

Vancouver Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 11, 2009, 6:00-8:30pm
Strathcona Room, City Hall



Present:

Chairs: Carole Christopher and Trish Kelly

Council Members: Doug Aason, Herb Barbolet, Barbara Joughin, Tara McDonald, Joyce Rock, Carla Shore, Yona Sipos, David Tracey, Kim Sutherland

Staff: Samara Brock

Requests for Leave: Melanie Kurrein, Andre LaRivière, Janine de la Salle, Daryl Arnold

Items

1. Introductions - 10 members of the Urban Agriculture Steering Committee, including co-chairs Mary Clare Zak, Director of Social Policy and Liane McKenna, Director of East District, Vancouver Park Board; Brent Toderian, Director of Planning; Rick Michaels, Asst Director, Development Services Inquiry Centre; Karis Hiebert, Manager of Sustainability; Alan Duncan, Environmental Planner with Park Board; Scott Edwards, Mngr of Greenways and Neighbourhood Transportation, Engineering Dept. Tami Gill, Planning Department, Devorah Kahn, Social Planner, and Samara Brock, Social Planner. (John Breckner, Asst Director, Real Estate Services sent regrets.) City Councillor Heather Deal was also present, along with 11 other guests.

2. VFPC - Urban Agriculture Committee consultation

Presentations by Urban Ag Committee and VFPC and Roundtable discussion of aligning our goals.

UASC- Mary Clare Zak

The committee was formed as a result of a discussion with Andrea Reimer and various City departments in which it was recognized that inter-departmental coordination is needed to address issues of urban agriculture. Understanding the benefits of such an approach and the need to integrate programs, senior staff began meeting quarterly, but now meet monthly to exchange work and resolve priorities. *Memo to Council 'Kick-Starting Green Initiatives', outline of current projects, and Terms of Reference distributed.* The UASC Terms of Reference is a living document which includes food security in its definition of urban agriculture, and outlines goals and mechanisms to move issues forward. Looking to develop a relationship with the FPC, the committee is aware of FPC motions to council, and would welcome FCP, along with VCH and VSB input on specific agenda items. The minutes are available, but the meetings are not open to the public. **ACTION:** UASC to send FPC list of meeting times and dates.

FPC presentation - Carole Christopher

A major goal of the FPC is to liaise with City departments. UASC represents a big step forward in that direction and reflects that staff has taken up food policy concerns in a way advantageous to FPC agenda. Carole provided a brief history leading to the establishment of the VFPC, including the work of the Food Policy Task Force, mandated by City Council in 2003. That task force, which engaged 70 community groups, defined a food security mandate for and elected the first members to the Vancouver Food Policy Council. Community engagement still informs much of the work of the FPC, and community forums allow for networking, membership recommendations, and reporting back. FPC mandate is in Vancouver, but extends to regional participation, including helping other municipalities establish food policy. *Brochure of VFPC distributed.*

Co-Chair Trish Kelly identified several key VFPC motions approved (unanimously) by Vancouver City Council which include: A moratorium on ALR exclusions; The 2010 Community Gardening Initiative; and The Vancouver Food Charter. A motion to request staff to develop guidelines for permitting back-yard chickens has been submitted to City Council. Another motion re: healthy food and beverage guidelines for municipal vending machines is also pending for City Council consideration. VFPC sent to City Council a major report on Recovered Food Assessment in 2007 and prepared but did not send to City Council a draft institutional food purchasing policy (IFPP- 2007). The current research project, 'How food secure is Vancouver?' (expected to be complete in early 2010) will

develop and utilize key food security indicators to determine Vancouver's current food security and benchmark Vancouver with other jurisdictions. Additionally, the VFPC has provided input on a number of other policy initiatives including EcoDensity, Urban Agriculture Guidelines, consultation on the social development plan, and research and formulation of a statement on bio-fuels for the City of Vancouver.

Discussion

There were many expressions of potential for working together. The formal position of the VFPC is not affected by the presence of the UASC. Role of UASC is to ensure that city departments act in concert around recommended actions and policy. It was proposed and agreed that the UASC Terms of Reference provide wording that clarifies the roles of the UASC and VFPC. Lines of communication will be open through the exchange of minutes and agendas. Mary Clare Zak recommended liaising around the strategic plan, the IFPP, and the recovered food assessment report. **ACTION:** FPC to send UASC recovered food assessment report.

