

Vancouver Food Policy Council

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

6:00pm-8:30pm

Town Hall Room, City Hall



Chairs: Dirk Gibbs (acting) and Caitlin Dorward

Council Members: Rebecca Cuttler, Zsuzsi Fodor, Antonietta Gesualdi, Stephanie Lim, Pat McCarthy, Tara Moreau Will Jung, Saber Miresmailli, David Speight

Liaisons: Theresa Dounstee (Metro Van), Adriane Carr (City Council)

James O'Neill (Social Policy, City of Vancouver), Janet Fraser (VSB), Michael Wiebe (Park Board), Kendall Andison (VYFPC)

Invited guests: Ryan Bigelow, CoV Business Planning

Regrets: Veronik Campbell, Anna Cavouras, Gabrielle Kissinger, Chashma Heinze, Kimberly Hodgson, Colin Stansfield, Sarah Carten (Social Policy, City of Vancouver)

Absent: Ilana Labow, Corinne Eisler (VCH), Heather Deal (City Council)

Agenda Items:

- 1 Motion to Accept Agenda and Previous Minutes
Moved by Pat, seconded by Caitlin, carried unanimously.
- 2 Introductions
 - 2.1 Round of names
Members, liaisons, and sixteen guests introduced themselves.
 - 2.2 Spotlight: Antonietta Gesualdi
Antonietta shared her background growing up with a large Italian garden. She has a long history of cooking, having completed a Culinary Arts diploma at VCC, before working with in industry with top chefs. She then worked as kitchen coach to provide training for those wishing to become employed in the hospitality industry. There she learned the power of food to connect and change lives. Since then, she worked leading workshops in the community and founded her business Kitchen Conversations. She is now certified to teach level one Food Safe. Antonietta has experienced food insecurity and is now interested in the larger food system and how it can impact lives.
- 3 Working Groups
Updates were solicited via email and circulated as an attachment to the agenda.
 - 3.1 GMO working group - plans to contact San Francisco to explore possibilities and then contact Councillor Carr to explore what can be done under the City's jurisdiction.
 - 3.2 Urban Framing - Marc S has been acting Co-Chair. The group is working on an overview of the impact of the new policy, looking at how farmer concerns can be integrated during the growing season. There is a desire to repeat the urban framing census. The group has plans to meet with James.
 - 3.3 Waste - the City has new initiatives in the pipeline, explained in the presentation later in the meeting.
- 4 Liaison Updates
Reporting Framework
 - What? Report on the item (prioritize 2 things that are actionable)
 - Now what? How can VFPC take action?

Liaisons

4.1 VPB

Concession strategy - the consultant has finished the review, which will revamp how the concessions operate. The report does not focus on food, and explores models of attaining the capital and partnerships needed to operate and maintain concession stands. ACTION: Michael will send the report to the VFPC for review. The goal is to get feedback on the report from the VFPC. Concessions are front line for tourists and touch on zero waste, suppliers, food, cost, accessibility, etc. The VFPC can review and ensure that it aligns with the Park Board's strategy and the City's strategy, and identify gaps and opportunities. A PB staff member has been assigned to

liaise with the VFPC and will be at the September meeting. ACTION: Michael will set up an initial meeting with the Chairs.

4.2 City Council

- False Creek Flats planning process - council members have been discussing alternatives to redirecting Prior/Venables traffic down Malkin avenue. One option is National Avenue.
- Meatless Mondays - following on the VFPC motion, the City will likely do a proclamation rather than a motion. There was a suggestion to present it at an event for World Food Day, in October.
- Oakridge development - a new application was submitted to reduce density. This site is not as food-focused as Pearson - Dogwood.
- Playland development - design will shift to a larger more themed play park, and would expand into the parking lot, north to water. The redesign will lead to more daylighting of stream and creating green spaces.

