

# Vancouver Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 18, 2007, 5:30-8:00pm

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## Present:

**Council Members:** Carole Christopher, Barbara Joughin, Yona Sipos, Doug Aason, Susan Kurbis, Janine de la Salle, Carol Ranger, Melanie Kurrein, Aron Bjornson, Herb Barbolet, Camilo Cortes, Tara Macdonald (alternate for Andrea R)

**Staff:** Mario Lee, Senior, Social Planner

**Regrets:** Spring Gillard, Spencer Herbert, Deepthi Jayatilaka, Devorah Kahn, Peter Ladner, Andre LaRivière, Chris Miewald, Andrea Reimer, Karin Schreurs, Barb Seed, Shirley Wong.

**Invited guests:** Mary Clare Zak, Director of Social Planning

## 1. Opening:

- 1.1 Introductions - one guest
- 1.2 Consent Agenda - March minutes approved
- 1.3 Review Meeting Agenda

## 2. Action/update Items:

### 2.1 June Forum - Carole C

Presented 3 location and three date options. Preferred date and location is Monday, June 18 at Van Dusen Botanical Garden, Floral Hall - 5:00-9:00 (Exact meeting time to be set.) Yona and Doug agreed to help with agenda planning and other elements of Forum planning. .

**ACTION:** committee will meet and present more information at May meeting.

### 2.2 Food Policy & Eco-Density - Barbara J (see handout)

Mary Clare Zak, Devorah, and Samara Brock (Social Planner,) met recently with Michael White, head of ED initiative. An opportunity exists for the Food Policy Council to become part of this major CoV process and move some of our objectives into action. Next steps could include interested VFPC members meeting to explore how best to pursue this opportunity and brainstorm ideas and strategies prior to May 16 VFPC meeting; present our involvement strategy to Food Policy staff around May 16 (either immediately before or after May VFPC meeting); invite Michael White to May 16 VFPC meeting to give a presentation on EcoDensity; and work with Food Policy staff liaison to the EcoDensity Technical Team to integrate VFPC work into EcoDensity (June principles and recommendations, VFPC participation in June workshop, input to September Action Plan)

**ACTION:** Barbara to send out email.

### 2.3 Objectives Committee - Janine dIS (see handout)

2007 VFPC Objectives formulated at Strategic Planning workshop in Nov have been followed up on at subsequent meetings. The committee presented an action plan (attached.) Further work on this plan will expand items to include first four months of work already completed and prepare a budget. **ACTION:** Carole noted that the agenda for the June forum will highlight all four of the 2007 objectives. Janine will send out the document again with encouragement to sign up for an action item.

### 2.4 CFAI Grant Selection Committee Appointment- Susan K.

Request for FPC to be on committee, Chris M's has agreed to serve temporarily. If anyone else is interested, contact Carole C by May 3<sup>rd</sup>. **ACTION:** Carole (in Susan's absence) will send out email asking for interest. If more than one member responds, we will see if there is opportunity for participation.

### 3. Social Planning Workshop -

#### 3.1 Social Development Plan - *Moving Towards Social Sustainability*

Facilitated by Mario Lee - (one-page sheets for eight theme areas sent out prior to meeting.)

Mary Clare Zak- Director of Social Planning introduced the workshop. The Social Development Plan is the first such plan in the City of Vancouver and addresses the need to be effective both in the city and in the community. Development of the plan has involved interviews with more than 200 people, including internal (with other city departments) and external consultations with a broad cross-section of the community. This is a working plan and it is intended not only for SP, but to incorporate strategies for the City to move forward.

#### Mario Lee

Motivation for the report came after a study of the Confederation of Canadian Municipalities released a report on the quality of life using various indicators. Vancouver scored high in many areas, but was close to the bottom for social issues (eg. urban poverty, distribution of wealth, child poverty, etc.) Social sustainability has 3 components (basic needs, individual capacity, community capacity). External partners have funded research that identified 900 groups involved in social sustainability (as funder, service provider, etc.) including 600 non-profits. Other findings were reported last September, 8 themes (see below) were identified for discussion and development within the plan. The full proposal will go to Council in the fall.

#### Questions:

Is this a pilot project? This is new plan, first by Social Planning in Vancouver.

What is role of Social Planning? There are few SP departments in Canada. Here, SP takes policy proposals to Council, funds groups and administers grants, and provides service to other city departments. A framework is to be developed outlining work other departments are doing with respect to social development, and how they interact, in order to work more collaboratively.

The VFPC was asked to look at the theme areas through the lens of food and to offer recommendations/suggestions for strengthening the Plan. We had time to consider four of the eight themes:

#### 1. Housing & Homelessness

##### What is working:

- Some co-op housing has community kitchens and/or Good Food Box programs.
- SP has identified 3 sites to potentially build housing on top of.

##### What is not working:

- Affordability. As people spend more money on rent, they have less for food, as these are in direct competition. Both quality and quantity of food suffer.
- Demand up 10% at BC food banks last year. Serve up to 25,000 recipients, 40% are children. Influx of immigrants, food bank acts as resource for services.
- Not enough *access* to nutritious food.
- Some housing does not have cooking space in the unit, nor a place for food storage (lack of wiring).

##### Proposed actions:

- Capacity building with respect to cooking.
- Support already-existing policies (Homelessness Action Plan).
- Incorporate urban ag into new housing designs.
- Undertake analysis of current conditions in low income housing.

Rent control is provincial jurisdiction, but SP and FPC can lobby. Most municipalities have about 2/3 owners and 1/3 renters, where in Vancouver 44% are owners and 56% are renting.

#### 2. Economic Security

##### What is working:

- There is much guidance in food charter re: food security.

- Work undertaken re: zoning of farmers' markets.
- Affordability at farmers' markets - Healthiest Baby Program

**What is not working:**

- Tenure for farmers' markets is still precarious.

**Proposed actions:**

- Although welfare rates and minimum wage are provincial jurisdiction, advocacy, partnership-building, facilitating communication and public outreach can be done. (Recent motion in City to lobby provincial government to raise minimum wage. (North Van's motion passed unanimously.)
- Better analysis of farmers' markets needed (# of producers, how they can be sustained, etc.) and better regulation.
- Lobby for zoning, bylaws, to make farmers markets a priority, so more farmers can be attracted. Issue of tenure - If a private spot is available, what permissions are needed? Criteria of feasibility would need to be assessed (space, residential, parking...) neighbourhood markets are preferred over centralized markets. **ACTION:** Tara M to articulate thought for the minutes

**3. Healthy Living & Wellness\*\***

**What is working:**

- City undertakes programs eg. through Park board.
- Integrating activities for children in City Square garden.

**What is not working:**

- Regarding obesity and diabetes, food sold in Park Board concessions, vending machines for community centres.

**ACTION:** Melanie to write about 'Mr Feet' program for improving vending machine fare.

Are there restrictions on edible food in daycare? This is unsure and needs more exploration.

*[\*\* While this was not discussed at the meeting, the Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report for 2006 focused on Food, Health and Well-Being in British Columbia. It documents the major public health concerns around food insecurity and poor nutrition and extensively documents what various levels of society can do to respond. While it is primarily addressing the Provincial Government, there are many implications and suggestions for other levels of government. ]*

**4. Learning and Education**

**What is working:**

- Community gardens provide an element of safety.

**What is not working:**

- More community gardens are needed in school yards and parks.

**Proposed actions:**

- Provide informal opportunities for learning through City modelling behaviour (eg. Serving more nutritious food, etc.). This ties in with Ethical Purchasing.
- Encourage food issues in community centres and Neighbourhood Houses.
- Support City Farmer.
- Cultivate intergenerational communication (as with MOBY, Collingwood).
- City could have 'Food Days', celebrating food and raising awareness of issues.

It was recommended that a step-wise, incremental approach to developing the local products/ethical purchasing sector be taken in order to ensure that both supply and demand can be met.

The role of food in building social capital was noted - FOOD BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER IN POSITIVE WAYS. SP is collecting feedback over the next couple months and **(ACTION)** - FPC members were invited to continue to contribute ideas for incorporating food issues into the eight theme areas of the Social Development Plan and forward these to Mario Lee.

It was proposed that Social Planning present briefly at June forum (or put flipcharts or forms for feedback).

Meeting adjourned at 8:02

- 2.1 **ACTION:** *Carole, Yona and Doug* - to meet to further plan agenda for June forum.
- 2.2 **ACTION:** *Barbara* to send out email re: involvement with Eco-Density initiative.
- 2.3 **ACTION:** Janine will send out updated action plan with a request for members to sign up and *June Forum committee* will integrate 2007 objectives into the Forum planning.
- 2.3 **ACTION:** Carole (for *Susan*) will solicit interest in sitting on CFAI Grant Selection Committee
- 3.1 **ACTION:** *Tara* to articulate thought about tenure for farmers' markets for the minutes.  
**ACTION:** *Melanie* to write about 'Mr Feet' program for improving vending machine fare.  
**ACTION:** *FPC* invited to continue to develop message around 8 themes of the Social Development Plan with respect to food.