

Vancouver Food Policy Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 13, 2011
6:00-8:30pm
Strathcona Room, City Hall



Chair: Brent Mansfield

Council Members: Maria Burtlehaus, Heather Deal (City Council), Trish Kelly, Ilana Labow, Ross Moster, Janine de la Salle, Helen Spiegelman, Kim Sutherland, Chris Thoreau, David Wilson

Liaisons: Terra Kaethler (Social Policy, City of Vancouver), Claire Gram (VCH), Annie Burkes (Community Services, City of Vancouver)

Regrets: Doug Aason, Daryl Arnold, Herb Barbolet, Joanne Bays, Jason Boyce, Carole Christopher, Cale Price, Carla Shore, Shelby Tay, David Tracey, Tara McDonald, Arzeena Hamir (Richmond Food Security Society), Aaron Jasper (VPB), Bill Manning (VPB), Jane Bouey (VSB), Allen Blakely (VSB)

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Round
Members and sixteen guests introduced themselves.
2. Motion to Accept Agenda and March Minutes
Moved by David, seconded by Chris, carried unanimously.
3. Staff Report on City's Food Policy Activity
Food carts - has been main project, 19 finalists have been decided. A vendor's association is being formed, and will look for connections with farmers markets.
Local Food Procurement - draft RFP soon to be released for feasibility study and implementation plan. This will be with the Sustainable and Ethical purchasing committee, which is more than food.
Food access - Community Produce Stands, a sub-type of pocket market, are being explored for food deserts. The intent is for neighbourhood groups to be selling at subsidized or wholesale rates. Still in early discussions.
GCAP small grants - in 2010, all funds were food projects. In 2011, funds will be allocated between different themes, including food.
4. City Funding of Food-Related Initiatives Annie Burkes
The Community Services budget is 6 million and they provide grants to approximately 200 groups in Vancouver. A review of their 13 grant is underway to ensure they are meeting community needs, as well as matching council/corporate priorities. Public consultations led to 75 recommendations, including the continuation of core funding, as project funding is easier to come by. The department would like to align with work in food policy and are looking for an overarching policy that ties everything together, increasing capacity with an emphasis on neighbourhoods and partnerships. They are seeking input on future directions and identifying gaps.

Discussion

- Funding will be open to non-profits and potentially partners of non-profits, but only those providing direct services, not events.
- VCH has been piloting the funding of neighbourhood food networks, and would like a strategy by December and is very interested in partnering
- Neighbourhood-level food security may be a good partner, Trish can provide more info on May event.

- There may be organizations that are working with resilient business models that are not non-profits. The department would like to support social enterprises as the unifying theme is that funding goes to organizations that mitigate conditions to lead people to be vulnerable.
 - Village Vancouver works with 'food justice' in neighbourhoods but also wants to explore the ecological relationship of food. Discussions will take place to connect the current focus on social sustainability with ecological and economic sustainability pieces.
 - Funding for sector organization is also being considered.
 - It was suggested that Think and Eat Green at Schools work be used to identify areas needing more attention in schools (e.g. farm to school and school gardens).
 - An ad-hoc subcommittee may be struck that will look at how food can be added to existing capacity and infrastructure; Brent to follow up.
5. Discussion of Committee Reporting at Futures Meetings - Brent
It was decided that the first half of the meeting will be administrative with the last half dedicated to engaging with the community. Different options for committee updates are being considered, Trish will help to draft suggestions which will be circulated prior to the May meeting.
6. Intro to Theme: The Role of Research in Food Policy
With food secure Vancouver, a question arose as to how the FPC can work with researchers to inform each other and act on that information. The formation of an urban food system research group is being considered.
7. Diversity and Engagement in Alternative Food Practice:
Community Gardens in Vancouver, B.C. (Darlene Seto)
Darlene introduced herself and spoke about her work at UBC. She is looking at community gardens and ethnic diversity, and has met with some community gardeners and will follow with a survey to as many members of community gardens as possible. She is hoping to do some statistical analysis with the results. Suggestions for FPC involvement for emerging academics include the mentoring of ideas, informational interviews, networking, student committee supervision, student presentations, and posting discussion papers. It was suggested that Darlene liaise with members of the Intercultural Community Garden, 40% of whom are immigrants. It was noted that immigrants have some of the best gardens and may not be in community gardens, and that it may be interesting to compare these groups. It was also clarified that she will look at both visible minorities and immigrants.
8. An Urban Farming Census (Marc Schutzbank)
With a background in philosophy, Mark looked at genocide prevention and found the link with scarce resources. An article on the Fairmont hotel garden led him to begin Plant to Plate program in Pittsburg (urban farm). High food prices from many issues including climate change and conflicts, has caused food to be on the public radar. Urban farming is one solution to problems in the food system. Urban farming is a growing movement in Vancouver, and can strengthen connections to rural areas. There is little existing data related to urban farming - demographics, yield, business models, earnings, and best practices. Mark's thesis will attempt to fill these gaps through a literature review and semi-structured interviews, and produce results which can be

used for further policy development. He is also looking at community benefits and environmental outcomes. Mark hypothesizes that urban farmers will need to diversify revenue streams in order to make a living.

9. Food Secure Vancouver study and app

Begun in 2008, the committee came up with six key determinants of food security with sub-topics and related indicators. Gaps have been identified through some primary research as well as the sharing of data, and can be used to identify key action areas. A report and interactive website have been generated, as well as an ongoing research program. The tool can all be integrated into all of the FPC's objectives. City wanted an app as a community engagement tool, and are looking to potentially partner with other cities for a food-related app map. Some limitations do exist but opportunities outweigh them. Foodsecurevancouver.ca

10. Discussion

While Food Secure Vancouver has not been officially launched, the June forum may be connected to app and food strategy. Mark to join FSV committee. It was suggested that the app could also be used for backyard producers. A section can be added to the website on how to become involved in research, as gaps are also identified in FSV. Research group is still being defined, VCH have also considered the idea. Organizations that are food assets can also benefit from research.

11. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Chris, seconded by Kim, carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:31pm