



Request for City Council Committee Action From the City Coordinators Office

Date: February 23, 2015

To: Honorable Cam Gordon, Chair, Health, Environment and Community Engagement Committee

Subject: 2014 Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council Third Annual Report

Recommendation: Receive and File

Previous Directives: September 2, 2011 Resolution 2011R-445 creating the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council and directing an annual report on work completed and the upcoming year's work plan.

Department Information:

Prepared by: Tamara Downs Schwei, Homegrown Minneapolis/Local Food Policy Coordinator

Approved by: Spencer Cronk, City Coordinator *sc*

Presenters in Committee: Tamara Downs Schwei and Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council Co-chairs Russ Henry and Omari Chatman

Financial Impact: No financial impact.

Background:

The Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council was established by 2011R-445 as a permanent body for the City of Minneapolis to serve as a nexus of citywide food related efforts. The purpose of the Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council is to:

- Advise the Mayor, City Council, and Park Board on food system related opportunities and challenges;
- Develop innovative policies and strategies to improve the growing, processing, promotion, distribution, consumption and composting of healthy, sustainable, locally grown foods in Minneapolis;
- Provide technical expertise and recommendations in the ongoing development of the City's Local Food sustainability targets;
- Advance the food system in directions that are health promoting, environmentally sustainable, local, resilient, inclusive, equitable, fair and transparent;
- Assist in development, implementation, and evaluation of Homegrown Minneapolis recommendations; and, where necessary, convene additional expertise to innovate around challenges;
- Support, participate and provide leadership in development of regional food system work;

- Assist with opportunities to celebrate food and its role in strengthening the connections of Minneapolis' many communities and cultures.

The Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council is comprised of 21 members and includes participation of 15 community members and six City staff and elected representatives, a co-ownership model proven to be effective for moving food system work forward. City representation includes a representative from: Health; Community Planning and Economic Development; Environmental Services, Sustainability; Mayor's Office; and, a City Council Member or City Council staff. 2014 was the first year of the second two-year term for the Food Council. New Food Council Co-Chairs Russ Henry and Omari Chatman took the helm in 2014 from the 2012-2013 Co-Chairs, Mustafa Sundiata and Beth Dooley. 2014 also saw a transition from a part-time consultant and Center for Disease Control Fellow supporting the work to a full-time staff hired coordinating the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative and Food Council work.

During 2014, Minneapolis boasted:

- More than 243 community gardens, including more than 30 community gardens leasing space on City lots. Community gardens have grown in number every year and nearly all are at capacity, providing opportunities to more than 5,500 youth and adult gardeners.
- Four local food resource hubs that served approximately 700 gardeners by providing seeds, plants and technical assistance, in partnership with Gardening Matters, with funding via the Health Department.
- 71 community gardens that incorporated more than 600 cubic yards of compost into their gardens through the City's free/reduced price compost program.
- Nearly 20 urban farms that produced vegetables, fruit, mushrooms, honey, fish and more.
- 29 farmers markets and mini-markets. All but one accepted federal food assistance (EBT/SNAP). Our farmers markets are an important economic marketplace, serving many thousands of people each week during the growing season.
- Three Minneapolis incubator kitchens helped launch numerous new food businesses, including food products, food trucks and caterers.
- Minneapolis' four food co-op grocery stores were all in growth mode, at which approximately 30% of annual sales were from local products, including Minneapolis producers.
- The City also boasted permits for more than 70 food trucks, more than 50 beehives and more than 265 chicken coops.

2014 Highlights:

- Partnered with the Health Department to increase the availability of healthy food in Minneapolis stores that accept federal food assistance (EBT/SNAP) by supporting amendments to the Minneapolis Staple Foods Ordinance.
- Helped increase locations where healthy food is sold by supporting passage of amendments to create the new Minneapolis Mobile Food Stores Ordinance.
- Supported passage of amendments to City farmstand regulations, allowing for additional farmstand sale days, signage and time for sales, increasing local growers' sales potential.
- Removed barriers to beekeeping by supporting an amendment to the Minneapolis beekeeping ordinance.
- Developed a list of food hubs in the Twin Cities area (defined as a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products.)

- Conducted interviews with 18 of 24 identified hubs/projects, including over 30 metrics on hubs operations.
- Hosted a community open house; engaged about 250 people and 20 organizational partners.
 - Supported expansion of the Karamu Garden in North Minneapolis by helping procure a grant through the United States Conference of Mayors.
 - Facilitated conversations about healthy food, land access, food justice and pollinators and represented Homegrown Minneapolis at numerous community events, in partnership with numerous community organizations.
 - Supported development and adoption of Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Urban Agriculture Activity Plan.
 - Supported state legislation requiring accurate labeling of bee friendly plants and seeds and compensation to beekeepers that lose bees due to pesticide application.
 - Supported state legislation enabling farmers market vendors to more easily provide food samples and removed other regulatory barriers such as operational day limits.
 - Coordinated with local cities/counties to successfully testify before administrative law judge regarding changes to Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's compost facilities regulations.
 - Distributed Homegrown Minneapolis monthly newsletter to over 1800 people, refreshed the Homegrown Minneapolis website and launched the new Friends of Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council Facebook page.

2015 Potential Activities:

- Work with policy makers, staff and stakeholders to engage community and support movement of policy changes related to
 - urban farm/community garden scale compost permits;
 - chicken/fowl permits and regulations;
 - food processing regulations;
 - equitable access to land for community gardens, market gardens and urban farms.
- Report results of food hub survey and foster connections between Twin Cities food hubs.
- Continue to partner with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board on the implementation of their Urban Agriculture Activity Plan, including ordinance changes and policy development.
- Advocate for revisions to Minnesota Seed Law as implemented by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, to allow for operation of seed libraries and interpersonal seed sharing.

Cc: Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council members

Attachments: 2014-2015 Homegrown Minneapolis Food Council roster, 2014 Homegrown Minneapolis Highlights