

# Homegrown Minneapolis Land Access and Urban Ag Working Group

## MEETING NOTES

**July 24, 2013, 6:30-8:00pm**

East Philips Cultural and Community Center  
2307 17th Ave. S, Minneapolis, MN 55404, 612 370-4888

**Meeting attendees** (18 people): Jane Shey, Alison Rotel, Jim Bovino, Charley Underwood, Deborah Ramos, Isaac Martin, Mustafa Sundiata, Lisa Farwell, Russ Henry, Art Serotoff, Robin Kyle, Laura Goetsch, Jane Shey, Meleah Houseknecht, Mette Nielsen, Beth Dooley, Mallory Morken, Elliott Altbaum

1. **Introductions** – Jim welcomed people to the meeting. Members present introduced themselves. We reviewed the agenda and Deborah requested that we add a recap of the May meeting to the agenda.
  
2. **How we got here (historical background on the working group)**
  - Alison provided a brief history of Homegrown urban ag efforts, and an overview of the April and May meetings.
  - Mustafa clarified that per the current by-laws the co-chairs of the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council appoint leadership for the working groups, explained that anyone who attends is considered a member and that all members may vote.
  - Mustafa Sundiata and Beth Dooley, the co-chairs, appointed Alison Rotel and Jim Bovino as the co-chairs of the Land Access and Urban Ag Working Group at the June Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council meeting.
  - Copies of the membership section of the by-laws (in English and Spanish) were shared with the group.
  - Art expressed concerns about the membership and voting structure, and was encouraged to bring his concerns to the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council Executive Committee, the group that would initiate changes to the by-laws for the Food Council.
  - Alison described the vision that she and Jim have for the working group:
    - The members of this committee and the city will be co-creators of the policies that we need to make urban ag successful.
    - This committee will decide **how** we want to achieve the goals and objectives identified by the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council and help make it happen.
    - We don't just provide input, we are doers.
    - The working group is also an opportunity for people to get input and support to pursue their own ideas as well.
  - Alison invited Deborah to review the May meeting, as requested. She deferred to the organizers of that meeting: Art, Isaac and Deborah. Art requested that we review the values adopted at the May meeting at the next meeting. These are: Equitable, Inclusive, Transparent, Effective, Productive, Accountability and Respect.

3. **Review goals determined by the food council and outcomes brainstormed at April 2013 meeting**

- Jim referred people to handouts prepared by Julie Ristau that offer context about what is happening in North Minneapolis and nationally (attached to August 5<sup>th</sup> email).
- Jim reviewed the goals and objectives (selected by the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council) and the associated proposed priorities/values and outcomes (generated by this group at previous meetings).
- There was a discussion of the language, with several friendly amendments proposed. Alison volunteered to adjust the language to reflect the feedback provided. She will work with Art, who shared many proposed changes.
- Jane shared an update about the outcome marked “done”: Facilitation of water access for urban farms. The city water department is now extending the same water access arrangement and payment structure that is used for community gardens to urban farmers.
- Russ shared an update about the outcome marked “in process”: Open up farm stands to all days of growing season and allow produce aggregation. It was recently brought to the attention of the City Attorney that the Minnesota state constitution prohibits the government from preventing people from selling produce that they have grown. This means that the provision of the urban ag zoning text amendments that limits the number of days that farm stands can occur will not be enforced. Urban farmers will also be allowed to aggregate produce from multiple sites. They will still need to follow the limits on hours.
- Deb raised concerns about one of the outcomes listed for goal 2: Farm/small business vehicle parking on street and at rental properties. Deborah recommended that the LAUA working group include an environmental and social justice impacts assessment per each outcome for both Goals 1 and Goal 2 to ensure that the safety of children and others, and the health of community members and of the environment as a whole is considered and outlined in each and future working group goals, outcomes and recommendations to the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council.

4. **Where do we go from here? (action planning)**

- Alison asked people to discuss the questions in their meeting packets with their neighbors and write down key action steps:
  - Given the identified goals and objectives, what should we do over the next six months?
  - What role am I willing to play?
  - Who are you willing to contact before the next meeting?
- The group came back together as a large group and shared some of the highlights from their conversations.
- People left their action planning notes for Alison to compile and share with the group (see below)

**Action Planning:**

1. Given the identified goals and objectives, what should we do over the next six months?
2. What role am I willing to play?
3. Groups and individuals we should connect with beyond the listserv who should like to have input into the plan for urban agriculture and land access (not inclusive, results of April brainstorming)

<b>WHO</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
Isaac Martin	What should we do over the next six months? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and involvement of groups listed/not listed on back of this page.</li> <li>• We need to fully flush out these goals into policy</li> <li>• Request sharing of what people are working on</li> </ul> What role am I willing to play? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research/developing of that policy</li> <li>• outreach to other groups</li> </ul>
Laura Goetsch	What should we do over the next six months? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food empowerment zones (see Art and Deborah’s sheets also)</li> <li>• Bioremediation of city lots.</li> <li>• Change format of meetings – BBQ’s, facilitated w/a popular education framework – growing out of knowledge base, which is the purpose of the working group. Have meetings reflect that.</li> <li>• Increase intentionality, through specific outreach, not through internet.</li> </ul> What role am I willing to play? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help facilitate &amp; engage &amp; bring food</li> </ul>
Deborah Ramos	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create community empowerment zones to address lack of access of healthy foods in low income/people of color neighborhoods, and to balance access to land for community gardening &amp; urban farming. My role: active working group member/organizer</li> <li>2. Change format of land access meetings to community gatherings that engage community in objectives &amp; goals of land access working group My role: active working group member/organizer</li> <li>3. Create strategy to intentionally engage community My role: active working group member/organizer</li> </ol>
Art Serotoff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create food empowerment zones – we will e-mail detail, had we known the agenda last week, we could have prepared</li> <li>2. Disseminate the model &amp; engage low income &amp; COC residents to access urban Ag private &amp; city owned land.</li> <li>3. Recruit low income &amp; COC to alternative meetings, gatherings, events to gain voice &amp; input.</li> </ol>
Mette Nielsen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do research on sole foods in Vancouver, BC</li> </ul>
Russ Henry	What should we do over the next six months? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist starting farmers</li> </ul> What role am I willing to play? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obj 1.2 (private land process model) - Can help create model</li> <li>• Obj 2.1 (text amendment changes) - Can help gather feedback from local businesses/residents</li> </ul>

WHO	ACTION
Robin Kyle	What should we do over the next six months? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage on vacant lots encouraging residents to get in touch with Homegrown to turn it into community gardens</li> </ul> What role am I willing to play? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am going to tour Will Allen’s Milwaukee farm this month. I will repost back on what I learn.</li> </ul>
Mallory Morken	What should we do over the next six months? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediately engage the native community to be a true partner from the beginning – honoring that this is indigenous land that has been stolen. What does “land access” mean? I’m sure we will hear a very different answer from the usual urban ag crowd. Native leaders need to be engaged, we need to take direction from them and act alongside them.</li> <li>• Ideas - Indian Health Board, other Native orgs who have a health/wellness component or economic development component. But more than just programmatic partners, we need to partner with the elder cultural leaders – this is about history, ethics, spirituality, etc. decolonization.</li> </ul> <p>“Nothing done for us without us is... us”</p>
Charley Underwood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Idea: To SUSTAG &amp; COMGAR in (maybe) February ask the question “Where did you get that land?”               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owned/leased/free/public/private community garden/CSA????</li> <li>• What sort of farming?</li> <li>• Problems? Water? Sales? Soil?</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Database for vacant land: Click to get – owner, tax records</li> </ol>
Elliott Altbaum	Encourage production on <b>park land</b> . Work performed by park employees
Jim Bovino	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Given the identified goals and objectives, what should we do over the next six months?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to reach out to other individuals and organizations potentially or actively interested in urban ag;</li> <li>• Convene individuals already involved in farming private land to provide insight into how individuals and groups might access private land: develop process model(s) in collaboration with those interested parties currently without access to land with a goal to increase food production/access throughout the city;</li> <li>• Identify areas within the city with least access to fresh, healthy food. Reach out to individuals and organizations in those communities in order to engage interested parties in this process;</li> <li>• Explore ways to engage directly with neighborhood organizations with the objective of empowering these entities to facilitate land access within neighborhoods, distribute produce, and train next generation of urban farmers with the objective of decentralizing our food system/decreasing dependency on outside actors for our food.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. What role am I willing to play?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to reach out to community members not yet engaged in the process;</li> <li>• Research other urban models for public land access/urban ag;</li> <li>• Engage community members already involved in urban ag or community gardening to provide insight/feedback to group on changes to current urban ag text amendment;</li> <li>• Help to flesh out land access process model by engaging and attempting to convene folks looking for land and those that have successfully access private land.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

WHO	ACTION
Alison Rotel	<p><u>Overarching:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Do outreach to expand and diversify membership in the working group</li> <li>2. Take the group's questions and ideas to already existing convenings of priority stakeholder groups for their consideration and advice.</li> <li>3. Host at least one potluck this fall as part of the monthly working group meetings.</li> </ol> <p><u>Proposed action steps for Goal 1:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research innovative and successful city-wide land access models from other cities that have developed processes for accessing public and private land</li> <li>2. Host session(s) with stakeholders to get feedback on the various models</li> <li>3. Based on what we learn, the working group would craft recommendations to bring to the Homegrown Food Council</li> </ol> <p><u>Proposed action steps for Goal 2:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Solicit practical input from members of the community engaged in food production and other interested stakeholders by convening a listening session in the fall (after the end of the growing season) to identify barriers to food production that may be addressed by changes to the text amendments.</li> <li>2. Based on the feedback received, the working group would work with Cam and Robin to craft language to be brought to the Homegrown Food Council, and ultimately to City Council.</li> </ol>

**Who are you willing to contact before the next meeting?**

GRASSROOTS	Name
<b>Community members:</b>	
Those who live next to or near the lots in individual neighborhoods	Isaac
Low-income folks and people of color (P.O.C.)	Isaac
Immigrant groups, esp. non-English speakers	Isaac
<b>Culturally specific organizations/Key leaders:</b>	
40 <sup>th</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Coalition Garden	Deborah
AfroEco	
CAPI	Alison
Center(?) School	Deborah
CLUES	Alison
Dream of Wild Health	Deborah
Elder cultural leaders	Mallory
Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA)	Jim
Indian Health Board	Mallory
Jardin Paraiso	Deborah
Little Earth	
Native orgs who have a health/wellness component or econ. dvlp component	Mallory
Tamales y Bicicletas	Deborah
Zenteotl Project	Deborah
<b>Faith organizations</b>	
<b>Neighborhood Organizations</b> (e.g. Central and some others who have special interest in urban ag.)	
Central neighborhood organizer	Alison
<b>Non-profits/coalitions/advisory boards/other:</b>	

Appetite for Change	Alison
CEAC (Citizens Environmental Advisory Council?)	Russ
Center for Earth Energy and Democracy	Isaac
Community Table	Laura
Gardening Matters	Russ
Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council members	Alison
Hope Communities, Inc.	Jim
McKinley CSA	Jim
Neighborhoods Organizing for Change	Isaac
Northside Fresh	Jim
Pillsbury United Communities – Waite House	Alison
Twin Cities Agricultural Land Trust	Jim
Urban Farmers’ Collaborative	Russ
<b>Schools</b>	
<b>GRASSTOPS</b>	
<b>Elected officials</b> (current and candidates for elected office, including Mayor, City Council, Parks Board, State legislators, etc.)	
<b>City departments:</b>	
Minneapolis Animal Control	
Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB)	Jim
Minneapolis Public Housing Authority (MPHA)	Alison
Minneapolis Public Works (water)	
Minneapolis Health Department	Alison