



VANCOUVER FOOD POLICY COUNCIL

MINUTES

November 18, 2021

A meeting of the Vancouver Food Policy Council was held on Thursday, November 18, 2021, at 6:04pm, by electronic means. The meeting was open to members of the public.

PRESENT:

Evan Bowness
Leona Brown
Alice Briggs
Emily Burkholder
Sarah Common
Clare Cullen
Sharon Dong
Khalid Jamal
Ivy Leong
Ben Liegey
Joey Liu
Rasoul Narimani*
Michelle Reining
Marc Schutzbank
Anthony Sullivan
Kae Yee Tsai
Carol White

ABSENT:

Miluska Bravo
Katherine Cooper
Jyotika Dangwal
Taelyr Keeley

ALSO PRESENT:

Caitlin Dorward, Social Planner, Social Policy and Projects, Staff Liaison
Jason Hseih, Social Planner, Social Policy and Projects, Staff Liaison
Mary Clare Zak, Managing Director, Social Policy and Projects, Staff Guest*
Rebecca Till, Environmental Stewardship Coordinator Vancouver Park Board, Staff Liaison
Trustee Estrellita Gonzales, Vancouver School Board
Councillor Michael Wiebe, City of Vancouver*

RECORDER:

Vicky Baker

*denotes partial attendance

WELCOME

The Chair acknowledged that we are meeting on the stolen and ancestral homelands of the ʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and sel̓íl̓wítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and reminded members of the commitment to honour the land, and thinking to the directions of those who have stewarded the land, to also build stronger food systems that move us toward justice.

The recent and ongoing climate change induced flooding and state of emergency, in addition to much hardship in recent months, were acknowledged. It was noted it is important to consider farmers and Indigenous people whose foodlands have been damaged by landslides and flooding. This is an example of how vulnerable Vancouver's food system is, and there is a need to consider what this means for the VFPC's work going forward.

Staff noted that the City's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is monitoring for shortages of critical supplies (food, medicine, hygiene). Members are asked to alert staff liaisons if they hear of shortages in the community so that this information can be shared with the EOC.

1. Online meeting reminders

Staff explained that members of the public are muted by default, but can use chat. Council members were reminded that voting must be done verbally and that items in the chat are not recorded in the minutes. Five members of the public attended.

2. Approval of draft meeting minutes, September 9th meeting

MOVED by Marc Schutzbank
SECONDED by Michelle Reining

THAT the Vancouver Food Policy Council approve the Minutes from the meeting of September 9, 2021, as circulated.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

3. Liaison Updates

- Councillor Wiebe
 - Council is currently in the process of reviewing the draft Operating Budget for 2022. Cllr. Wiebe noted that there are elements in the City's plans that are not resourced and difficult decisions need to be made. Members are encouraged to come speak to the importance of those elements and share relevant information at the upcoming Council meeting about the Operating Budget, which is taking place on December 1st. ANTHONY and LEONA to help.
 - MARC to contact Councillor Wiebe directly to request further details about which elements might be cut and what the timeline is.
- Trustee Gonzalez
 - Suggested that VFPC could consider bundling simple motions and including them as "consent agenda" items to speed process for simple items.

- The Education Plan (strategic plan) has begun and will go to trustees for review in January for approval.
- New superintendent Helen McGregor starts in January and will work with employees to operationalize those goals.
- Applications are open for the VSB Ad-hoc Food working group. Will begin in January and meet for several months. VSB is seeking subject matter expertise in poverty, food insecurity reduction, etc. Trustee Gonzalez will be 1 of 2 Trustees in the group.
- VSB has done surveys around anti-racism work and has a Plan that will be implemented.
- Budget time has begun; the reduction of 1000 students from 2019 will affect funding. Families are leaving the district; VSB needs to work with the City Council on housing and childcare. The Ministry of Education is launching an initiative for seamless childcare for 3-5 yr old children.
- Park Board – Rebecca Till
 - The LFSAP Plan was approved, and work on implementation will begin. A budget request has been submitted to resource the Plan; many commissioners understood the need for funding to back the Plan. Members who spoke at the Board meeting were thanked for their contributions.
- Deferred: Social Policy – Caitlin Dorward

4. Working Group Updates and VFPC work plan

Working Groups shared the term priorities that are outlined in the draft workplan.

Members of the public were reminded that they are able to join working groups. The workplan is a living document and can be updated as needed.

Motion to accept 2021-22 workplan

MOVED by Joey Liu

SECONDED by Leona Brown

To approve the working group priorities as written in the VFPC Work Plan 2021.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

CAITLIN to share the workplan with Clerks office, who will share it with City Council.

5. Admin Team updates

5.1 Motion to accept Community Agreements

The Admin Team presented an updated common definitions document and Community Agreements, and discussed the intent that these documents inform the VFPC's work together (see both appended).

MOVED by Leona Brown

SECONDED by Ben Liegly

To accept and approve the VFPC Community Agreement and to accept and approve the Shared Definitions Document.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

5.2 Call from clerk's office around ongoing review and improvement of advisory bodies

The admin team has started to draft a letter to provide feedback to the Clerk's office on advisory body process, recruitment, and governance. Feedback will inform Clerk's office staff review of the Advisory Bodies as a whole and a report to Council anticipated for March 2022. Feedback on the draft letter from other VFPC members is encouraged.

SARAH to share the draft letter.

5.3 Guest speakers

Caitlin sent meeting dates for 2022 VFPC meetings. Admin Team is encouraging all Working Groups to participate in planning the 2022 meetings – eg: identifying topics, guests, and potential motions. Connect with Admin Team early to get on the schedule. A “future meeting topics” document is also available in the Drive for reference of what is being planned.

6. Discussion on 2022 Budget

- Mary Clare Zak, Managing Director of Social Policy, provided an overview of the potential implications of the proposed 2022 Operating Budget.

This is a difficult year for the City's budget. An estimated 10% increase to property tax rates would be needed to continue current staffing and service levels. However, City Council voted earlier in 2021 to raise the tax rates no more than 5% in 2022. As a result, all departments will need to make cuts. City council is committed to equity, which is much of the work of Social Policy. There are currently about 2.5 full time equivalent staff working on food policy within Social Policy. Under the proposed/draft budget, some of this staff time which may be reallocated to other portfolios, requiring some food policy work to be delayed or stopped. The 'cost of living' increase for grants will be limited to 1%, even with a 5% tax increase. If only a 4% tax increase is approved, deeper cuts to staffing and service levels will be required to be identified. Food policy is not the only area affected – for example, no Healthy City coordinator, no work on motion around water as a human right or review of the MMIW report.

- Questions for staff
 - To what extent are resources like Defund 604 and the People's budget considered when the budget is drafted?
 - Staff does consultation and research, however council can direct staff to consider other resources for inclusion such as reports like these.
 - There will be a presentation to City council Dec 1; members may sign up to speak
 - Can food waste reduction be linked to food purchased by the City?
 - Recommend to connect social and economic aspects when speaking to council.
 - It was noted that a 10% property tax increase would result in an approximate \$290/year property tax increase on a home with an assessed value of \$1 million.
 - The high cost of union agreements that exist with VPD was noted.
 - It was noted that reallocating VPD funding could allow for reconciliation and a greener city.

- The Admin Team introduced a draft motion regarding the City's 2022 Operating budget. The draft motion was read aloud. Discussion of draft motion
 - There is a need to need to centre indigenous voices work as part of reconciliation. People of the land are a priority, others can learn from indigenous views for how to build bridges.
 - City policies exclude voices; they need to include lived experience to build community.
 - It is easier to speak to hereditary chiefs because they consider the priority of the land already.
 - What does UNDRIP mean? What does reconciliation mean?
 - Recommend to include social enterprise to push for social impact.
 - It was noted the actual amount of the increase would have a minimal for most residents.

Motion regarding City of Vancouver Budget 2022

Background:

The Operating Budget of the City of Vancouver sets out the way the City annually allocates spending to cover operating costs and is primarily funded through property taxes. Under B.C. law, the City of Vancouver's operating budget cannot have a deficit, so the operating budget must balance providing services with a desire to keep property tax increases manageable. Each year, City of Vancouver staff prepare a proposed operating budget for the following fiscal year. As part of this process, staff provide several briefings to Council during which Council has time to receive and comment on information about the budget as it is developed. By November, the draft budget is typically finalized and in early December, a Council meeting is held to debate and vote on the proposed budget. As part of that debate, Council may make amendments to the draft budget before approving it.

Earlier in this year of 2021, City of Vancouver Council directed staff to develop a 2022 operating budget funded by a property tax increase of no more than 5%, and to explore options for property tax increases at 3% and 4% so that Council could consider several scenarios; and Staff are not recommending the 4% or 3% tax increase scenarios, as these would require significant service reductions and staff layoffs, such as

- a. Under the 4% increase scenario - Reductions to grant increases: remove grants annual inflationary increase for Social, Cultural, and Homelessness Action Week grants
- b. Under the 3% increase scenario - Significant reduction in staff and work program, including service reductions at inner-city Community Centres and grants to Non-Profit Organisations. Staff would seek Council direction on what work to stop doing.
- c. the 5% tax increase scenario, an additional 45 million in savings must be identified in order to avoid a deficit, resulting in initiatives across departments would be unfunded (delayed or stopped).

Under the 3%, 4%, or 5% tax scenarios, which are designed to achieve savings, the following negative impact on food policy work in Vancouver would occur:

1. Food policy staff: These scenarios would redirect a Social Planner I (Food Systems) to work on other portfolios, reducing social policy food staff from approximately 2.6 FTE to about 1.6 FTE. Specifically, the information presented to Council identifies continued work on urban farming guidelines and other food initiatives as work items that will be

delayed or stopped in 2022 under these budget scenarios.

2. Grant increases: These scenarios would eliminate part of the regular 2% annual increase to the City's granting program budget, which includes Social Policy grants such as Sustainable Food System grant and others. This impacts the ability to award any inflationary or new program grants in 2022.
3. Portfolios with links to food systems or VFPC priorities: these scenarios would negatively impact several other portfolios with links to food systems or VFPC priorities where there will increase staff vacancies or extend them or face delays to hiring of new staff (e.g., additional staff to assist in the implementation of UNDRIP and assist with Indigenous relations; staff to implement the Language Access Policy, including translation of City communications to the public, delays to Circular Economy Strategy, and others).

More background from community orgs and reports:

1. Kiwassa Neighbourhood House Report "Transforming Dignified Food Access": "Our work is informed by the City of Vancouver's Food Charter, specifically in recognizing "access to safe, sufficient, culturally appropriate and nutritious food as a basic human right for all Vancouver residents" and in reflecting "the dialogue between the community, government, and all sectors of the food system." (www.vancouver.ca/files/cov/Van_Food_Charter.pdf) Our work is further informed by the Right to Food principles outlined by the United Nations (www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Food/Pages/AboutHRFood.aspx) as the right to have regular, permanent and unrestricted access to adequate and sufficient food that is culturally appropriate, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear."
1. "Red Women Rising" Report from the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre: "Indigenous women's poverty in the DTES is one of the main factors magnifying vulnerability to abusive relationships, sexual assault, child apprehension, exploitative work conditions, unsafe housing, food insecurity, poor health, and social isolation. The national poverty rate for Indigenous women is 36 percent, which is more than double the rate of non-Indigenous women. In a DTES women's safety audit, 57 percent of women said that they had felt forced to do something they were not comfortable with in order to survive and make ends meet.⁸ In a separate study, one-third of women on welfare reported staying or returning to an abusive partner for financial reasons, and one-fifth of women reported engaging in the survival sex trade due to welfare rules."
1. PIVOT Legal Society's "Project Inclusion": "Our systems for securing the basic necessities of life—income, food, shelter, health care, psychological support—are not equitably distributed nor consistently administered" and that those who face barriers to inclusion such as poverty and homelessness, are often denied access to food.
2. BC Food Systems Network Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty "9th Annual Meeting Report Part 1 Prepared by: Dawn Morrison, August 2015": "We are dealing with a high level of stress and illness associated with past traumas and social and environmental injustice issues in our families and communities. It is important we respect and honour those that are here and those that can't be here, and do what we can to accommodate more participation in a more informal structure that is sensitive to the cultural values and concept of time, as well as the high context communication patterns of Indigenous people. Important note: The healing process and deep and meaningful truth and reconciliation of past injustices takes time and cannot be rushed or forced into an

outside agenda or low context communication pattern or a cultural concept of time that does not reflect Indigenous ways of being, doing and knowing.”

3. “Nothing About Us Without Us!” - Originally from James Charlton: “Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability, Oppression and Empowerment” although heard first by contributing member of Vancouver Food Policy Council 2021 Term, Sarah Common, from Tracey Morrison, Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users.
4. People’s Budget: Reimagining How We Support One Another In Our Communities, 2021
“The People’s Budget is a project of the Defund 604 Network. We stand in solidarity with Indigenous self-determination and organize on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), sə́lilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh), Q’e’yc’ey (Katzie), Qw’?ntl’en (Kwantlen) kʷikʷə́ləm (Kwikwetlem), qiqéyt (Quay Quayt), and Stó:lō peoples.”

FINAL MOTION AS APPROVED

MOVED by Sarah Common

SECONDED by Marc Schutzbank

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver has declared itself a City of Reconciliation and is committed to adopting UNDRIP. The City’s policies as they exist exclude many voices and create barriers to access and understanding; to put Reconciliation into action we must listen to Indigenous voices and dismantle these barriers together, to clearly understand what Reconciliation and UNDRIP mean to those who are most impacted.
1. Access to affordable, nutritious, culturally appropriate food is a social determinant of health, increasing health and safety in our communities.
1. Food security is a critical component, not only of the City of Vancouver’s own strategy, but also as named by community organizations in the following reports, who we look to for leadership:
 - a. “Transforming Dignified Food Access” Report from Kiwassa Neighbourhood House Report
 - b. “Red Women Rising” Report from the Downtown Eastside Women’s Centre
 - c. “Project Inclusion”, Report from PIVOT Legal Society
 - d. “9th Annual Meeting Report Part 1 Prepared by: Dawn Morrison, August 2015”: BC Food Systems Network Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty.
 - e. “People’s Budget: Reimagining How We Support One Another In Our Communities, 2021” by the Defund604 Network.
1. Cutting staff time would directly oppose the recommendations of the Vancouver Food Policy Council in these recent examples of motions, letters, and memos (though there are many more from previous terms) that specifically cite the need for additional staff time and resources to support a just and sustainable food system:
 - a. Motion supporting Local Food Systems Action Plan 2021; November 8 2021
 - b. Memo to Council re: Accessibility and Virtual Meetings, signed by VFPC co-chairs; October 2021
 - c. Supporting frontline initiatives at DTES NH and Dudes Club; Jan 11, 2021
 - d. Motion on Urban Farm Guidelines; April 2021,
 - e. Motion to support diversity on councils; 2018.
 - f. Motion Vancouver Food Strategy Progress Report and Action Plan Update; 2017

1. The City of Vancouver has continually pushed back the report on urban farming, originally scheduled in 2018, which continues to be pushed back as a result of budgetary concerns.
1. Vancouver Food Policy Council acknowledges that we rely on the support of City Staff in making our work relevant, timely, and impactful, navigating and translating City of Vancouver policy into accessible language and structure.
1. Vancouver Food Policy Council recognizes that grants programming supports grassroots and community organised initiatives in bridging gaps in City services, and that it is in the leadership of those groups that we see direct impact in communities that are equity denied, with youth and children, elders and newcomers alike. Community knows what it needs to be safe; the work of the City, and of its Advisory Councils, is to empower the leadership of communities who live the experiences of disconnection to food.
1. Food prices are increasing, and with future increasing food prices on the horizon, any decrease of financial support for food systems grants, school food programs, or city run subsidized meal programs can have a dramatic and deleterious impact on the people it serves.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Vancouver Food Policy Council calls on the City of Vancouver to:

1. Prioritise and centre Indigenous Leadership, listening deeply to voices of lived and living experience, to those who have stewarded the lands, soils and waterways of this place since time immemorial.
2. Explore additional taxes and revenue generation and review budget allocations across departments to continue to work toward a just and sustainable food system.
 1. Create a meaningful, accountable and equitable participatory budget process.
 2. Fund the following in the 2022 Operating Budget:
 - a. Support Community Led Safety through increasing the “Social Impact Grants” budget - to support Non Profit Organisations and social enterprises, including those organisations who deepen access to food, build food systems literacy, engage youth and children in food systems, build equitable community gardens and green spaces, reduce food waste, build mutual aid systems around food sharing, and together build resilient food systems in the city.
 - b. Take Action on Climate Change: Supporting Parks Board Manager of Environment and Sustainability Position to provide focused Park Board management oversight of Climate Emergency + Resilience, Biodiversity Strategy, Access to Nature, Vancouver Plan – Ecological City, One Water and MST environmental and restoration/stewardship.
 - c. Increase Focus on Equity and Critical Social Issues: City Manager implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to meet the demands of the City's evolving Indigenous-relations work with specific reference to funding work supporting Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls.
 - d. Low-cost meal provision: no increases on meal fees for meals served at three inner-city community centres to keep costs low for people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.

