

Vancouver Food Policy Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 14, 2012
6:00-8:30pm
Town Hall Room, City Hall



Chairs: Brent Mansfield and Trish Kelly

Council Members: Joanne Bays, Maria Burglehaus, Robyn Carlson, Claudia Chan, Zsuzsi Fodor, Peter Ladner, Emme Lee, Pat McCarthy, Tara Moreau, Ross Moster, Nicholas Scapillati, Shelby Tay, Helen Spiegelman, Chris Thoreau, David Wilson

Liaisons: Heather Deal (City Council), Theresa Duynstee (MetroVan), James O'Neill (Social Planning, City of Vancouver), Kim Sutherland (BC Ministry of Agriculture),

Regrets: Jason Apple, Ilana Labow, Kimberly Hodgson, Paul Taylor, Aaron Jasper (Park Board), Rob Wynen (Vancouver School Board), Claire Gram (Vancouver Coastal Health)

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Round
Members introduced themselves. Thirty-one guests were present.
2. Motion to Accept Agenda and previous minutes
Moved by Joanne, seconded by Claudia, carried unanimously.
3. Approval of 2012-13 Work plan
Work plan as circulated prior to the meeting has been approved. The plan will be posted on website, and revisited in the future.
4. Update on Food Strategy - James
Social Planning provided an update to City Council on the Food Strategy, which was well received. Full strategy to go back to Council in January, and support from FPC is welcome. In June, the FPC working group provided input, and it will continue to be revised before adoption by Council. Draft actions circulated for meeting only - 65 from resulting from strategy, to be further refined.

James noted challenges of the food systems at several scales, and gave an overview of the food system in Vancouver from 2003, beginning with the Food Policy mandate, until the establishment of food-focused interdepartmental teams within the City. Through strong partnerships with diverse stakeholders, the strategy will support the City's sustainability goals (e.g. farmers' markets garden plots, urban farm land, more residents involved in NFNs). Select food assets tracked in GCAP have been mapped, and correlated with density. Challenges - environmental impact of food system, unequal food access, and lack of coordination among existing policies. These isolated policies will be aligned and integrated by the strategy. Over 2,000 people engaged in multiple consultations and communications about the strategy.

The strategy identifies five goals and prioritizes corresponding action areas. Goals - examine built environment, empower residents (human capital), increase access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents (food security), create centrepiece of green economy, advocate at all levels of government. Action areas relate to growing food, human capital, access, processing and distribution, and waste. Benefits include a healthier city, increased community capacity, meeting GCAP targets, and creating green jobs, making Vancouver a leader in this area.

It was noted that the strategy is a roadmap for action, includes accountability for those actions, and allows for an active role for the FPC and citizen engagement.

Discussion points

- Policy for urban farms - working with technical team, will make policy move after strategy has passed. May consider increase in number of hives/hens to increase urban farm gate sales.
- Community incubator - community kitchens will need infrastructure to allow for commercial sales, distinction will need to be made between community/commercial ventures.
- Engagement of industrial food sector encouraged.
- Urban farming - actions encompass input and recommendations from previous discussions
- Farmers markets access - wording may be clarified (“support” provision of water or PROVIDE water...), and could include targets.
- Stronger links to rural areas and MetroVan encouraged and to be made explicit.
- Local food procurement/advocacy - not just for the City but with/for other partners. Recommendation to make linkages with other municipalities and levels of government more explicit given dependence on a vibrant peri-urban zone that is currently threatened.
- Food waste - need to look at food recovery/rescue and food waste reduction, especially in the home. Food hubs don’t allow for distribution of recovered food.
- Recognize that FPC exists and provides input.
- Opportunity to include all areas that City is involved with, including signage issues related to interim farmers markets policy.
- Community food markets - defined as smaller farmers markets with access to healthy food, typically for vulnerable populations. Definitions will be in food strategy.
- Indicators - some actions have metrics associated but capacity within the City does not exist to track information. Contract may be considered to work with local organizations to collect information.

5. Keeping the Just in “Just and Sustainable”: Exploring How Food Assets Can Support a Just Food System

Theme follows on last meeting.

Diane Collis - comes from collective lens, and works with community kitchens toward just food systems, one that includes everyone in the system, from food consumers to food citizenship. Biodiversity and agriculture, diverse human voices, and human capital create resilience. Privilege exists in the food system, and community kitchens create leadership, shifting power and giving voice to different populations. The FPC can work with diverse residents in the NFNs and neighbourhood houses, with more focus on anti-racism.

Stephanie Lim - from Collingwood NH, reflects on language used around “just, sustainable, local” food systems. “Local” food may not be inherently just or sustainable, may impact on the social sustainability of cultural food traditions, and can imply ignorance on parts of the population. We need to think carefully about words used and what they mean to diverse groups and how to be more inclusive.

Scott Rowe - New Hope Cuisine Program (food rescue program). Program driven by stats - 40% of food is wasted, 30% of waste is organic in MetroVan. Commercial food system is broken and doesn’t connect like natural food system (pay to bring food in, and to throw it out). By rescuing food that cannot be sold from retailers and wholesalers, the program saves 70% and composts 30% of the food picked up. This is done in 2 stages - firstly by sharing with other organizations and then by processing some for those who can’t prepare food for themselves. Can provide chef training, compost to local gardens. Advice - start where you are, use what is available, do the best you can.

6. Roundtable Discussion

- Inclusivity in new initiatives - it was suggested to begin with where people are at and get them to talk in a safe space, then build on that knowledge to come together on common values.

- In some areas, 'pioneer seniors' may feel a sense of displacement as new minorities. Conversations around similarities (in food forms, for example) rather than differences can help bridge gaps.
- The role of the facilitator is often privileged, and in addition to allowing time for others to speak, can sometimes be given to participants to balance power dynamics. Encourage acknowledgment of culturally different ways of communication and meeting styles. Facilitators must trust in wisdom of those in the room and the process, which can take time.
- Justice has many forms - economic, cultures, environmental - and dialogue is an end in itself.
- Food justice is context-based, and the changing food landscape in the next 20 years or so needs to be considered.
- Justice in food distribution - discrimination exists in DTES - no right to choose, no trust, little justice. There are limits on visits to food bank, and limited access to transport. Neighbourhood trading posts in every neighbourhood (to buy/trade/donate clothes, food, time, etc.) were recommended.
- Food bank - new leadership understands need for new model while using existing infrastructure, resources. Need to educate large donors, public at large.
- DTES kitchen tables project develop standards for donation. Suggested FPC project to encourage adoption by other agencies and communicate to granting agencies, educating large donors that food bank is not a disposal system. Suggested meeting theme for early 2013, which could be cohosted with the Urban Aboriginal advisory committee.

7. Motion in Support of the Raise the Rates Campaign

MOTION: That the Vancouver Food Policy Council will support and urges the BC government to enact a comprehensive anti-poverty program to include:

- significant increase in all welfare rates bringing them up to the Market Basket Measure;
- An end to the arbitrary barriers to receiving welfare like the 5 week wait;
- An end to the 100% claw backs of earnings and child support of people on welfare;
- Raise the minimum wage to a living wage (www.livingwageforfamilies.ca);
- Building at least 2000 units of affordable non-market housing per year;
- Provision of universal, high quality, public early learning and child care; and
- Reversing the tax cuts for corporations and the rich since 2001, and increasing the tax rate on people who earn over \$250,000 a year.

It was noted that while the wording relating to the living wage has been added, many other groups have approved this motion. After some discussion, it was decided that the motion be approved as is. Moved by Nicholas, seconded by Joanne, carried unanimously.

8. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Chris.

Meeting adjourned at 8:39 pm