

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 12, 2020

6:00pm-8:30pm

Strathcona Room, City Hall



Meeting Co-Chairs: Martina Marsic and Emily Voong

Council Members: Clare Cullen, Kaitlyn Fung, Tamer Mohamed Hussein, Joey Liu, Delphina Kejo, Marc Schutzbank, Darlene Seto, Sarah Siska, Andrew Stephens-Rennie, Kelsey Timler

City appointed liaisons: Councillor Bligh (City Council), Caitlin Dorward (Social Policy, CoV), Trustee Gonzalez (VSB), Katelyn Ling (Park Board Staff), Councillor Wiebe (City Council)

Invited Guests: Yan Zeng (Rezoning Centre)

Regrets: Jolene Andrews, Heather Escobar, Jesse Veenstra

Absent: Evan Bowness, Commissioner Dumont (Park Board), Rachel Telling (Sustainability)

Minutes

1. Welcome/Call to order

1.1 Land Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge that we are meeting on the unceded homelands of the *w̓m̓əθk̓w̓əy̓ əm* (Musqueam), *s̓k̓w̓x̓ w̓ú7mesh* (Squamish), and *sel̓ilw̓itulh* (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations and give thanks for their generosity and hospitality on these lands.

1.2 Quorum

There is quorum at the meeting.

1.3 Roundtable introductions

Members and liaisons introduced themselves. Seven guests introduced themselves.

2. Consent agenda matters

2.1 Previous Minutes

Motion to approve February 2020 minutes: Moved by Darlene, seconded by Delphina, carried unanimously.

3. Continuous learning

3.1 Development 101 Presentation (Public, community benefits, urban agriculture)

Working Group requested a presentation to better understand how the zoning and rezoning process works, and to provide a foundation of knowledge for ongoing work in order to make informed suggestions and recommendations. Of particular interest is the supply chain and how re/zoning affects food businesses, recognizing that zoning is one of the most powerful tools that a municipality has.

Yan provided an overview of how bylaws support the city's various policies and plans. Rezoning requests can be made by the City, or privately initiated. The rezoning centre includes three areas (housing priority, metro-core, and community plans). Each neighbourhood has a plan or a vision.

Process

- Pre-enquiry - confidential discussions to resolve larger issues.
- Letter of inquiry - includes a package with drawings, specific details on intent.
- Staff review - built form, housing targets, engineering perspectives, etc. are reviewed. Determine on-site public benefits (e.g. childcare, social housing). Schools are not taken into consideration, however development statistics (e.g. how many units are approved) are shared with the VSB. The VSB is consulted as part of new neighbourhood plans.
- Letter of response - provides developer with certainty of staff support.
- Pre-application open house - the intention to apply for rezoning is made public at this time.

- Rezoning application submission - includes more details, including how the development meets requirements.
- Rezoning Application process - Community Open House - signs are posted and a website is created. Neighbours within two blocks are notified by flyers two weeks in advance. The application is reviewed by the Urban Design Panel, who give non-binding recommendations. At times, Council will approve a development that has not passed the Urban Design Panel. If an application does not pass, the applicant may revise the application to address concerns.
- Council referral - staff present report summarizing feedback from open house.
- Public hearing - citizens can sign up to speak. Council debates and votes to approve, reject, or recommend revisions.
- Rezoning enactment - all legal conditions in report need to be fulfilled before the zoning actually changes.
- Specific streams of applications (e.g. social housing or rental tenure) have an expedited process. There is a simplified rezoning process where a formal process is not required (5 months vs 9-12 months for standard application).

Discussion

- How is feedback from official staff vs. citizens weighted? It is a democratic process; all comments are welcome. The substantive comments are reviewed and community cohesiveness is considered along with the specific reasons. The feedback is included in the staff report to council, and is weighted by frequency. It is recognized that the process is not ideal. Staff receive direction from council, and consider the overarching policies and impact on the neighbourhood, while remaining neutral.
- Is the consultation available in different languages? Communications in Chinese and Punjabi have been attempted, with mixed results and feedback. This is a city-wide issue, including with the Vancouver Plan. Conversations for improvement are ongoing.
- To what extent are amenities driven by the City vs by the developer? The amenities are a combination of developer aspirations, public benefit strategy (included in community plans), and public input. Every new plan has a public benefit strategy, older 'visions' do not.
- Where there is no strategy, how are public benefits assessed? They are often assessed on an ad hoc basis. The City's Real Estate and Facilities Management is aware of facilities that require upgrades, in line with the [Financing Growth](#) guiding document. If not providing benefits, cash contributions (Community Amenity Contributions) are made.
- To what extent is food systems planning a lens in this process? The food system is not specifically considered. VFPC members noted that when looking at food character and access in the city, small scale independent food markets provide important value for low income residents and can be important for cultural food access and traditions.
- For commercial leases, small business are squeezed out through the development process due to an increase in valuation. The goal is to enable building development. Food is only considered in large site rezoning when developers are required to include three onsite food assets. However, the bar is low and can include planting some fruit trees, or including rooftop urban agriculture plots. For leases, The City creates the commercial retail units (CRUs) with urban design guidelines; it is the development that fills them. BIAs could take active role to talk to developers and get best tenant. However, as a parallel example, the City pays attention to the tenants that are displaced when rezoning involves displacement of housing, so it appears there are robust protections for tenants, but there is only soft persuasion for developers to move long standing businesses.
- In North East False Creek there is a discussion of a curated retail strategy included in the design guidelines.
- Are there affordable rentals for businesses? There is some indication this may happen in the DTES but the current status not clear. The REFM has a mandate to maximize profit. The issue may be revisited. Cultural spaces where the City is the owner can be leased for reduced rate, similar to childcare. However food is retail, not non-profit.
- There may be an opportunity to negotiate between social businesses and childcare, similar to a 'food utility', possibly through a public private partnership with interesting leasing opportunities to keep business here. The City tries not to nominal leases; rather grants are awarded to cover the costs of a standard lease so that the full value is known.
- Is there a plan for the sustainable food systems objectives drafted in 2014 (for large sites) to be reviewed? The policy was amended in 2016 that states that for sites over 10 acres, the developer has to provide

three food assets and a plan for programming and stewardship of those sites. It was noted that this could be updated.

4. Great Big Crunch

Declaration & Photo - Councillors Bligh and Wiebe and Trustee Gonzales read the proclamation to declare March 12, 2020 as “The Great Big Crunch for Healthy Food in Schools Day” in the City of Vancouver. Members participated in the crunch and will post a photo to social media to support the national campaign.

5. Member updates

5.1 Liaison Reports

- Councillor Wiebe
 - Council passed Access without Fear, which affects Temporary farm workers and other precarious workers. It was first passed in 2016, however some elements were not fully delivered. The goal is that all organizations that receive funding from the City include policies to provide access to services without being required to provide immigration status.
 - The City is undertaking the largest consultation in history for the Vancouver Plan; food needs to be supported as a public benefit.
 - An Ecosystems restoration motion was introduced to make Vancouver a salmon-safe city and increase biodiversity and can allow for reconnection to natural food cycles.
 - COVID19 virus - Seattle has closed restaurants, which affects food access. The City of Vancouver is working on a business plan for how to support food assets if the same happens in Vancouver. Charitable food and social services will be affected, and it was recognized that people in the DTES may have comprised immune systems and a lack of hygiene and may be unable to quarantine themselves.
- Councillor Bligh
 - Acknowledged ongoing work on the food file and was honored to bring forward a motion to support the Coalition for Healthy School Food, which passed with unanimous support. Now other smaller steps can happen without opposition. Councillor Fry will take it to the UBCM, and Councillor Bligh to the FCM. Councillors have asked to visit LunchLab, an exemplary school meal program integrating food literacy and healthy meals.
- Commissioner Dumont - no direct update available. Councillor Wiebe shared that the Park Board is restoring two creeks with a goal to reconnect parks and work with first nations.
- Trustee Gonzalez
 - The motion to formally endorse the Coalition for Healthy School Food passed Feb 24, 2020. The Terms of Reference for the external working group also passed; VSB is working to get the applications out. The VSB has aging infrastructure and declining interest in culinary programs and wants to be ready for a universal school food program which is recognized to have long terms benefits for society. Work is planned to begin in early April.
 - The long-term facilities survey has wrapped up, and VSB is going to consultations for how school spaces can be community gathering spaces, to address declining enrollment.
 - Coal Harbour school will begin construction in September with childcare and social housing, using passive house technology. It is not clear if there will be a kitchen at Coal Harbour. The minimum that is needed for a food program is a double sink, commercial dishwasher, and oven.
 - Budget process - looking for public feedback. A small surplus will used to increase capacity for special needs and indigenous students.
 - It was noted that the area standards used by the province are not aligned with new curriculum, and that much lobbying of BC government is needed.
- Katelyn Ling (PB staff)
 - Local Food Action Plan update - the RFP is in the procurement process. Members that are aware of firms that can support the update are asked to email Katelyn.
 - The Neighbourhood Matching Fund pre-application process opening soon; full applications are due May 7. The NMF allows for community enhancement of parks.
- Rachel Telling (Sustainability Staff) - no update available.
- Caitlin Dorward (SP staff)
 - Council approved new expanded and extended lease of Sole Foods site to accommodate the two previous sites that the City will take back. A \$220k grant was approved to finance the move and reconstruct greenhouses. The lease currently goes to 2023 and may be extended. The site will eventually be developed as part of the SEFC plan. A call for applications for urban agriculture infrastructure upgrades is open. ACTION: Caitlin will circulate.

- City Council Interactions - deferred to next meeting.

5.2 Working Group Updates & Learnings- deferred to next meeting.

- Food Cultivation & UbAg
- Development/Retail
- Food Waste
- Children & Youth
- Leadership Team
- Community Food Prog.
- Evelyne Saller Ctr

MOTION:

To extend the meeting to 8:50pm to allow for discussion of food bank and Wet'suwet'en support.
 Moved by Marc, seconded by Martina, carried unanimously.

- GV Food Banks

Significant changes to the intake process were recently announced. The Food Bank serves thousands of people in Burnaby, North Shore, and Vancouver. All are vulnerable and some have no fixed address. Food is delivered through food hubs across communities and to groups that deliver meal programs. Previously, there was a low barrier intake that allowed people to self-identify, recognizing the challenges to provide tax returns or paystubs, or if undocumented. Assessments have shown that there is no one cheating the system. People are continuously stigmatized when having to repeatedly prove they are poor. With the new system, photocopies of ID are not accepted, and every adult in the household must provide either a tax statement or three paystubs/benefits receipts. This is a shift away from other major food banks that are moving to more dignified access. The changes are due to begin April 1. The City of Vancouver does not provide funding to the Greater Vancouver Food Bank.

Discussion

- The Food Bank undertook little to no consultations and did not meet with the City or key stakeholders including the Board of Directors. The need for accountability and data collection have been cited as reasons for the change.
- What influence/relationship does city have on food bank? It is unclear; ACTION: Staff will report back with more info.
- There are ongoing discussions about space. Senior city staff have met with the food bank.
- To avoid any conflict of interest, Joey Liu left the room for the remainder of the discussion.

MOTION OF CONCERN REGARDING RE-REGISTRATION PROCESSES BEING ENACTED BY THE GREATER VANCOUVER FOOD BANK

WHEREAS

1. The Greater Vancouver Food Bank has recently made significant changes to their intake process (now requiring current photo identification, proof of address, and proof of income for all adults in a household);
2. People accessing the foodbank have been shown to be food insecure;
3. Having to 'prove one's poverty' is a stigmatizing and difficult experience;
4. The public consultation of these changes was extremely limited and/or not completed;
5. Known best practices for dignified charitable food access call for reducing barriers to access;
6. In light of COVID-19, ensuring access to needed food support will be critical over the next months, and food banks in other jurisdictions are modifying intake procedures, including waiving sign-in requirements, to protect the health of vulnerable food bank clients; and
7. The City of Vancouver has recently passed its Access Without Fear policy to ensure that all residents can have access to services regardless of immigration status.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT the Vancouver Food Policy Council expresses serious concern regarding the re-registration process being enacted by the Greater Vancouver Food Bank effective April 1, 2020;

FURTHER THAT the Vancouver Food Policy Council calls upon the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, during the COVID-19 crisis, to ease its registration requirements and ensure all new and existing clients can access food in a timely, safe, and dignified manner;

FURTHER THAT the Vancouver Food Policy Council further calls upon the Greater Vancouver Food Bank to pause any changes to their re-registration process;

FURTHER THAT the Vancouver Food Policy Council calls on the City of Vancouver to direct staff to engage in consultation with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank Leadership and its Board of Directors on this issue of concern;

AND FURTHER THAT the Vancouver Food Policy Council request staff to report back on this issue, with specific respect to the City of Vancouver's relationship (funding and otherwise) and activities with the Greater Vancouver Food Bank.

Moved by Andrew, seconded by Kelsey, carried unanimously.

6. Matters requiring discussion

6.1 Wet'suwet'en Support Efforts

The VFPC has committed to supporting indigenous issues as a cross-cutting theme, and resources exist in the shared drive. A letter of solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en had been drafted and circulated via email with a request for timely circulation, however only six members responded. It is important that all members provide feedback; it is not clear whether others did not support the letter, did not have enough information, or did not want to sign their names.

Discussion

- It was noted that a lack of nimbleness is not a lack of support and that there is a limit to what can be done through email.
- This is a complex issue where there may be tentativeness to weigh in over email due to possible misinterpretations.
- In the previous VFPC term, an open letter was sent regarding the name of a restaurant. Feedback was received that the VFPC had not consulted the restaurant before publishing the letter, and members are urged to consider what can be learned from that.
- Due to the health crisis, the current political pressure to release a letter is not as strong. The RCMP has said verbally that they would leave but they are still there. It was suggested that a film screening with funds donated will be more meaningful.
- It was noted that the working group Indigenous Food Sovereignty has released a statement that the VFPC could amplify.
- Depending on the wording, a vote may be needed to support the letter on social media; a protocol may need to be created.
- It was decided that it will be most impactful to both support the statement by the Indigenous Food Sovereignty working group now, and to follow up with a statement on behalf of the VFPC.

MOTION:

THAT the VFPC endorse the statement of solidarity with the hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en first nations written February 9, 2020 by the working group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty.

Moved by Andrew, seconded by Clare, carried unanimously.

- The VFPC solidarity statement in support of the hereditary chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en, advocating to the City and beyond, will be on next agenda. ACTION: members will read and provide input on the statement within 2-3 days of the next meeting. The potential film screening will also be discussed at the April meeting. ACTION: Darlene will contact the Hua Foundation to provide an update.
- It was noted that there have been language shifts around core-values, moving away from 'reconciliation' and toward 'solidarity'.

7. Adjourn meeting

Moved by Clare, seconded by Kelsey, carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13pm