- e. Food policy staff: retain the Social Planner I (Food Systems) to enable continued work on urban farming guidelines and other food initiatives.
- f. Support Britannia Community Centre in hiring a Youth Worker - providing support critical to youth in this neighbourhood, including connection to food through the rich programming around food at this Centre.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

7. Bread basket (outstanding items)

7.1 Vancouver Soil Day motion

Background: The International Union of Soil Sciences, in December 2002, proposed that December 5 should be World Soil Day. This day would signify the importance of soil in our ecosystem and the critical impacts of the destruction of soil.

In December 2013, at the 68th United Nations Assembly, December 5 was officially declared as World Soil Day. The following year, 2014, marked the first official celebration of the event on December 5, 2014.

World Soil Day aims to attain global attention and bring the effects of soil loss and damage to light. Without soil, the ever-growing population will remain underfed since plants won't have any space to grow. World Soil Day demands recognition and support for the management of soil along with sustainability. It aims for proper maintenance and care of soil all over the world.

Each year World Soil Day has a theme and for 2021 the theme is '**Halt soil salinization, boost soil productivity**', particularly relevant to coastal regions such as the Lower Mainland and Vancouver.

Many public engagement activities are and can be planned around Dec 5 as community-building and educational opportunities to raise awareness about maintaining healthy ecosystems and our planetary well-being.

The City of Vancouver proclaimed a "Vancouver Soil Day" in 2015 and 2020.

Motion to request a City of Vancouver proclamation of "VANCOUVER SOIL DAY"

MOVED by Clare Cullen

SECONDED by Alice Briggs

WHEREAS Healthy soil is important for all living things and healthy soils sustain life and society; bringing us into connection with the land, and the Host Nations of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsliel-Waututh.

AND WHEREAS

December 5th, 2021 is United Nations World Soil Day;

AND WHEREAS

Soil is essential for food security, food production, food waste reduction and composts; all of which are linked to the creation of a just and sustainable food system to which the City of Vancouver committed itself to in the 2013 Vancouver Food Strategy;

AND WHEREAS

The Vancouver Soil Celebration provides an opportunity for Vancouver residents to learn more about the role of soil in storing and filtering water, preventing erosion, cycling and storing carbon and providing for plant and animals;

AND WHEREAS

The Vancouver Soil Celebration is an opportunity for people of all ages to share knowledge and learn about upcoming academic and community-led research about sustainable soil management; and to acknowledge that soils are a solid ground for life, even in the city:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Vancouver Food Policy Council respectfully requests that Kennedy Stewart, Mayor of the City of Vancouver, proclaim Sunday, December 5th, 2021 as "VANCOUVER SOIL DAY" in the City of Vancouver.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

It was clarified that proclamations must be requested each year, and that the VFPC has not requested one each year.

8. Vancouver Plan and Broadway Plan

Due to lack of time, this item which was scheduled for today will be addressed during a special meeting. CAITLIN will connect with staff to decide a date and send an invitation to VFPC. No motions are needed, only review and comments on draft food policy directions being put forward in both Plans, so this will be an informal meeting.

Staff from the Broadway Plan and Vancouver Plan introduced themselves and briefly explained the two planning initiatives. More information and general engagement materials are available at www.vancouverplan.ca and <https://shapeyourcity.ca/broadway-plan>

9. Adjournment (Motion to Adjourn)

MOVED by Carol White
SECONDED by Emily Burkholder

THAT this meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

10. Next Meeting:

DATE: Thursday, January 13, 2022
TIME: 6:00 – 8:30 pm
PLACE: WebEx Online

The Committee adjourned at 8:32pm.

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