liaisons: Thien Phan (for James O'Neill, Social Planning), Theresa Duynstee (MetroVan), Corrine Eisler (VCH)

Regrets: Jason Apple, Joanne Bays, Kimberly Hodgson, Trish Kelly, Ilana Labow, Tara Moreau, Nicholas Scapillati, Chris Thoreau, Heather Deal (City Council), James O'Neill (Social Planning, City of Vancouver), Aaron Jasper (Park Board), Rob Wynen (Vancouver School Board)

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Round
Changes to VCH Liaison - Welcome Corinne
Corrine is a nutritionist/dietician from the Healthy Living Program, and was one of the original members of the Food Policy Council.
Members introduced themselves. Eighteen guests were present.
2. Motion to Accept Agenda and Previous Minutes
Changes to agenda: Item 3-removed Update on Food Strategy and Large site development; Item 4-added Upcoming Meetings.
Moved by Pat, seconded by Anna, carried unanimously.
3. Staff Update - Thien
 - Awards of Excellence - 21 awards in 6 categories for outstanding individuals and organizations. Deadline April 4.
 - Grants - Community garden infrastructure (max \$1000) and community kitchen appliances. Deadline April 15th for both. Contact Thien or James for applications.
 - Greenest City Scholar - will examine how to fill gaps in diversity, based on Darlene Seto's MA work in cultural and ethnic diversity.

Discussion

Business license for urban farmers - needed for insurance purposes but current zoning will require bylaw changes. While the process is in progress, a presentation to Council may not happen until the fall due to competing City priorities. Thien will explore if FPC can help expedite the process or if an interim solution might exist.

Grants - new grant streams are geared toward organizations that have applied for other grants. Social Policy is working to get information on its website.

Projects for Greenest City Scholar - tentative topic will build on research and work with community garden associations to explore how to increase diversity in community gardens.

4. Updates and Discussion
 - Meeting Preamble Update (Trish) - tabled until next meeting. Trish is working with the indigenous food community on language. Contact Trish if interested in working on this.
 - Letters of Support Update (Zsuzsi) - two requests received - one from Kwantlen (Food system design

group), and the Hua Foundation. With 10 yeses needed for approval, both were approved (Kwantlen 13-1, Hua 14-0 with 4 abstentions for each). Feedback about the process suggests that if background information is sent along with the request, then an online process works well, and that it need not be an anonymous process. It was recommended that once the criteria and process have been set, that information be posted on the website so other groups are aware. Another request was received from individuals at the Park Board, to nominate the Local Food Assets Task Force for the Awards of Excellence. MOTION: That the FPC put forward a letter of support to nominate the Local Food Assets Task force for an Award of Excellence. Moved by Pat, seconded by Dave, carried unanimously.

- Website Updates (Vicky) - Past meeting minutes are now posted under 'Monthly Meeting' once approved. Presentations and electronic documents circulated at meetings will be posted along with the post about that meeting. It was suggested to post working group descriptions and a page with links to resources of interest. Consideration will be given to hiring someone or expanding Vicky's job.
- Sustenance Festival (Zsuzsi) - the FPC traditionally does an event around World Food Day (Oct 16) and has been asked if the FPC will include an event this year. There is no meeting room available for October. There was a suggestion to use the event to get food on the election platforms. An ad hoc working group was formed (Dave, Ross, Anna).
- Upcoming meetings (Zsuzsi) - April: urban bees and pollinators in the DTES, would likely be off-site, Anna is looking for someone to talk about bats and birds as pollinators. Fairmont has bees on the roof. Dave has contacts for birds. Pollinator corridor project with Emily Carr identified Elizabeth Elle at SFU for bees. May: Two guest speakers on migrant farm workers. June: Trish to lead meeting marking the end of the City's Year of Reconciliation (maybe offsite).

5. Introduction of Topic - Engaging Across Diversity Darlene Seto

Darlene is the program manager for the Live Well research group at SFU, working with diverse immigrant groups. Her MA work looked at diversity in community gardens in Vancouver, BC. Currently, there exists an idea of non-inclusion (that the food movement caters to elite or privileged populations) while at the same time there is a desire for a just, sustainable, and inclusive food system. Many gardens use City land and resources. Darlene chose to focus on community gardens but results can relate to many aspects of the food system. The project looked at demographics, motivations, and provided recommendations. An electronic survey was conducted, and semi-structured interviews explored structural rules and criteria for membership. The gardens contacted came from the City's list but not school gardens or communal gardens. Results on demographics show that gardeners are below the City average for percentage of visible minorities, non-primary language as English, and low-income status, while above the City's average for post-secondary educational attainment. Their motivations revealed that lower income households agreed that they garden to food reduce cost, while visible minorities were more likely to say it was culturally important. Overall, most gardeners have a positive sense of community and are satisfied with their experience. Structural and logistical barriers were identified - for example, if language is a barrier, referral services can be used, or signs. Even the 'lived experience' of being in a community garden may be unfamiliar. Recommendations included examining the allocation of resources - if diversity is a priority, then staff time and a budget line are important. Members were encouraged to consider how power and privilege operate in their organizations.

Questions & Discussion

- Distribution of community gardens - located in dense urban areas, with less in the far south east part of the city. The study used census dissemination areas, and results from the study can inform where new community gardens go and ensure that food assets (gardens and others) are equitably distributed. The City distributes 'Expression of Interest' (Eoi) for community gardens to those organizations who partner with immigrant serving agencies.

- Many ethnic gardeners may use backyard gardens and may not need a community plot.
- Annual Fee - Some gardens have a fee. It was suggested that a fund be created for people to donate to, to offset the fee for lower-income gardeners.
- Many assets and skills go into building a community garden (ability to network, fill in city forms, etc.) which could favour privileged populations.
- People with disabilities are often also from low income households.
- Guidelines around ethnic inclusion could be created (similar to existing ones for accessibility) although there was a concern that this could be over-determining representation. Balance is needed between over and under regulation.
- Gardens in DTES were not included in the study as they are more communal and gardeners may be more transient. Community garden model with individual plots suits a certain population but other models may be adapted to other populations. CoV is trying to address different models - the Eol is not just for community gardens (includes orchards, etc.).
- Surveys were broken down by gender and age - age was close to the CoV average, while 70-75% of gardeners were female.
- Need to keep cultural anchor of food as a mechanism to engage cultures.
- Public policy and infrastructure can be used to pro-actively include people. However, cities and policies engineer society but may overlook existing richness. Encourage policies that can help citizens define cultures without having to be told.
- Encourage participation through neighbourhood houses, especially where there are higher immigrant populations, to get involved and avoid isolation. There is diversity in models of participation (kitchens, CSAs).

6. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Robin, carried unanimously

Meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.