Brent Toderin, Director of Planning spoke about the widespread and growing support for urban agriculture within city departments and community support expressed during EcoDensity consultations. Scott Edwards noted occasional complaints about projects being targeted to specific groups but not a major impediment. Garden tenures is an ongoing issue of concern. The guidelines for urban agriculture on Engineering lands look to create opportunity to include the broader community.

Re: question of VFPC membership on UASC, it is hoped that by sharing minutes, each group will be aware of the priorities of the other and welcome to provide input by request to present on specific agenda items. As Samara Brock is both a member of the UASC and staff liaison to the VFPC, she can act as liaison between the committees. It was suggested that this role be formalized. There was additionally a suggestion to include a grower/producer on the UASC.

Re: questions concerning additional staff needs, it was noted that social planner, Devorah Kahn devotes time to the urban agriculture agenda and much of the staff work of the UASC goes to her. Issues of VFPC staffing continue to be a concern for the VFPC. This context is not the venue for resolving that concern.

FPC has made progress with local government, but UASC was encouraged to work with the provincial government to support local agriculture. Kim Sutherland offered to present summary of positive and negative effects of the City's policies on agriculture in the Lower Mainland (such as dumping fill on ALR) and cautioned that urban agriculture is sometimes used as an excuse to remove land from the ALR. Peak oil and climate change also need to be included in the urban agriculture portfolio. The Sustainability Group is working on long-range climate planning, and it was suggested that the project manager could present to FPC.

Clarification was requested regarding the table on Page 2 (Current Garden Plot count) of the Memorandum to Council, in which the majority of plots occur on 'Vacant private lots' and 'Development permit applications'. It was explained that the first refers to sites where the developer has chosen to support urban agriculture, and the second refers to new buildings whose applications have been approved and whose blueprints include community gardens. A discussion ensued concerning the relative benefit to the developers. There was concern expressed regarding the potential toxicity of sites. On private lands, non-profit groups are approached to manage the gardens and are aware of concerns. It was suggested that the Environmental branch work with MoE on site profiles. On public lands soil is removed and replaced.

ACTION: UASC to send short list of priorities for FPC strategic planning.

3. Motion to accept agenda and requests for leave
MOTION: To approve the January minutes, the requests for leave, and the agenda. Moved by Barbara, seconded by Carla, carried unanimously.
4. Updates
Food/Beverage Guidelines - Maria Burglehaus, VCH (on behalf of Melanie Kurrein)
Melanie is attempting to contact Andrea Reimer. It was suggested that Councillor Deal be copied on the next message.
Chickens - Trish Kelly
Because of the recent avian flu incident, the recommendations are hinging on a formal letter from a veterinarian to assure there would be no risk to backyard flocks.
Study Committee- Barbara Joughin
Consultant report will be in soon and will be reviewed. Updates will come by email. Are collating results from forum and the UBC study to build Phase 2 of the study.
Membership committee Update - Yona Sipos
Seven positions are unfilled from a range of sectors. Call for Applications are open and continue until the 28th of Feb. The committee will next meet on March 2nd .

Members were reminded that all advisory committees have been disbanded, and will be appointed on a time schedule determined by the City Clerk's office. The recommendation to reappoint the FPC is now on the City's website. Reappointment is 3 years, and budget is assumed to be the same.

Discussion of Strategic Planning session - Carole Christopher

Bob Ransford has been hired to facilitate the strategic planning, and is familiar with the FPC through work on the communication plan. Correspondence was distributed outlining 4 proposed objectives. **ACTION:** In order to stay focused, distribute last two years' summaries and task lists, and review prior to session. There was a suggestion to structure priorities around the policy, the strategy, the impact, and the tangible change that would result from ideas presented by FPC. Also, to build in a grassroots method for measuring success. After some discussion, consensus was reached that the session be closed to the public. Ideally, the session would be 4.5 hours, locations are being explored, suggestions welcome.

5. Closing
Meeting adjourned at 8:44pm.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

2. **ACTION:** UASC to send FPC list of meeting times and dates.
ACTION: FPC to send UASC recovered food assessment report.
ACTION: UASC to send short list of priorities for FPC strategic planning.
4. **ACTION:** In order to stay focused, distribute last two years' summaries and task lists, and review prior to session.