

## Vancouver Food Policy Council

### Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 12, 2016

6:00pm-8:30pm

Town Hall Room, City Hall



**Chairs:** Caitlin Dorward and Tara Moreau

**Council Members:** Veronik Campbell, Will Jung, Saber Miresmailli, David Speight, Colin Stansfield

**Liaisons:** Crecien Bencio (VYFPC), Heather Deal (City Council), Kitty Yung (VCH), James O'Neill (Social Policy, City of Vancouver), Orlando Schmidt (Ministry of Agriculture), Theresa Duynstee, Adriane Carr (City Council)

**Invited Guests:** Gerry Kasten (Public Health & Home Care Dietitian, Vancouver Coastal Health)

**Regrets:** Anna Cavouras, Rebecca Cuttler, Zsuzsi Fodor, Dirk Gibbs, Chashma Heinze, Kimberly Hodgson, Ilana Labow, Stephanie Lim, Pat McCarthy, Sarah Carten (Social Policy, City of Vancouver), Janet Fraser (VSB)

**Absent:** Gabrielle Kissinger, Michael Wiebe (Park Board)

#### 1 Introductions

- Round of names
- Introducing new liaisons

Quorum was not met as many members are at the Food Secure Canada conference, and there are some vacancies. Members present decided to proceed with an informal meeting. Members and Liaisons, and nine guests introduced themselves. Corrine has stepped down as the VCH representative, and Kitty Yung will replace her. Kitty is responsible for the Healthy Eating Program at VCH.

#### 2 Overview of October meeting theme

The Chairs acknowledged that the meeting takes place on unceded territory of three Coast Salish first nations. [World Food Day](#) (October 16th) and the theme of "Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too" and the [International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#) (October 17<sup>th</sup>). Other important activities include the [Welfare Food Challenge](#) (to only spend \$18 on for food for one week), [Homelessness action week](#), and the [Sustenance festival](#).

- Update on Motion on food insecurity from last month  
The motion was introduced last meeting, and as the quorum was not met, the motion will go to an e-vote sent through Google Forms. Previously, the VFPC had made an internal motion to recognize the link between income and food security. There is also a reference to the link in the Milan protocol which the City has signed. This will be added as a WHEREAS to the motion.  
ACTION: Heather will look into the issue of quorum as related to reduced membership.

Original Motion:

WHEREAS the Vancouver Food Charter endorses the position that "Food is a basic human right. All residents need accessible, affordable, healthy, and culturally appropriate food"[\[1\]](#).

WHEREAS the Healthy City Strategy states "Income is a strong determinant of health and well-being. While Vancouver is a growing, thriving city, we also have high poverty rates, and many people struggle to make ends meet"[\[2\]](#).

WHEREAS 1.7 million Canadian households, including over a million children, experience food insecurity.[\[3\]](#) In British Columbia, 1 in 10 households, representing 485,000 individuals, experience food insecurity[\[4\]](#) and a total of 5% of Vancouver households report being food insecure[\[5\]](#).

WHEREAS there is a direct link between poverty and food insecurity in that lower income results in less capacity to obtain healthy and culturally appropriate food.

WHEREAS food security organizations and poverty reduction initiatives acknowledge that a sustainable income for households is key to achieving sustainable food security.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT in conjunction with the celebration of World Food Day (October 16<sup>th</sup>) and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17<sup>th</sup>), the Vancouver Food Policy Council recognizes and affirms the connection between food security and income security. We encourage the City of Vancouver to advocate and support other governments in BC and across Canada to work towards poverty reduction

initiatives in partnership with communities, as well as to advocate for a provincial poverty reduction strategy and a national food strategy.

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[1] City of Vancouver, “Vancouver Food Charter”, [http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Van\\_Food\\_Charter.pdf](http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Van_Food_Charter.pdf), (January, 2007), 2.

[2] City of Vancouver, “Healthy City Strategy: Our Goals: Making Ends Meet and Working Well”, <http://vancouver.ca/people-programs/healthy-city-strategy.aspx>, (accessed Sep 10, 2016).

[3] Laura Track, “Hungry for Justice: Advancing a Right to Food for Children in BC,” [https://bccla.org/our\\_work/hungry-for-justice-advancing-a-right-to-food-for-children-in-bc/](https://bccla.org/our_work/hungry-for-justice-advancing-a-right-to-food-for-children-in-bc/), (March 7, 2016).

[4] PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research, “Priority health indicators for British Columbia: Household food insecurity indicator report”, [http://www.phsa.ca/population-public-health-site/Documents/Household%20food%20insecurity%20in%20BC\\_full%20report.pdf](http://www.phsa.ca/population-public-health-site/Documents/Household%20food%20insecurity%20in%20BC_full%20report.pdf), (August, 2016), 2.

[5] City of Vancouver, “What Feeds Us: Vancouver Food Strategy”, <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-food-strategy-final.PDF>, (January, 2013), 28.

### 3 The Cost of Eating in BC

Guest Presentation from Gerry Kasten (Public Health & Home Care Dietitian, Vancouver Coastal Health) on the findings of the [Food Costing in BC 2015](#) report.

Gerry was invited to speak about food costing in BC, and specifically Vancouver. He clarified that the statements expressed are his, and do not constitute positions of VCH or its affiliates.

Every two years, dieticians and volunteers do food costing in grocery stores in BC, which is compiled by provincial health services. The report states that the average cost to feed a family of four with nutritious food for one month in VCH was \$977 for 2015, and in Vancouver \$1,011. When high-end establishments are removed (four were included), the figure falls to \$952/month. The main issue is what proportion of their income people spend on food. For a middle-class family of four, 16% of average income is spent on food, however low income families spend on average 48% on food. Ten percent of families in Vancouver are food insecure, and report lower positive general physical and mental health. When people are food insecure, it costs the system more. It was noted that 65% of food insecure individuals are employed, and that food insecurity is both a poverty issue and a women’s issue. The report notes that the only solution is to ensure that families have adequate income, and that food-based solutions are insufficient, despite having other positive benefits.

#### Discussion

- It is difficult to model for families; social assistance rates are paid by child whether they are 3 or 17. The median income is used as a starting point.
- Q: With the motion from the Right to Food working group to raise awareness of link between poverty and food security, how can we go from advocacy to action? A: There is discourse at the federal level about a guaranteed annual income, and calls to provide feedback. When low income seniors receive a guaranteed income at age 65, food insecurity drops. Encourage discourse. Advocating for living wage, along with subsidized daycare, housing. Talk to elected officials, MLAs. If we invest, our health care costs will drop. Food banks are advocating, talking to ministers. The message needs to be heard many times. Dieticians of Canada website have similar reports for other provinces.
- It was suggested that the VFPC could host an all candidates meeting in advance of the provincial election, as previously done with the municipal and federal elections.
- Members were encouraged to learn about and participate in the Welfare food challenge, and also to blog about it to engage more people and provide the coalition with tools to use in advocacy.
- Gerry referred to a research study in Mexico - *Oportunidades* - where research subjects were given \$50/month to spend however they wanted. All reported positive outcomes. It is unclear what the impact is in Seattle since they adopted a \$15/hour wage policy. Only pertains to city employees. An earlier study with guaranteed income in Delphin, Manitoba saw increased health and education outcomes.

Small group breakouts - members and guests broke into one of the following groups:

- a. Connection to Food Strategy and other food policies: How could the focus of the Vancouver Food Strategy be expanded to include actions to address rising costs of food in Vancouver? How could the VFPC support/advocate for this?
- b. Connection to School Food: How can VFPC support expanding the focus of school-based hunger awareness promotions (such as food bank collection drives, 24 hour fasts, World Food Day events) to increase schools' learnings about Individual and household food insecurity?
- c. Aside from adjusting wages and/or social assistance rates, how can VFPC support advocacy that will put more money in people's budgets for food? (e.g. subsidized day care, subsidizing/paying for education...)

#### Report back and discussion from breakout groups

Food strategy - Academic links to policy could be stronger. There was a suggestion to engage secondary schools to do education, recognizing the power of students as next leaders. Seeing where needs are in neighbourhoods through Neighbourhood Food Networks and increasing the ability to measurement impacts. Figuring out a way for food businesses to reduce waste, so not downloading costs to consumers, increasing awareness and knowledge of food recovery systems, ability to connect available food to needs. One action 5.4 - we need to do some advocacy to provincial government need to tie into the motion; a WHEREAS clause could be added. Link can be made in the Healthy City strategy and Community Economic Development strategy, particularly in DTES. The most recent draft mentions the link but there is no long-term vision. ACTION: Colin will update the FPC on the content as links to food once it has passed.

School Food - There was recognition that it is a challenging issue as the VSB is currently in a crisis. There are basic challenges in finding info on how to advocate with many players. It was suggested that impact hiring could be used when hiring and for procurement. There is potential for action through 'community schools' teams (different funding) with 'vulnerable' students. Nutrition education should be mandatory. There is an opportunity to raise the profile of the issue with the upcoming election. Issue is complex with many players (VSB, teachers, MLAs). Fresh Roots is a model that employs youth to increase their food security and employability. Youth need support to get into the green economy to gain skills to earn more. It was noted that there are many federal funding opportunities for recent graduates in agriculture, and a need to advocate for support and increased funding. Education for youth and for their families through initiatives such as 'Bring your parents to school day' that involve community.

#### Other

This discourse is about food, but this issue is really about income. There are groups that advocate for other subsidies, VFPC may be able to help with the food piece. The City can buy land and encourage urban agriculture; other policy ideas are welcome. There is a need to continue good activities, while being aware that basis is income. Critics say that further development of local food system will cause the price of food to rise but there are other benefits. There was a suggestion to change hours of school to align with the workday so people would not need to pay before-after school care. As the VFPC enters our new term, it was suggested that a working group liaise with other advocacy groups. Metro Vancouver alliance is a coalition that addresses many issues. A suggestion was made to add it to the selection criteria for VFPC membership.

ACTION: Gerry will send documents for Caitlin to post online.

#### 4 Working Group dates

- Waste
 

Members attended the 2040 waste event; overall attendance was 80-85. There is engagement with staff from the city on zero waste. There will be 5 workshops in total, with one on food. Mapped points of loss, talked about the roles and responsibilities of the city and institutions. All notes, proceedings, and action items will feed into the COV 2014 Zero Waste Strategy. Scale is important (personal, family, neighbourhood, municipal, provincial, national, international), as is knowing where the waste is on that scale and in those systems. It was noted that the session in single use containers is also relevant to food waste. ACTION: Will attend and take notes. Chris (staff) knows that VFPC wants to be engaged and will be in touch. Dirk and Tara are both on the waste advisory council. It was noted that there is public confusion between 'organics' and 'organic agriculture'.
- Urban Farming
 

Marc is the representative and is away at FSC. The group has not met recently and is waiting for the farmers to finish the season. No urban farms have gone through the licensing process yet, likely due to a combination of a busy season and reluctance to go first. The City has spoken to the VUFS and will provide extra support,

and has hired a building specialist. Heather noted that the slow uptake is similar to other activities that had flown under the radar before being legitimized.

When students in the farmer training program have questions, it is not always clear who they should speak to. A role for the working group could be to reach out to them as future farmers. Orlando noted that he obtained a building permit and (non-farmer) business license for his farm in Abbotsford. ACTION: Tara will follow up with Marc and Ilana to explore how to provide support to urban farmers.

- **Development**  
The group plans to reconvene soon. There is an upcoming sustainability workshop for NE false creek. The group cannot attend but will look at the notes.
- **School Food**  
Funding was secured from the Coalition for Healthy School Food to send members to the annual meeting and to connect with other member organizations. The former co-chair Antonietta stepped down; Anna attended to represent the group. The motion to support youth programs by enhancing food access in schools passed unanimously, and will provide \$80k to the Strathcona community centre. In the report that went to council, 250 students were identified as vulnerable, but with few individuals in many schools, no solution was found for how to provide food to them at a reasonable cost.
- **GMO/GE**  
The municipality of Duncan passed a motion to become a GE-free zone and refrain from purchasing GE plants. The group has not yet been able to contact representatives, but found there are 16 similar municipalities in BC that do not buy GE plants or animals. It is clear that this is one way that the city can be a GE free zone. There could also be a requirement that no GE food could be purchased from vendors. The Union of BC Municipalities is asking for province to be GE-free. It was clarified that in Duncan GE is separate from GMO. The distinction needs to be clear; however, the definition is changing with new technologies (e.g. CRISPR). It was suggested that this working group be called Biotechnology rather than GMO/GE so that it includes new and emerging technologies.
- **Right to Food**  
No representatives present.

## 5 Liaison Updates

### *Reporting Framework*

- What? Report on the item(s) (prioritize those that are actionable)
- Now what? How can VFPC take action?

### *Liaisons*

- **City Staff**
  - The City was honoured to be nominated for a [Milan food policy pact](#) international award. One of the six categories is Governance, and the City of Vancouver won for its work on the Food Strategy. The Canadian embassy will accept award and will show the food video.
  - FPC membership - application deadline is 5pm on Oct 28<sup>th</sup> - members were reminded to re-apply. The new Council will be named in the new year. Meeting dates for 2017 have been booked. A blog post on website explains the membership process; members are encouraged to share with networks. ACTION: Caitlin and Tara will send a reminder about the gaps in membership.
  - Council of councils meeting Nov 9 - Three slides of highlights will be presented with the top accomplishments, priorities, and future goals. The annual report is a summary of the slides in written format and will be rolled into a larger report with other advisory groups. ACTION: Chairs will circulate slides for feedback.
  - [Sustainable food systems grant](#) - is due this Friday October 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - [Urban Agriculture](#) - deadline to submit Expression of Interest has passed. Applications will be reviewed in the coming weeks with Engineering and Parks.
  - City Hall - the East Wing will be removed, and there are plans for an urban farm on City Hall, possibly on the podium. An RFP will be launched in the new year.
- **Other**
  - **City Council**
    - Meatless Monday - There has been correspondence surrounding the motion. Councillor Carr will follow up, and is exploring whether the City can promote it rather than proclaim it. With the

international year of pulses, the City can promote the benefits of plants rather than reducing meat, to avoid alienating some.

- Report how to support new immigrants - does not explicitly mention food but could be considered.
- Earth quake preparation - The Board of Trade group on earthquake preparedness would like to discuss food. It could be a potential working group if there is enough interest. ACTION: James to send correspondence.
- NE false creek - development may affect Produce Row. Opportunities for food assets on City-owned blocks will be explored.
- Arts and culture policy council - when discussing the definition of culture, food came up several times. There may be potential for collaboration.
- Arbutus corridor - there is a consultation on temporary materials for trail (asphalt) while longer term plan is in place that will address seating, lighting, and community gardens.
- Upcoming in Council - adaptation of rising sea levels, lack of access to drinking water, and how it affects food insecurity and production.
- [City awards of excellence](#) nomination process is now open for adults, children, and organizations.

○ Vancouver Parks Board - Staff  
Not present.

○ Vancouver Parks Board - Commissioner  
Not present.

○ Vancouver School Board  
Not present.

○ Regional Representatives

- MoAg conference in Kelowna in November about the need to have a secure food supply. Brent Mansfield and Theresa Duynstee are speakers.
- Grow local, a BC government initiative administered through investment agriculture, will award \$25,000 to three communities. Nov 4 deadline.
- Land, farmers water - MoAg conference on water supply. Climate change - Metro Vancouver climate projections adaptations - on website.

○ Vancouver Youth Food Policy Council  
This group is recruiting new members.

## 6 Bread Basket

- Delta - federal government plans to remove agricultural land to develop the port. SPEC is writing a letter and will likely ask VFPC to sign on.
- PHSA released a report on Agriculture's Connection to Health.
- Farm to School received funding for photo contest; exhibit starts Nov 6 at the art gallery. ACTION: Vanessa will send to Caitlin to post online.

## 7 Motion to Adjourn

Moved by David, carried unanimously.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm