

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



Chairs: Brent Mansfield and Trish Kelly

Council Members: Joanne Bays, Robyn Carlson, Claudia Chan, Zsuzsi Fodor, Emme Lee, Ross Moster, Nicholas Scapillati, Shelby Tay, Chris Thoreau,

Liaisons: Theresa Duynstee (MetroVan), Kim Sutherland (BC Ministry of Agriculture),

Regrets: Jason Apple, Maria Burtlehaus, Kimberly Hodgson, Ilana Labow, Tara Moreau, Peter Ladner, Pat McCarthy, Helen Spiegelman, Paul Taylor, David Wilson, James O'Neill (Social Planning, City of Vancouver), Heather Deal (City Council), Claire Gram (Vancouver Coastal Health), Aaron Jasper (Park Board), Rob Wynen (Vancouver School Board)

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Round
Members introduced themselves, and forty-three guests were present.
Rob Sutherland was thanked for volunteering to buy an adapter cable for presentations.
Members were reminded to send regrets well in advance of the meeting.
2. Motion to Accept Agenda and previous minutes
Moved by Theresa, seconded by Kim, carried unanimously.
3. Succession Planning - Trish
Given that the chairs are both halfway through their second 3-year terms, and that members can only serve for two terms, both Brent and Trish will finish their terms as members at the end of 2014. Trish is looking to step down from co-chairing by this September and Brent will look to do the same some time in the new year. They are currently seeking any that might be interesting in becoming involved in some chairing responsibilities to begin to transition in now for when both step down. If you are interested, please contact Brent and Trish. It was suggested that Chairs have staggered terms to ensure continuity.
4. Short updates:
 - a. Report from Agricultural Advisory Committee Workshop on March 13 - Emme
Three representatives from FPC attended bi-annual meeting with government, land-use planners, and other AAC members. Focus was on communications. Land use inventory, including maps, are available on website.
 - b. Meatless Monday - Trish
A proclamation with Eleanor Boyle has been drafted to declare a meatless Monday. Councilor Deal has been consulted, and the proposed date is Monday, May 6. Outreach to restaurants will be conducted. Vancouver would be the first Canadian city to endorse the concept.
 - c. GE Free Resolution - Trish
Further discussions needed with Councilor, as well as Commissioner Jasper. A sub-group will be meeting to explore how to move the issue forward.
 - d. Open letter to Conference Board of Canada - Brent
Open letter was sent following on consultation, response was also circulated. Limited media coverage generated but was circulated through national networks.
 - e. Right to Food in Canada - Brent
Vancouver was one of 50 communities across Canada to host an event. Visit Food Secure Canada website for more information. Food Secure Canada, TFPC, TYFPC, and others to host joint event Apr 8, which will be webcast at 2pm PST.

5. Discussion of April meeting - Joanne Bays
Theme is innovative strategies to bring local food to institutions. Panel will include Ken Babich (Canadian Council for Local Procurement), Hayley Lapalme (My Sustainable Canada), Lana Popham (Provincial NDP critic). Joanne will provide overview of national context, followed by Q&A.
6. Presentation by Cottonwood Community Garden - Len Kydd and Alyssa Semczyszyn
Alyssa gave a visual representation of the proposed changes to widening of Malkin Ave and how it would affect the garden, which includes teaching, seed growing, a food forest, and 140 individual plots. The garden has existed for 22 years, and supports goals in the City's GCAP. As one of the earliest community gardens, it has helped spawn the boulevard and GreenStreets programs. Built on wasteland and designed with permaculture principles, it is now a gathering place that hosts many projects from diverse volunteers and partners such as EYA. 40% of garden is on City's Right of Way. Strathcona and Purple Thistle gardens would also be affected. Garden members would like FPC to endorse a resolution encouraging City Council to choose an alternative option.

Discussion

Other options - include leaving Prior as it is, or use Northern Avenue. Garden members are exploring more options that would be acceptable to all community members, as this option does not support increased food security

One of city's goals examines tenure of food gardens. The FPC can commit to having conversations with staff.

Malkin Ave expansion does not make sense in terms of heavy traffic around produce warehouses.

MOTION: To revise the resolution and revisit at next meeting April 17 for endorsement.

Moved by Brent, seconded by Trish, carried unanimously. Trish, Brent, and Ross to work on it. Will be circulated the week prior to meeting.

7. Introduction of theme - Brent Mansfield
Recommended by Peter Ladner. Members were reminded that ideas for themes can be sent to chairs.
8. Presentation: Towards a Bioregional Food System - Kent Mullinix, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
In the US, only small or very large farms are growing in numbers, a trend also seen in BC. Agriculture is a main contributor to GHG emissions, and is very energy intensive, with one unit of output for five of input. With peak oil estimated in 2037, the balance between global and local needs to be examined for our bioregion. This project is organized around ecology and aims to develop economies, communities, and the food sector through re-regionalization. Goal is to engage communities of interest and broad stakeholders in the design of a realistic, practical food system with a project methodology that can be replicated in other areas. It will explore integration and operations of all aspects of food production over 3 years. The project is now 5 months in to the first phase assessment with the design of the food system in Year 2 and the development of the implementation plan for 2030 and 2050 in Year3. Stakeholders will be fully engaged to give feedback on preliminary design directives, and throughout the project to produce a clear, practical roadmap based on empirical data, with all potentials benefits clearly outlined. Committed to full transparency, all materials will be posted online. Because the food system is more than agriculture, an advisory committee will ensure that all elements are taken into consideration. Hope to work with Thompson and Prince George bioregions next, then all regions in BC, then to examine links between them for 'a global network of regional agri-food systems'.

The team is asking for endorsement of the project, to assign a VFPC liaison, and to encourage the City of Vancouver to support the project.

9. Roundtable and Small Group Discussion
Discussion

- NGO sector - will be engaged; project will build on work done currently
- Operationalization - the goal is that with engagement from municipalities, and a fully explained action plan, that municipalities will be compelled to action.
- Institutional stakeholders - seven universities participate actively, more will be identified.
- Support - there was a concern that the project is very academically oriented and does not have broad support. While many organizations and municipalities have written letters of support, it was recognized that buy-in from all parties may not be needed at this stage, but will hopefully come along in time.
- Role of farmers - will be included on the Advisory committee, and engaged at each step.
- Issues such as salmon farms transcend regional governments and will be explored by those on the team that are focused on policy.

Members and guests broke into small groups to discuss the following:

Q1 How can the bioregional food system project advance the food strategy and the Metro Regional Food System Strategy?

Q2 What should a bioregional food system be like and achieve?

10. Summaries and Next Steps

- Although the approach in Vancouver is insular and small scale, but recognition exists that the larger scale is necessary. The current system is more adaptable than perceived.
- Farmers need markets and institutions need supply. Need to support projects that close that gap.
- It was thought that the project would integrate the existing food strategies.
- Increasing the number of rooftop gardens would increase available land area
- To make the system more ecologically adapted, what we *should* be producing in the bioregion could be delineated along with integrating indigenous/wild foods and using perennial systems to reduce inputs.

Requests - Brent willing to engage in project and can be liaison. Other members are invited to form a working group. It was suggested to engage business side of food system to provide that perspective. Chris will participate. The project could not be endorsed due to lack of quorum. The first meeting of the working group will be for FPC members only then opened to public. Issue will be revisited at a future meeting.

11. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Claudia, seconded by Joanne, carried unanimously.
Meeting adjourned at 8:28pm