4.3 City Staff

- Neonicotinoids ban - staff acted quickly to revise bylaw.
- Milan Urban Food Policy Pact - upcoming awards are available. The City will submit an application in the category of Governance, related to its work on the Food Strategy. There is a cash prize to create a network of cities engaged in similar work.
- Urban farming - James met with Marc and Marcella to discuss next steps in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the changes. A baseline is needed; the City will engage with them again after the growing season on the urban farming census.
- Food Policy Report to Council - in September City Council will receive a report on the Food Strategy, the funding for school food, and the Metro Vancouver regional Food System Action Plan. All municipalities are asked to endorse the plan. The plan is complete, and the Metro board has adopted it. ACTION: Teresa will send a link to the online report. Members of the VFPC (Stephanie, Antonietta, Tara, Caitlin) will meet with James in mid-August to review a draft, provide input into next steps, and flag emerging issues that are not in food strategy. ACTION: James to arrange for this meeting.

4.4 VSB

Janet was not at the last meeting focused on school food, and is grateful for the report. ACTION: Janet will liaise with James for an update on the funding City provided to feed identified students.

4.5 Other

4.5.1 Metro Van - The Food System Action Plan identified new initiatives and new collaborative opportunities. Many actions are actions that municipalities have already committed to completing.

4.5.2 YVFPC - are recruiting new members. The group meets once/month at a neighbourhood house.

4.5.3 Leadership group - there has been a need to have one central place to keep reference materials and orientation materials. Caitlin has now put that information on line, would like to make it public to inform the public. ACTION: Caitlin will send a link to the reference materials by email. Members asked to review and let Caitlin know if you'd like changes. ACTION: The documents distributed by the City Clerk's office will be put online. Katrina has offered to do the training for the council. It was suggested to provide the training next year when a new council is formed and can be done individually before that if needed. ACTION: Contact Caitlin if interested in receiving training now.

5 Development Working Group: Update on False Creek Flats & Malkin Avenue

5.1 Background on the issue and presentation of motion [material circulated in advance]

The working group has been working on this issue for 8 months, and has learned that the biggest issue would be the negative effects on both Produce Row and Cottonwood gardens if Malkin Ave were made to be the main east-west artery. The co-location of businesses on Produce Row allows for a sustainable footprint for deliveries and a marketplace for independent grocers. They employ approximately 1000 people and supply healthy food to Vancouver and beyond. Produce Row businesses would need to relocate, and it would have significant impact on the businesses, the employees, and food prices. In 2013, the VFPC passes a motion to encourage the protection of Cottonwood gardens in their entirety. The current motion asks the City to look at options beyond Malkin, and to use the VFPC as a liaison to help support a more sustainable decision for food assets.

Discussion

- Residents of Prior St - the Residents' Association had previously expressed to Council that they do not want Prior St to be used as a thoroughfare.
- Recommendation of WG - there is an option to make National into the main route, however the working group recommends that the COV explore all options, and is not recommending National specifically. It was noted that the City could explore the option of not making a new main artery.
- National Ave - this option would have cost impacts for the City works yard and other infrastructure. It would be more expensive to build, but does not take into account the cost of the full impacts on Produce Row.
- Produce Row businesses - business operators in attendance were supportive of the proposed motion to explore any options other than Malkin. They do \$1B in business each year, and have historical ties to Chinese culture in Vancouver. Some work with larger local growers and support farmers markets.
- Neighbourhood Food Networks - representatives shared that they are opposed to using Malkin. They have provided a letter to the City stating their opposition. Many programs for low-income households use food bought at wholesale prices from Produce Row, and the Cottonwood gardens provide an exceptional outdoor learning space for at-risk youth. Village Vancouver also opposes using Malkin as the main artery.
- Amendment to motion - 2nd BE IT RESOLVED - "explore other routes and alternative options for the east-west arterial route" amended to "explore alternatives to Malkin as the east-west arterial route".
- Amendment to motion - 2nd WEHREAS, 2nd bullet - "Western Canada" amended to "Canada".

5.2 Vote

The amended motion is included below as an addendum to the minutes.

Moved by Caitlin, seconded by David, carried unanimously.

5.3 Next steps

The working group will recommend to Council that a full cost-benefit analysis is needed to evaluate the direct and indirect impacts of each option. The group will also consider ways to raise awareness of the issue with the general public.

6 Waste Working Group:

6.1 Presentation from City on Zero Waste 2040 Strategy - Ryan Bigelow

The City is engaging stakeholders and the public on a new zero waste strategy. Ryan provided some background on the issue and details on the planning process, and information on how to get involved. He also noted some current areas for discussion.

The GCAP was established in 2009 and aims to have Vancouver become greenest city by 2020. Zero waste is a goal, with a target to reduce waste to landfill by 50% from 2008-2020. In 2014, the City had reduced the amount by 24%. There has been an expanded recycling program, weekly food scraps and biweekly garbage collection, as well as an expanded solid waste bylaw and a new bylaw for green demolition. In May 2016, staff was directed to develop a strategy beyond 2020.

Elements of the strategy include a lighter footprint, a circular/sharing economy, local production of food and products, renewable energy, and green buildings.

Research has begun and the process is now in the engagement stage. The website has been revamped, and events are being hosted to solicit input from the public. An advisory panel of about 20 people (2 are VFPC members) is being assembled to guide the strategy development process. Workshops around food waste will be held in Sept and Oct. ACTION: Dirk will send a link to the survey, and follow up on interest in a potential roundtable discussion.

An audit showed that there was 23% food waste in Metro Van waste stream in 2015. Some of the plastic and paper waste is also related to food consumption. Often related to poor food planning, 50% of food waste is avoidable. The City will take a systems approach and look at food production, processing/distribution, purchasing/consumption, and waste management. Possible areas of discussion include food literacy, consumer preferences, single use policies, and packaging.

Discussion

- Green bin - more frequent pick up is possible, at a higher cost that would be less financially sustainable.
- Strategy - will focus both on communication/education to change behaviors, and enforcement/policies at a policy level.
- Procurement - a suggestion was made for guidelines/standards of procurement of specific items (e.g. compostable forks), to alleviate some of the contamination.
- Education - more education is needed to know how to recycle properly, and should begin with children.
- Food redistribution - the Food Bank can offer support for a universal program that does not target vulnerable populations.

- Soft plastics - are best reduced voluntarily, however a ban can be explored.

6.2 Presentation on organics recycling - Dirk Gibbs

Dirk provided a detailed description of the anaerobic digestion process that creates methane to use for power and other co-products. This process is used at Seabreeze Island (wet), and Harvest Power (dry). Net Zero Waste uses aerobic composting, using water and oxygen so no methane is produced. Waste products are heat, CO₂, and leachate. Material laid in windrows and moved, then screened. Products are finished compost and overs (sticks, plastics) that are reprocessed. A new policy from the Ministry is in development to control odours; methods used to mitigate include biofilters, high stacks, and specific containers. Aeration done by blowing air into material is more energy efficient than removing it. Leachate is wastewater from waste food, and can be kept in a separate pond, or stored in sealed tanks that recycle it back into the system. Record keeping is important and is controlled electronically. There are methods in place to reduce contamination, however it is a major issue, especially with plastic. People are confused by terms (e.g. compostable bags) and produce stickers end up in compost.

Discussion of next steps

- City could consider composting at the landfill.
- Neighbourhood composting - there are few examples that could handle the local waste stream. Permitting can be a challenge.
- Net Zero waste is exploring a heat capture system, and aims to produce more heat to be used for greenhouses.
- Non-profits do not have infrastructure to process waste dumped as donation.

7 Bread Basket

There were no items in the breadbasket.

8 Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Caitlin, seconded by Will, carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm.

Motion from Development Working Group for July 20 2016 VFPC Meeting

WHEREAS the City of Vancouver:

- Is working towards the implementation of the Vancouver Food Strategy;
- Recognizes that access to culturally appropriate and nutritious food is a basic human rightⁱ;
- Recognizes that a thriving, diverse economy with opportunity for everyone is the foundation of a liveable cityⁱⁱ and, in keeping with this has undertaken a number of initiatives to promote and strengthen local businessⁱⁱⁱ and acknowledged local food as the largest subsector of Vancouver's green economy^{iv}; and,
- Is striving to eliminate dependence on fossil fuels and achieve a one planet ecological footprint^v.

AND WHEREAS the food distribution businesses ("produce row") situated on and adjacent to Malkin Avenue are important food assets that:

- Contribute directly to food Vancouver Food Strategy Actions 1.1 - 1.9^{vi} and Goal Area #3^{vii}, and have the potential to play an expanded role in Vancouver Food Strategy Goal Area #4^{viii};
- Comprise a vital food hub, unique to BC, that contributes significantly to food security by providing affordable, culturally appropriate, healthy food to individuals, businesses (grocery and corner stores, Granville Island Market, restaurants), and community programs (e.g.: City-supported Neighbourhood Food Networks) in Vancouver, the lower mainland, and throughout Canada;
- Contribute to the local economy of Vancouver and BC by employing approximately 1,000 residents in living wage food system jobs, moving over \$700 million (wholesale value) worth of food through Vancouver annually, and creating a vital link between BC's population centres and food producing regions in the rest of the province, in California, Latin America, and around the world;
- Are co-located, increasing the efficiency of transporting food into and within our city, with associated savings in transportation-related GHG emissions.

AND WHEREAS Cottonwood Community Garden, situated adjacent to Malkin Avenue, plays an important role in local food production, habitat provision, and community building and the VFPC has previously asked City Council to commit to preserving them in their entirety^{ix}.

AND WHEREAS the re-routing of the east-west arterial route through the False Creek Flats could force the "produce row" group of businesses to relocate or close and jeopardize the integrity of Cottonwood garden, in turn causing a ripple effect of negative implications in the areas of food security, economics, and sustainability by:

- Compromising the availability, in Vancouver and beyond, of a full range of affordably priced fresh foods and meats, including culturally appropriate food, unavailable from any other local source, a time when food price increases are exceeding the general inflation rate^x;
- Putting many food system jobs at risk of being lost in Vancouver;
- Reducing the transportation efficiencies gained through the co-location of food wholesalers along Malkin Avenue and risking an increase in transportation-related GHG emissions; and,
- Reducing residents' access to established community gardens.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the VFPC asks City Council and Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to explore all possible options to ensure the ongoing vitality and contributions outlined herein of the "produce row" group of businesses.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the VFPC asks City Council and Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation to explore alternatives to Malkin as the east-west arterial route currently being proposed through False Creek Flats.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the VFPC asks to be called upon for their input and expertise on issues that affect Produce Row, community gardens, and other food assets in the planning for False Creek Flats and Malkin Avenue.

ⁱ See Vancouver Food Charter http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Van_Food_Charter.pdf

ⁱⁱ See <http://vancouver.ca/doing-business/economic-development.aspx>

ⁱⁱⁱ See <http://vancouver.ca/doing-business/economic-development.aspx>

^{iv} See <http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/focus/green-economy/> or http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/VEC_GreenJobsReport_2014_web.pdf

^v See Greenest City Action Plan Part Two 2015-2020 <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/greenest-city-2020-action-plan-2015-2020.pdf>

^{vi} Community gardening

^{vii} Improve access to healthy, affordable, culturally diverse food for all residents

^{viii} Make food a centrepiece of Vancouver's green economy

^{ix} This ask was made in a VFPC resolution passed in April, 2013

^x See <http://foodinstitute.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Food-Price-Report-2016-English.pdf>