

Vancouver Food Policy Council

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 12, 2017

6:00pm-8:30pm

Town Hall Room, City Hall



Chairs: Tara Moreau and Kimberly Hodgson (Acting)

Council Members: Nikoo Boroumand, Damien Bryan, Clare Cullen, Jess Dennis, Kevin Huang, Sharnelle Jenkins-Thompson, Will Jung, Stephanie Lim, Brianne Miller, Stefan Misse, Jessica Pautsch, Marc Schutzbank David Speight, Georgia Stanley, Jesse Veenstra, Chantille Viaud

Liaisons: Sarah Carten (Social Policy, CoV), Councillor Carr, Claire Gram (Vancouver Coastal Health), Rebecca Till (for Alan Duncan, Park Board), James O'Neill (Social Policy, CoV), Michael Wiebe (Park Board Commissioner)

Special Representative: Theresa Duynstee (Metro Vancouver) Orlando Schmidt (Ministry of Agriculture), Crecien Bencio (Vancouver Youth Food Policy Council)

Regrets: Caitlin Dorward, Zsuzsi Fodor, Janet Fraser, Dirk Gibbs, Councillor Deal (City Council)

Absent:

1. Homelands acknowledgements

The Chairs acknowledged that the meeting takes place on unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations.

2. Introductions & Housekeeping

- Introductions

Members introduced themselves to council. Eight guests introduced themselves.

- Housekeeping

Tara will be stepping down as co-chair in the coming months. Kim has been nominated; if others are interested, please contact chairs. An election will be held at the next meeting.

- Meeting Supporting Working Group

Biographies and photos have been posted [online](#), and Georgia has agreed to bring food.

3. Approve minutes from March 2017 meeting

Moved by Georgia, seconded by Stefan, carried unanimously.

4. Liaison and WG Updates

- City Staff Liaisons - deferred to agenda item 8

- Parks Board - deferred to agenda item 6

- Vancouver Coastal Health - Claire Gram

- o Health Authorities - work with PHSA to support food security. One initiative is to promote community groups to work more effectively with local government. BCFSN has been contracted to develop a community of practice toolkit to support that work. There is much interest in food policy councils across all regions.

- o Health system redesign in DTES - food quality standards for VCH sites are being developed. These will come to VFPC for review once complete.

- Waste - Zero Waste 2040

- o This group will work with the Right to Food WG on food recovery, and research what's happening what's across the country and provide an update to the 2040 committee.

- o 2040 - Five 'buckets' of waste are being looked at, and one is food (including packaging waste). VFPC liaisons to that committee are attempting to bring in culture and justice pieces. In May, the 2040

committee will present an update, giving the VFPC an opportunity to provide feedback. ACTION: James will with Tara circulate material out in advance.

- o Harvest power - was shut down for 2 days in March due to odour and could not accept any organics. It is now running again.

- Provincial Questionnaire Update

The questionnaire was sent to 39 Vancouver standing nominees on April 4 and they were asked to respond by this Friday (April 15). Jerry Kroll (Green) sent his party's platform on Agriculture and Food Security BC. While he did not answer the form, he said would be happy to talk further. David Stall (Your Political Party) also responded. The questionnaire was also shared with the BCFSN. ACTION: Tara will get update from Brent. Liberals and NDP are just now rolling out their platforms now. The goal is not to attract media, it is to educate the parties on food policy council and their issues.

5. City Council -

Grants - passed \$7M in grants, including one to UBC for Think and Eat Green @ School, and many at the neighbourhood level.

Water Use - pursuing a change in bylaw to reduce water use, related to the food strategy goal. This will impact the building code and non-circulating water equipment, and commercial applications. A ban will be in place for in-ground water sprinkling systems for homes; it is unclear if it would affect food producing gardens.

6. Urban Farming -

The Southlands district is on ALR land. This week, two farmers in Southlands were told they were only able to keep 4 hens as per the City bylaw, which supersedes the Right to Farm. A motion was circulated by email with the intent to have staff explore the best approach to resolve the issue, given the City's support of urban farming.

There was an assumption in the city that farming could happen on ALR, however the legal team determined that the bylaw only allows for four hens. Various policies/plans are relevant - ALR in Vancouver, Animal Control Bylaw, the Southlands plan and the Zoning bylaw. An internal team from several departments is being created to discuss how to bring this forward and discuss options. Council is supportive of preserving and enhancing ALR.

The final motion was moved to item 9. on the agenda

As a general guideline, it was requested that material be sent out with as much lead time as possible. At this point, it seems nothing can be done to allow the farmers to keep their chickens. Next time council meets is in 3 weeks, which would be too late. Motions are due Monday at 5pm before a council meeting.

Ministry of Agriculture's Right to Farm Act would come into place if bylaw did not exist. There is a process to handle complaints.

7. Parks Board: Food Programming Opportunities

The process of updating the Local Food Action Plan was inspired by revisions with the food strategy. The process is beginning now, and will be followed by a more thorough review. Four Park assets (Land, Kitchens, Community Gardens, Centres/programs) were discussed in small groups with the goal of helping park board to create a vision for how food programming can be animated in the park board. Suggestions included:

Kitchens - connections can be made to small scale processors and urban farmers to provide use at a low cost (provided for-profit groups are able to use). Connections can also be made linking surplus from farmers markets to community kitchens and for additional programming. More outreach can be done in the neighbourhood to groups who are not aware of this asset.

Land - land use could be changed for orchards, and chicken coops, and would require a process to apply and manage. Gardens could have interpretive signs. Parkland can be used to highlight the indigenous food system. Use can also be applied to water - providing piers and habitat islands for fishing on the Fraser River, ensuring water is clean enough to harvest shellfish.

Gardens - opportunity for collaboration with schools, could allocate park space for school gardens, and more space in general. More funding and resources to support outreach and education. Surveys could be done to see where demand is highest and where gardens are underutilized. More outreach from the City as to how residents can start community gardens to fill unused land.

Programs - create 'best practices' for engagement at community centres, as it varies now. Clarify that the role of NFN coordinators is different than food programmers, who can collaborate but have different needs.

Golf courses - are on Park land, and are well used. Opportunities such as reforestation are being acted on, and there may be further opportunities with perimeter paths.

8. Food Strategy Reheat

A preliminary conversation took place at the March meeting, and there has since been feedback and conversations with staff in several departments and stakeholders. There is more to come, all of which will inform the final version.

A document with draft priority actions was circulated. Social policy staff will meet separately with the Right to Food working group. Members and guests divided into small groups to discuss the following:

- Are these the right actions the City should take to advance goals?
- How do you see yourselves helping to advance action plan and what would your role be?
- What are the priority actions the VFPC wants to advance?
- What are the top actions that they City should prioritize?

Groups reported out as follows, with full notes given to staff for consideration:

Urban agriculture - an end date could be added; 2040 suggested. Measures of success should not be tied solely to businesses. Align policies and bylaws to support food growing and raising. Connect rural and urban lands, advocate for agricultural use of lands. Indirectly support community groups stewarding gardens on land. Increase staff time to tend plants on city land.

System wide - 'culture' and 'culturally diverse' are in the Access section and should be in the System wide section that also includes production and distribution. More strategies where food is found can be aligned (e.g. emergency resiliency); food needs to be seen in all strategies and departments. Seafood needs to be addressed. Right to Food will suggest new wording for addressing 'hunger and poverty.'

Access - first bullet should be system wide. It was recognized that no points explicitly speak to the affordability of food (see Seattle's plan, for example). Collaborative work can happen with settlement agencies through grants, with information compiled and shared.

Distribution - Food hub could be expanded beyond the food bank, and be integrated to accommodate new food businesses, as well as storage. A survey of needs could be conducted. Long term permits would provide support and guidelines for network of food runners.

Space will be held at the next meeting for an update, and a report to council will happen at the end of June. A request was made to see the new priorities in the context of the 2013 strategy in advance of the meeting. It was clarified that there is no report on how the actions have been completed. Council has been updated on the food strategy through the Greenest City Action Plan. An action was included to report back to council, however it was recognized that funding might be needed to enable more robust reporting.

9. Bread Basket

- The City of Richmond recently passed a motion to put a temporary moratorium on building on ALR lands. A draft letter of support was circulated. ACTION: Clare will recirculate the draft and ask for edits within one week then will send.
- The following motion was tabled:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Vancouver Food Policy Council request City Council to direct City staff:

To work on an interim solution so that farmers in southlands can retain their agricultural animals for agricultural purposes

To align existing city policies and bylaws with the goals of the Southlands plan and the ALC that support food production (including agricultural animals) and the agricultural nature of the Southlands district.

Moved by Marc, seconded by Clare, carried unanimously.

The goals of the ALC goals will be included as a 'whereas'.

- Tree sale - Apr 29, 30. Goal is to increase food assets and build canopy. Sign up online; many species already sold-out

10. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Stephanie, seconded by Will, carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:32pm.

Motion from the Urban Farming Working Group:

MOVED by Marc Schutzbank

SECONDED BY Clare Cullen

WHEREAS farmers in Southlands, a designated Agricultural Land Reserve area within the jurisdictional region of the City of Vancouver, attempted to grow food, by producing eggs for sale, but were stopped due to bylaw restrictions, and

WHEREAS the goals of the Agricultural Land Commission and the lands it designates is to: a) to preserve agricultural land; b) to encourage farming in collaboration with other communities of interest; and c) to encourage local governments, First Nations, the government and its agents to enable and accommodate farm use of agricultural land and uses compatible with agriculture in their plans, bylaws and policies, and

WHEREAS urban farming contributes directly to the actions and goals of the Vancouver Food Strategy, the Healthy City Strategy and the Greenest City Action Plan, and positively benefits the health, social, economic, and environment of Vancouver's residents, and;

WHEREAS Agricultural Land is limited, and much land is being repurposed for non-agricultural purposes; and in 2013, City Council adopted a motion on preserving and enhancing Agricultural Land Reserve in Metro Vancouver. However, Agricultural Land Use Inventory conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture in 2011 revealed that only 26% of the ALR in the City of Vancouver is used for farming; and

WHEREAS the high cost of land and limited available land for urban agriculture makes farming in the city financially challenging, and

WHEREAS the Healthy City Strategy and Vancouver Food Strategy target an increase in citywide and neighbourhood food assets by a minimum of 50% by 2020, and the Food Strategy specifically articulates the goal to create policy to enable commercial food production, and

WHEREAS The Greenest City Strategy focuses on doubling the number of green jobs over 2010 levels;

WHEREAS the intention of the Urban Farming Bylaws is to increase the ease by which urban farming occurs in the city, and therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Vancouver Food Policy Council request City Council to direct City staff from relevant departments to:

- Work on interim solutions so that farmers in the Southlands can retain their agricultural animals for agricultural purposes
- Align existing city policies and bylaws with the goals of the Southlands Plan and the Agricultural Land Commission that support food production (including agricultural animals) and the agricultural nature of the Southlands District.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY