

Vancouver Food Policy Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 11, 2011
6:00-8:30pm
Strathcona Room, City Hall



Chair: Joanne Bays, Brent Mansfield

Council Members: Herb Barbolet, Carole Christopher, Trish Kelly, Ilana Labow, Tara McDonald, Ross Moster, Helen Spiegelman, Kim Sutherland, Shelby Tay, David Tracey, David Wilson

Liaisons: Arzeena Hamir (Richmond Food Security Society), James O'Neill (Social Policy, City of Vancouver)

Regrets: Doug Aason, Daryl Arnold, Cale Price, Chris Thoreau, Maria Burtlehaus, Heather Deal (City Council), Janine de la Salle, Jason Boyce, Carla Shore, Aaron Jasper (VPB), Bill Manning (VPB), Jane Bouey (VSB), Allen Blakely (VSB), Claire Gram (VCH)

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Round
Members and nineteen guests introduced themselves and shared food-related news.
2. Motion to Accept Agenda, Requests for Leave and April Minutes
Announcements section added before Item 6. Motion to accept amended agenda - Moved by Carole, seconded by Trish, carried unanimously.
3. Staff Update on City's Food Policy Activity - James O'Neill
 - Food carts - new ones are in operation, and increasing access to food. Work is happening to connect vendors with local food producers. FPC members were thanked for their contributions.
 - Municipal Food Strategy - a draft will be presented next month for feedback. Brent and others have been brainstorming goals. This will be theme next meeting. WG will be contacted.
 - Procurement - RFP to hire consultant for feasibility study has been completed; some details are still being determined.
 - Greenest City Neighbourhood Grants - are currently being adjudicated with recommendations going to Council in June. There is 100k in funding annually, which was used last year to fund 5 neighbourhood food networks. Themes have been expanded this year to also include Waste, Trees and Greening, and Active Transportation. Over half of the applications received this year are food-related. The total value of all applications is approximately \$600k.
4. Liaison Report on Food Policy Activity - Arzeena
BC Food systems network meeting will be at 100 Mile House on the July 7 weekend. FPC members and guests are encouraged to attend; Arzeena will circulate invitation to members. Conference is seeking proposals for workshops, members are encouraged to apply.
5. VFPC Working Groups Report Back
Working groups and lead contacts have now been listed on the blog, leads are asked to provide a short description. There are 5 questions that the working groups are to address during their updates:
 - i. What progress have you made toward 2011 work plan?
 - ii. Has your WG been involved in outreach?
 - iii. Are you on track with your budget?
 - iv. Do you need support from council?
 - v. To what extent do your plans integrate with plans of other groups?

Trish Kelly, Neighbourhood food networks

- i. This WG has gone to the neighbourhood level where there is much action but little coordination with help of agencies. Plan is to do four gatherings, one has been completed and one is planned for July in South Van. Other part of work plan includes two events, the first which will be on May 26 convening CoV, VCH, VSB, VPB to build food-related partnerships in the city. The other event is planned for October. The WG is on track with their work plan.
- ii. Trish attended a community planning workshop, and has met with the General Manager of the Park Board to discuss neighbourhood food assets. The community centres are actively participating in offering healthy food, with the majority signing on to do more planning. Trish will send out resource list for feedback and suggestions before they are to be posted online. At a meeting in the West end, 40 people came and will meet again to see how to move the agenda forward.
- iii. Yes, the budget is on track.
- iv. Support is not needed at this time, perhaps some promotion for July event.
- v. Integration with other groups happens through 12 members that participate in this group and others.

Brent Mansfield, Food Secure Vancouver

The report is complete and a press release will be sent soon. A forum will take place June 29 from 4-8pm at Creekside Community Centre which will include a discussion of the report and presentation of the app along with the preliminary food strategy presentation and a report back to the community. Brent will send out invitation for members to participate on the planning committee.

Ilana Labow, Youth Food Policy Council

This WG has done background research and connected with youth workers and organizations to solicit ideas on how to move forward. There is much interest and meetings have taken place with key stakeholders to discuss the functions, objectives and different models for a youth policy council. Another meeting is planned for June. Their budget is on track.

Announcements

- Food Secure Canada membership has lapsed, Carole to circulate request to renew. Individuals are also welcome to join.
- Farmers Markets are opening on Saturday.

6. Intro to Theme:

Beyond Eden: Exploring the Role of Community Gardens in Cities

Joanne introduced the theme and the speakers for the following presentations.

7. Towards Global Food Justice: Community Gardens in Cuba - Robert Fox, Executive Director Oxfam Canada

Robert gave a detailed description of the urban agriculture system in Cuba. Due to necessity and far from being a hobby, workers are paid well to maintain urban farms the size of football fields. A portion of the produce goes to state-run institutions, while the remainder is available for purchase by the community. The farmers have created a technical manual, and Oxfam is working to connect them with other growers globally to share best practices. In June Oxfam will launch a four-year global campaign to address food-related issues relevant in different communities. Robert asks that Canadians demand more of our decision makers and acknowledge that our affluence and associated over-consumption cannot continue. He commended the FPC for their work and invites them to meet with visitors to demonstrate local projects and engage in dialogue in a global context. Miriam from Oxfam will follow up.

8. Beyond 2010: Community Gardens in Vancouver - James O'Neil, Social Planner, City of Vancouver

James provided context for community gardens within the broader theme of urban agriculture. Map distributed showing the location of community gardens. Many were created through the 2010 initiative which has spread - London currently has a challenge of 2012 growing spaces by 2012. Green Streets may re-evaluate prohibition of planting food on boulevards. 74 gardens exist with approximately 3260 plots growing food. School gardens may be added as well as others that have been added since the map was produced. The City may do GIS analysis to explore relationships between different aspects of gardens. Opportunity exists for collaboration with Park Board and community centres to address food deserts in South Van. 30% of the gardens are on city land, 21% on Park Board land, and 49% on private or other land. GCAP includes a target of 5000 plots by 2020 (i.e. 5-6 new per year with about 30 plots each). With the infrastructure in place, the City would like to do some capacity building and training around issues relevant to community gardens.

Discussion:

VCAN was working on getting water into community gardens (which succeeded) and also to reinstate the free delivery of compost to community gardens. The following motion resulted after some discussion - **Motion:** That the FPC ask Councillor Deal to request that Engineering work with the FPC on the issue of compost delivery to community gardens. Moved by Herb, seconded by David, carried unanimously.

9. Edible Garden Project - Heather Johnstone, Project Coordinator

Heather gave background on the project, which grows gardens to increase food production on north shore. They currently maintain 8 gardens and distribute 2800lbs of produce through a program to connect food to those who need it. Their 'Strong Roots' program educates people on increasing food knowledge through workshops. Other highlights include honeybees that produced 400 pounds of honey, a community orchard, and gardening at BC Housing. They will operate a small market garden, which has generated a lot of enthusiasm, including from corporate sponsors.

The project is working toward developing policy and would welcome support from FPC. Joanne and Brent have offered to help out. Heather also hopes to share more opportunities to further these issues.

Discussion on all presentations

- Targets for how many plots per # of citizens exist in the 'Dig it' publication as well as possibly the Greenest City Action Plan.
- It was clarified that the lands in Cuba that are now open to the private sector are underused peri-urban and rural lands that are offered to co-ops and similar groups.
- Community garden on park lands - the discussion has evolved but elements still exist. Regarding tenure, community gardens are seen as being dynamic and may change so the city re-evaluates its terms every 5 years to ensure spaces are used to the full extent. Some gardens have 20 years in existence, and tenure can be an issue. It was suggested that an appropriate tenure would be equal to the length of the garden's existence.

10. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Herb, seconded by Kim, carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:47 pm