MEETING NOTES
4/17/13 Homegrown Minneapolis Urban Agriculture/Land Access Working Group

Introductions (22 people; contact list attached)

There was brief context setting, including an acknowledgement that the wording of the two goals needs to be refined at a future meeting.

The facilitator explained the mix/max activity. People were encouraged to review and consider the brainstorming related to Urban Agriculture/Land Access from the full food council meeting on 3/20/13 (attached) and the notes from the first brief meeting of the working group that was part of the last full food council meeting (attached) as they answered three questions on flip chart paper around the room (questions are below in bold). People were given markers, and encouraged to discuss the questions with others as they waited for their turn to write their responses.

Following the activity, the facilitator asked people for their observations about what people had written. The notes below are from that large group discussion. (The input provided on the flip chart paper will be typed up and distributed later.)

What are the most important outcomes that our work associated with land access and urban agriculture should accomplish?

- There are a lot of barriers that need to be addressed.
- Process: Need for an outcome to prove the case (building the case for economic and civic benefits, also more generally) Why does urban ag get this and not other businesses? Best use of city owned land, etc.
- We need the council members and the general public. There may be opposition in some neighborhoods.
- We all want access to more land, so we need to think creatively about what land is out there (schools, public housing, churches, park lands, etc.) There is land (ex: empty lots), how do we access it? Clear inventory about available land base.
- Residents around available land are involved, employed, farming, accessing food that is grown. They should derive benefit from this. Need wholistic approach to keeping resources in the community.
- Developing a system to determine who has access to the land. Are they competing or coordinating the effort? Ex: First right of refusal goes to this group, then the next group, etc. We want to avoid conflict around land. Outreach needs to happen in multiple languages.
- There is a very long list of stuff to do. Need to figure out the timing of things (2013, 2014, 2015). We need a common understanding of what we are going to work on this year.
- What's in the way for anybody who wants to do this? Barriers to urban farmers are barriers for everyone who wants to grow.

- We need resources in multiple languages (how to start a garden, the clear steps, etc.) for community gardens and urban farms. Families who want to grow for themselves or for profit.
- Contextual – what do we want to accomplish overall? (This is the first order of business.)
- Logistic – these are the things we need to get out of the way
- There needs to be prioritizing. Farmers – some things need to happen sooner rather than later. There needs to be a bigger framework

NEXT STEPS: Group by themes (clean it up a bit). At a future meeting discuss: What is missing? What questions do people still have? What additional information is needed to make the case? Prioritize. Determine timing (factoring in the election this fall).

Who are the groups and individuals we should connect with beyond the listserv who would like to have input into the plan for urban agriculture and land access?

- We reviewed and added to the list.
- Need to target groups based on the specific initiatives we select.
- Who are we not communicating with that want access to land to grow food? How do we engage them?
- We have a sense of who, but need to get clear on why and when.

NEXT STEPS: At the next meeting, discuss: What is the purpose and process for reaching out? Is it to get input, ideas, ask for help, etc.? Who will do what and when?

What are the steps involved with developing and administering the survey around land access and urban agriculture to the Homegrown Minneapolis listserv?

- Use the TCALT (Twin Cities Agricultural Land Trust) survey of growers as a foundation. It is currently in the field and results will be shared at the May food council meeting. Use their survey instrument and modify/add to it.
- Moving things this year is really important. We are moving on some stuff, and for some things we shouldn't wait for the survey.
- Originally, the proposed purpose for the survey was to gage people's energy level on working on the various objectives and ask them which issues they would like to work on and how.
- A survey to the Homegrown listserv is not that hard to do and is an easy way to get input from a large number of people.
- A survey isn't just mining for information, but it also a way to engage people.

NEXT STEPS: At the next meeting, discuss: What is it we would like to learn from relevant stakeholders? Then, pick the method (survey or other method).

Policy endorsements

- Following the large group discussion of the three above questions, members of the working group presented two recommended policy positions related to water access for urban farms and market gardens and farm stand regulations for community gardens, urban farms and market gardens.
- Notes from the discussion:

    - Access to water and change rules related to farm stands
    - Later, 1-2 years, a credit program via changing storm water credit program.
    - How does using drinkable water affect storm water? Gayle would want to see the science.
    - Urban farms and community gardens soak up water and prevent run off.
    - Peggy has done research on this.
    - Aggregation of food from multiple sites operated within Minneapolis by the same entity should be allowed.
- After discussion and amendments, the group voted on each and approved them to bring forward at the food council meeting following the working group meeting. If approved by the full council, once the ordinance or policy language is drafted it will come back to the working group for vetting and input.
- There was agreement that that process needs to be more transparent, with an opportunity for more discussion and to engage more people.

Art Serotoff, Laura Goetsch and Isaac Martin volunteered to schedule, plan and facilitate the next working group meeting.

After the meeting adjourned, Rudy Alvarez shared that there is a church at 1st Ave. and 39th St. where we could hold the next meeting.