

Vancouver Food Policy Council
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 25, 2014
6:00-8:30pm
Town Hall Room, City Hall



Chairs: Zsuzsi Fodor and Tara Moreau

Council Members: Anna Cavouras, Trish Kelly, Ilana Labow, Brent Mansfield, Pat McCarthy, Ross Moster,

Liaisons: Heather Deal (City Council) James O'Neill (Social Planning, City of Vancouver), Corrine Eisler (VCH), Theresa Duynstee (MetroVan)

Regrets: Robyn Carlson, Kimberly Hodgson, Chris Thoreau, Orlando Schmidt (Ministry of Agriculture)

Absent: Jason Apple, Joanne Bays, Peter Ladner, Emme Lee, Nicholas Scapillati, Helen Spiegelman, David Wilson, Aaron Jasper (Park Board), Rob Wynen (Vancouver School Board)

Agenda Items:

1. Opening Round

Members introduced themselves and completed the following phrase: My most important food systems issue for this municipal election is _____. Twenty-one guests were present.

Issues identified: children's right to food (and seniors and other vulnerable groups); childhood hunger; innovative commercial food production and its contributions to social and environmental aspects; farmers' access to farmland, food waste; food system education in schools; how to engage a broader demographic in the equitable food access discussion; the City's leadership in the region and the province; policy changes and bylaws for long-term achievement of City's goal to have everyone live within 5 min walking to a food basket; to have the term 'Access' include affordability; how to scale up as quickly as possible to address the challenge of climate change; the City's need to focus on economic development opportunities related to food; to find a model for affordability or subsidized fruit and vegetables stands.

2. Motion to Accept Agenda and Previous Minutes (April and May)

Agenda change: membership discussion has been tabled until July meeting. Moved by Corrine, seconded by Brent, carried unanimously.

3. Staff Update: Urban Farming Policy, GE-Free motion & Food Hub

Urban Farming Policy - FPC reviewed draft last year and provided input to policy recommendations. While feedback was positive, developing the recommendations has taken longer than anticipated. Recommendations to date include allowing farms in the zoning and development bylaw, in all zoned lands, and creating a business license category to legitimize the sector and enable farmers to apply for insurance and to sell products. There are questions of tax implications of those who receive farm status (farms receive a reduction in property taxes). May departments (Law, Financing, Planning and Development, etc.) are needed to move forward, balancing with other city priorities. The goal is to have it go to council in early 2015. The next steps include building capacity across city departments, before going to the deputy and city manager, then to council with a report and for a vote. The definition of urban farming is restricted to fruits and vegetables, and does not include marijuana or animals. At regional level, marijuana growers will not get agriculture status. It was also clarified that urban farms do not fall under 'right to farm', as they are not in the ALR.

GE Free Zone - Council passed a [motion](#) last month, and directed staff to research and discuss with FPC and GE-free BC. Discussions include where the City can have jurisdiction, and what elements can be done to move issue forward. A working group was formed which Pat and three members of the public will join. A year ago, GE-Free BC asked that Vancouver resolve that Vancouver be a GE-free zone but without jurisdiction, the resolution would only be symbolic. A concrete example is the Park Board's decision not to purchase GE trees or shrubs for its Urban Forestry plan. Other suggestions are to include in the community garden policy and to tie it in to the larger Non-GE awareness campaign, and partnering with existing groups for actions. The City's procurement could influence and ban purchase of GE products. City is working hard on sustainable procurement. Better definitions are needed - GE is not the same as GMO, and needs to be clarified for the public. The city of Duncan has a GE-free policy that could

be used for best practices. This will be addressed at BC food systems network meeting in Sorrento. It was noted that issues can be prioritized in the city if an individual lobbies multiple councilors which then direct staff members. The Food strategy does not mention GE foods. The working group will report back to the FPC in September.

Award of Excellence - Ilana was congratulated for winning an award for Fresh Roots Urban Farms.

Food Hub - There is a need and a vision, and many models exist. Much work has been done around design, feasibility, and experiences of other cities. A food infrastructure gap analysis was conducted about a year ago, and the City has since learned more around what those gaps are, and assets in Vancouver. The work of the Neighbourhood Food Networks was recognized, and the need to strengthen those. The need to look at the mid-range food system was also recognized. The Food Bank is a key entity that is looking at moving to a larger space; the City would like it to stay in Vancouver. The new CEO has brought a new perspective to food justice, increasing dignity and reducing stigma. Two motions have been received from council that could be opportunities - 1) urban agriculture in false creek flats; and 2) support relocation and integrate components of food hubs. The City will work with partners to discuss what would make most sense for aggregation, distribution, etc. to develop a plan and timeline for relocation, and to determine what could be accomplished in the next two years until the Food Bank's current lease expires. Social Planning is hopeful that when there is an agreement and they would report back to council, that there may be land or capital to contribute.

