

Vancouver Food Policy Council

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 19, 2017

6:00pm-8:30pm

Town Hall Room, City Hall



Chairs: Caitlin Dorward and Kim Hodgson

Council Members: Nikoo Boroumand, Clare Cullen, Jess Dennis, Zsuzsi Fodor, Dirk Gibbs, , Kevin Huang, Sharnelle Jenkins-Thompson, Stephanie Lim, Tara Moreau, Marc Schutzbank, David Speight, Georgia Stanley, Jesse Veenstra. Chantille Viaud

City-Appointed Liaisons: Councillor Carr (City Council), Councillor Deal (City Council), James O'Neill (Social Policy, CoV), Sarah Carten (Social Policy, CoV), Theresa Duynstee (Metro Vancouver)

Invited Guests: Sara Muir Owen (Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions), Dr. Sean Smukler (UBC), Kate Menzes (SPEC), Dr. Art Bomke (SPEC), Katie McPherson (City of Vancouver), Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas (GM Community Services) Rebecca Till (for Alan Duncan, Park Board), Michael Wiebe (Park Board Commissioner)

Other Liaisons: Janet Fraser (Special Representative), Emma Holmes (Ministry of Ag)

Regrets: Crecien Bencio (Vancouver Youth Food Policy Council), Claire Gram (Vancouver Coastal Health), Damien Bryan, Will Jung, Brianne Miller, Stefan Misse

Absent: Jessica Pautsch

1 Homelands acknowledgement and round of introductions

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations and we give thanks for their generosity and hospitality on these lands.

Council members and guests introduced themselves. Nine guests were present.

2 Approve minutes from June 2017 meeting

June minutes will be approved in September once members have had a chance to review. Members were asked to pay particular attention to the section on the National Food Policy, and advise if any changes are needed.

3 Liaison Updates

- City Staff - special guest Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas
Kathleen is the General Manager of Community Services at the City of Vancouver, under which Social Policy (and the food policy unit) falls.

The food policy unit will bring forward the updated Food Strategy to City Council in the fall. The unit is part of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' contribution to the national food policy.

Discussion

The Healthy City Strategy (HCS) is the 'meta-strategy' that is the guiding document determining the work plan for the coming years. It was recognized that achieving the Food Strategy goals with only two staff is challenging, and it was noted that the whole department is underfunded, and that a business review is underway. A committee is currently reevaluating the governance model to get more effective action. The HCS sets out aspirational goals with the understanding that partnerships will be required to accomplish them. This is similar to the Food Strategy, as efforts are shifting from aspirational thinking toward more investments and results. A Poverty Reduction Strategy is being undertaken. Food also falls under the Greenest City Action Plan, and those goals are reflected in the HCS. It was noted that Vancouver has no citywide community plan that includes integrated metrics to track.

The goal is to present the revised Food Strategy to City Council in the fall, however this is a soft deadline and James and Sarah will ensure VFPC can review and provide feedback in advance.

- City Councillors - Adriane Carr & Heather Deal
 - National School Food motion passed unanimously at City Council June 27.
 - Housing issues - VFPC Chairs were unable to participate in the Chairs of advisory committees meeting due to the last minute change of the meeting date. An outcome of the meeting is to have a housing component to each advisory group, and a meeting will be held to address how this will be done. Despite having no 'housing' working group, the VFPC can provide input to the meeting, which will happen in early August.

Marc, Sharnelle, Georgia and Kim offered to participate. ACTION: Sarah will share VCH papers on connections between food and housing. ACTION: Meeting details will be circulated once finalized.

- False Creek Flats - update will go to council next week, but will be more technical in nature. Zoning will include food business on ground floors, spilling into the street. Restaurants will be allowed, despite industrial zoning. East Fraserlands plan will be coming forward soon.
- Parks Board Commissioner - Michael Wiebe
No updates.
- Parks Board Staff - Rebecca Till
No other updates (see Item 4 below)
- Other liaisons - time permitting
 - Ministry of Agriculture - Emma Holmes was introduced as the new liaison for the Ministry of Agriculture replacing Orlando Schmidt. Emma Holmes has recently started at the Ministry of Agriculture as the New Entrant Agrologist. It was noted that there is a new Minister of Agriculture in place, Minister Popham.
 - Metro Vancouver - No updates.

Liaisons were reminded that if there are pressing items to report on, to request time on the agenda in advance from the chairs. It was clarified that Janet Fraser was appointed as a Special Representative to the VFPC by the City after the dismissal of the elected Vancouver School Board Trustees, and is no longer an official liaison to the VSB.

3 National Food Policy Report Back & Next Steps

ACTION: Chairs to circulate PPT with notes. Kim and Caitlin participated in two of the four breakout sessions at the Ottawa Summit. While a full participant list was not released, it was noted that there were representatives from several government departments, local governments, first nations government and leadership, academia and industry present, with approximately 400-500 attendees total. It is unclear how representative the stakeholders were of civil society. Day 1 focused on providing feedback on the draft guiding principles and pillars of the Food Policy for Canada, as well as breakout groups focused on in-depth feedback related to the 4 goals/themes. Day 2 (half day) included a panel of government representatives and sessions focused on generating feedback about the implementation of the Food Policy for Canada.

It was noted at the Summit that several policies are already in place that affect food systems, and this new policy will build on those. The Chairs commented that it may be hard to overcome the status quo in those existing documents, especially the 2017 federal budget goal to increase Canadian food exports to \$75 Billion, which framed the direction of the discussion. There was pushback from many attendees to encourage the government to think beyond economics and an export oriented food system. Government representatives were unclear on how they would ensure cooperation between various departments. .

Many had read the FSC material, and there was consistency in responses. Kim and Caitlin presented select responses from each breakout group to the VFPC. There were concerns that due to the process, some voices were not heard or were misinterpreted. Many participants wanted to see more of a systems approach not based on sectors (environment and social were often missing or not fully developed). The good work of Food Secure Canada to bring civil society on to the same page was recognized. People who spoke up were mostly civil society and academics, not industry. There is an [online survey](#) - all members are encouraged to complete. There will be more regional engagement sessions and roundtables by hosted MPs.

Discussion

- The term 'Innovation' - was mostly represented by government as 'technology', however some attendees had a broader understanding.
- Regional engagement strategy- it is unclear if the VFPC could convene a meeting, but it could submit a written response. It was recommended to use the same question format as the survey.
- Growing healthy food - it was noted during the summit that discussion on migrant labour was missing from draft materials.
- Climate change - it came up several times but could have played a more prominent role. It was a key issue in the Regional Round Table with Joyce Murray.
- Ad-hoc group to craft written submission - Dennis, Teresa, Tara, Jesse, Caitlin, Sarah to form a group. Heather has requested to be a liaison at FCM.

4 Wild Salmon Caravan: Update and Discussion of VFPC Role

After meeting with Dawn Morrison, it clarified that there are no expectations of the VFPC, and individuals and their organizations can contribute. A summary was circulated outlining possible actions.

MOTION: BE IT RESOLVED THAT the VFPC support the Wild Salmon Caravan, and allow use of the VFPC logo in their promotional materials.

Moved by Tara, seconded by Zsuzsi, carried unanimously.

An ad-hoc group was formed to determine next steps and organize contributions to the feast: Clare, David, Georgia, Marc, Steph, Zsuzui, Emma, Chantille, Kim, and Caitlin.

There will be a parade leading to the feast; all are welcome for that part, and also to follow the caravan to Adams Lake after the feast. There was a suggestion to see if the event could be recognized officially by the City. It was discussed that it is difficult to have an event recognized as a 'City event'. A Proclamation can be made for 'Wild Salmon Day' and be read by a City Councillor. The Proclamation would need to be restated each year. ACTION: The working group will draft suggested wording, and Nikoo and Rebecca to check with Dawn on protocol. It was noted that proclamations only go through the Mayor's office, and further efforts, such as a press release, are needed to promote it further to ensure broad recognition.

Dawn offered a workshop on 'Food systems and decolonizing research and relationships in food policy' as a way to thank the VFPC for efforts in organizing the feast. It was felt that she should be remunerated for her work. There is currently a process in the City to educate staff about reconciliation and Indigenous cultural competency, and it was suggested that the City may be able to cover the fee for the VFPC as an advisory committee. ACTION: Chairs will send request to City Councillors.

- 5 Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in our Food System: Exploring how the VFPC can Support Climate Action
 - Dr. Tara Moreau (VFPC) - *Introduction*

Tara began by presenting the UN sustainable development goals. She noted that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has worked for 25 years, and only now do we have the Paris Accord. Mitigation and Adaptation are the main solutions, and the best solutions are found where both are addressed. The Paris Accord shifts the focus to adaptation. While agriculture is not explicitly discussed, there is discussion on eliminating hunger. Tara then provided an overview of features of resiliency, many of which are contradictory to the industrial food system. The importance of crop wild relatives was noted, and safeguarding crop ancestors is important for future food security. The VFPC is active in areas that address climate change; it was suggested that a 'Climate action working group' be formed.
 - Sara Muir Owen (Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions) - *BC Mitigation and Adaptation Priorities and Projects*

Sara provided an overview of her organization, established in 2008 as part of the Campbell government's Climate Action Plan. She stressed that NOW is the time to act. CO₂ concentration is higher than it has ever been, and impacts are being seen now. Canada has 5 times the world average for emissions. Climate change is about more than just energy. [Metro Vancouver's report on climate projections](#) makes clear that there will be impacts for Canada, for example less water from a smaller annual snowpack. No single solution will work, and a systems approach is needed. Recent efforts include the [Vancouver Declaration](#) by the federal and provincial governments, the City of Vancouver's [Renewable City strategy](#), and [Climate Adaptation strategy](#). Partnerships are needed at all levels. The Paris Accord has a goal to work with all sectors to keep the global temperature rise below 2 deg. C. however this is insufficient - even with countries' pledges, warming is still expected to be approx. 3 deg. C. Everyone, everywhere must take action. [PICS](#) has a number of programs to address take climate action.
 - Dr. Sean Smukler (UBC) - *Regional farming adaptation strategies*

Sean gave an overview of [his team's research](#). Farmers are some of the most impacted by climate change, and some impacts are already being seen. Precipitation patterns have been shifting, meaning farmers have difficulty planting and harvesting. Both resilient and resistant systems are needed. Adaptation strategies may need more infrastructure. Globally, agriculture contributes 13-25% of CO₂ emissions, and much of this can be addressed through existing technologies. Some adaptations can help mitigation (hedgerows, fallow fields). Researching new technologies. BC agricultural climate change adaptation research network - partnership with government, NGO, research organizations, and businesses.
 - Kate Menzes and Dr. Art Bomke (SPEC) - *Urban Farming Adaptation and Extension*

Kate explained the [SPEC project on extension services](#) for small-scale farmers, who face many challenges currently, that are expected to become more extreme. Extension can help improve livelihoods and create more resilient food systems and healthier agroecosystems. Personal resilience is also needed. The project works with 12 farms doing site visits, workshops, and collaborating with other groups doing similar work. They are working toward a model of extension that is affordable and not owned by any one group, with a short-term goal to provide immediate assistance and training.

- Katie McPherson (Resiliency Officer - City of Vancouver) - *Resiliency Strategy*
Katie described the [100 resilient cities program](#) and partnership. Much of population will be in cities in the future. Risks and threats of climate change are massive, but there are opportunities to become resilient. To develop a resiliency strategy, funding was provided to hire a resiliency officer for two years, along with access to partners and resources. The goal is to use these to make a meaningful difference for Vancouver. Food is a way to connect people with big ideas in many other sectors in the context of equity, justice, and climate change. The City is in the early stages of designing an engagement process. The first phase is to complete a preliminary resilience assessment - what is happening now to allow Vancouver to thrive in the future. Near the end of the year, the assessment will go to City Council with assessment identifying 3-5 areas to focus investment. Katie requested to return when the internal assessment is done to seek advice and commitment to support the integration of food strategy objectives into the resiliency strategy. She also requests to return to do an inventory of actions that are most important with respect to food policy in Vancouver and regions.

Discussion

- Themes of resiliency - the Resilient Neighbourhoods program is now in a pilot phase and will form a core part of the strategy. Food, as a connector, can facilitate discussion of climate adaptation in context of communicating to those with other priorities.
- Large-scale agriculture - how can the research reach large farms on the Prairies? SPEC has limited capacity to work with large farms. It was noted that change begins at the margins, and the SPEC project is an opportunity to demonstrate ideas by addressing issues in our own region.
- PICS has done papers on adaptation for agriculture, and has resources available on their website. There is a fine line between adaptation and better farming (given a volatile climate). Activities should align, to provide adaptation and mitigation through efficiency.
- The VFPC invited Katie to come back to seek input/advice on the resiliency strategy. ACTION: Chairs to keep in touch with Katie to this effect.

6 Bread Basket

- Next meetings - members were reminded there is no meeting in August, and informed the September meeting will be in a different location (TBD)
- Agenda for September will include a checklist tool by the development group to assess impact of development, and a presentation from the Institute for Sustainable Food Systems project (previously endorsed by CoV and VFPC).
- The Chairs reminded all members and liaisons that meeting ideas can be suggested any time, and all members are encouraged to send ideas for meeting topics and offer to coordinate meeting themes
- VFPC work plan - needs more details on goals. ACTION: Caitlin to send request for more details.
- ACTION: Tara to send email about creating a Climate Change working group.

7 Motion to adjourn

Moved by Marc, seconded by Tara, carried unanimously.

Meeting ended at 8:35pm.