Discussion

- The infrastructure gap analysis identified the same gaps as Local Food First! (aggregation, storage, distribution) and spoke to all scales.
- The City is open to all models, not only charity and not-for-profit ones. Food hub could raise capital, and does not have to depend on governments. It can be successful as a public-private partnership. The feasibility will need strong business case to determine which model will work.
- A focus groups with farmers shows that the previous model was not strongly supported. Farmers at markets seem skeptical, identifying the need for a paid coordinator and to exist year-round, but they could be swayed.
- The report can be shared with FPC. It was suggested to link the report and both motions.

4. Updates and Discussion

- Migrant Farm Labour & [Sanctuary City](#) Follow Up
Questions remain about what would be in the City's jurisdiction. Toronto is already a Sanctuary city, and came up with a list of 13 implementation recommendations, 15 months after it passed. It seems there are no other cities in BC involved. It was recommended that either the FPC convenes a conversation or connects with other organizations that work with newcomers. Councilor Meggs wants a recommendation in fall, and implementation in 2015. A Letter of Support from the FPC could be helpful in the fall. Zsuzsi will follow up with Councilor Meggs and copy Councilor Deal.
- Membership Committee Formation - tabled until July meeting.
Sustenance Festival Town Hall October 16 - candidates will be invited to participate. The FPC is committed, and many volunteers are needed to make it happen, especially council members who are familiar with the event. Expectations/tasks will be itemized at next meeting. Trish has templates and files from previous planning, and Ilana and Zsuzsi have offered support.
- July & September Meetings & August Break Reminder - July meeting will be at the UBC Botanical Garden and will build on the theme of reconciliation. Last July the FPC met at the UBC farm in conjunction with the declaration for the Year of Reconciliation. The next level will be for Vancouver to declare Vancouver a City of Reconciliation, and a motion was passed to acknowledge Vancouver is on unceded territory with 3 host nations. There is no meeting in August. The September meeting will be in City Hall building off right-to-food discussions. Brent is organizing the event, hoping to bring Janet Poppendieck (author of [Free for All](#)) as a speaker. Motion: To approve that Brent liaise with City to request funds for the event. Moved by Anna, seconded by Ilana, carried unanimously.

5. VFPC Fall Municipal Election Priority Planning - (Trish Kelly and Heather Deal excused themselves)

The purpose is to get consensus on concrete issues or policy initiatives to put forward for the election in the fall. FPC members and guests broke out into small groups to prioritize their top three issues. These will be used to create a one or two page document that will be shared with councilors and communities.

Previously identified issues: Urban farming, Food hub, ALR, Food waste, GE Free, Sanctuary city - migrant labour, Right to food, Pollinators. Priority areas in food strategy: food production, empowering residents' participation in community programs, access, food processing and distribution, food waste. It was recommended that the FPC connect with the BC Hospitality and BC Chefs association. Jamie Oliver is opening a restaurant in Vancouver and will be speaking at a Vancouver event. They are working on food waste issues and packaging.

Report back

- Tourism and food - huge revenue, helps promote Vancouver's identity. What steps are you taking to ensure the local *terroir* and the jobs it generates will be protected and enhanced?
- ALR - source of food for Vancouver. Would you be prepared to protect the ALR underpinning food security? Or, being a provincial issue, how do you plan to give Vancouver a voice in this matter and work with other jurisdictions?
- Right to food - with respect to food, poverty, and insecurity, the Food Bank may become part of a hub; what could the City do to transform this necessary resource into a more holistic food service to ensure citizenry's right to food?
- Can city make food storage available for markets?
- Can the food hub be multi-functional and partner-based, and include the food bank?
- Will the City support a local food system (neighbours selling food, food education)?
- Can the City use its influence to support food system?
- When will the City prioritize food strategy?
- Food waste - how do you help reduce waste and encourage recovery?
- Right to food for all - how to recognize food as a human right?
- Affordability and poverty - what are innovative solutions to improve affordability?
- Farming - how to encourage farming both in the city and the region?
- How do we make more effective use of existing and emerging resources (e.g. urban waste and energy - shift to neighbourhood composting to reduce energy costs of pick up)?
- How can we remove barriers (e.g. legal issues) around food recovery?
- How can a food hub increase access to healthy food for vulnerable populations?
- Food recovery - what steps can the City do to help existing programs to reduce food waste?
- Urban farming - what are priorities for this?
- GE - what is your position re: Vancouver as GE-free zone?

6. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Pat, carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm