

Homegrown Minneapolis

Community Meeting Agenda and Minutes
December 9, 2010 5:30-7:30 p.m.
Urban Research and Outreach Center
2001 Plymouth Avenue North, Minneapolis

Agenda

- *Welcome – R.T. Rybak, Mayor*
- *History of Homegrown Minneapolis – Megan O’Hara*
- *What’s Next? - Cam Gordon, Council Member*
- *Urban Ag Policy Plan Overview – Amanda Arnold*
- *Breakout Sessions*
 - 1) *Urban Ag Policy Plan – Amanda Arnold*
 - 2) *Local Food Resource and Food Preservation Networks – Ana Micka and Nadja Berneche*
 - 3) *Local Food Policy Entity – Julie Ristau*
 - 4) *Pilot Business Development Center - Bob Lind*

Minutes

Mayor R.T. Rybak welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted the importance of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative. Seventy-two people signed in to the meeting and everyone in the room introduced themselves.

Megan O’Hara provided an overview of the work that’s been done through the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative recognizing it has been a unique City-community partnership to work on strategies that will increase and improve the growing, processing, distributing, consumption and waste management of healthy, sustainable, locally grown foods. She further noted that this work is about our quality of life and focuses on our community’s health and well being, our region’s economy and our planet’s sustainability.

Ms. O’Hara recognized some of Homegrown’s accomplishments including the completion of the draft Urban Ag Policy Plan (that is now available for public comment through January 31, 2011); community garden process improvements; the expansion of EBT into farmers markets; the completion of the community kitchen inventory; completion of a small business training and financing inventory; and the establishment of the two new networks in the City – the Local Food Resource Network and the Food Preservation Network. www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/FINAL_HGReport.pdf

Council Member Cam Gordon provided a forward looking view of Homegrown Minneapolis by talking about next steps and the coming year. He highlighted development of the Homegrown Business Development Center and the strategic planning process underway to establish a city local food policy council after the current phase two efforts come to a close in July of 2011. He also anticipated that

Homegrown Minneapolis efforts will continue to grow and new projects evolve as people across the city join in on this effort to help upgrade our food system to meet the needs and concerns of today.

Amanda Arnold, Community Planning and Economic Development Department at the City, provided a presentation summarizing the highlights of the urban agriculture policy plan that was released today for public comment. The public comment period ends January 31st and two public comment periods will be held in January 2011. www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/news/20101210UrbanAgPolicyCmnt.asp

Breakout Sessions

1) Urban Agriculture Plan

Facilitators: Robin Garwood & Amanda Arnold

Robin Garwood facilitated introductions, encouraged all participants to let other people know about the plan and to submit comments to Amanda after they have had time to review the content of the plan. Amanda provided some additional information about the plan (following the large group presentation) and opened the discussion with the following questions:

- What questions do you have about the plan in general now that you've seen the presentation?
- Does it seem like the recommendations further the goals outlined in the Homegrown Minneapolis effort?
- As the recommendations move forward for adoption and implementation what should we consider?

The discussion included the following:

- *How specific is the plan? Does the plan include specific recommendations for a range of uses and structures (mushroom farming, aquaculture, raised planning beds, hop houses). Are there recommendations around growing and selling commercially?*
Amanda and Robin provide some examples of the level of specificity and that more details are worked out through the recommended text amendments. The group discussed the way the plan groups uses, commercial growing versus community gardens/growing for personal consumption.
- *Does the plan discuss a u-pick operation?*
One person suggested that u-pick operations are already established in St. Paul and that the plan should include something about this type of activity. There was some discussion about whether this is a use that would only happen on a larger scale (urban farm) or if this is something that might be accessory to a market garden.
- *Mobile vending? Does the plan discuss mobile vending/food selling operations? Selling vegetables from bicycles?*
Robin discussed some work that has happened in downtown through business licensing around Mobile Vending separate from the Urban Ag planning efforts.
- *Does the plan include information/policy about chickens and other animals? Is there a recommendation about lowering permit costs for chickens?*
Amanda went over what is included in the plan related to animals; this includes a recommendation that CPED should work with animal control in the future. Animal regulations are outside of the purview of this plan and the role of CPED, but could be part of future Homegrown efforts.
- *Businesses create from waste generated from ag related uses (i.e. turning fish waste into compost)*
The plan does not address waste related businesses. However, there is a recommendation about Anaerobic Digesters. The participant was encouraged to submit more details about the types of businesses they are referring to and recommendations about where they fit in terms of land uses in

the City and what types of changes to existing regulations could be included in the plan. Waste management related activity is another area beyond the scope of CPED but could be pursued as part of future Homegrown Minneapolis efforts.

- *Will the plan provide legal protection for people participating in programs that conflict with federal food safety laws?*
A participant brought up an issue with differences between state/local/federal regulations. She was encouraged to provide Amanda with more information about the programs she was referring too. The current draft does not touch on this subject.
- *Do we anticipate public or political opposition? Is there anything stakeholders should do to support the efforts?*
Amanda and Robin described the upcoming events and public hearings leading to a final action by the City Council and the steps to follow (e.g. text amendments).
- *Discussion about un-developable versus un-buildable lots. Who decides whether or not a parcel is un-developable?*
There was a discussion about the way decisions are made about selling city-owned parcels for community gardens and other urban agriculture uses. Amanda went over the recommendations about including criteria for the sale of land for growing or open space.
- *Does the plan address composting? Is there a recommendation about dedicating land for community composting at the neighborhood level?*
Robin provided information about the composting pilot program going on in the City.
- *Is there an effort to use land on church sites or other excess land? Is the land capacity analysis available?*
Amanda summarized the main findings from the land capacity analysis and pointed people towards the appendices to the draft plan. Greg Goeke from public works provided information about liability issues.

2) Local Food Resource Network (LFRN) and Food Preservation Networks (FPN)

Facilitators: Nadja Berneche and Ana Micka

The following thoughts and questions were articulated in a discussion of the LFRN and FPN networks evolving in the city:

- Advertise opportunities to donate canning and other food preservation resources on the FPN website. People have useable canning supplies that they want to donate.
- Link Neighborhood Association classes/resources to the LFRN (Corcoran Association is an example).
- Allow community groups to post blog entries on LFRN website about urban ag happenings.
- The hubs need a better name—how about using a name that describes a “constellation of resources.”
- How can we tap into the U’s expertise—Maggie Adamek offered to connect us. There is interest in research collaboration with University on topics such as vertical urban agriculture.
- Will hubs help with soil testing and remediation? How will community kitchens plug into the LFRN?
- The compostadores (volunteer compost group) need to be plugged into the LFRN.

- The LFRN should connect with the EXCO program.
- LFRN should tap into business community (Bachman's, Bailey Nursery, etc) for product donations and resources.

3) Local Food Policy Entity

Facilitator: Julie Ristau

Julie Ristau provided background on the efforts of the Local Food Policy Entity Working Group that has been meeting for over a year to research existing food policy council models and explore potential options for a Minneapolis food policy council for the third phase of Homegrown Minneapolis. The Working Group's charge stemmed from two recommendations that came out of the first phase of Homegrown Minneapolis. The first charge was to carry out the research that could help chart future work - particularly focused on ways to build structure for the ongoing food system work - and the second charge was to expand the community that is involved in Homegrown Minneapolis.

Julie noted that the Homegrown Minneapolis process has been unique in terms of its grounding in the grassroots. Two years of work have in essence established the baseline network and relationships that continue to grow and will undoubtedly inform and support the work of a formal food policy council. Julie also discussed how a parallel effort in the community has been moving forward around the development of a regional food policy council and this effort can contribute to informing and galvanizing that effort.

Three visioning questions were posed to the group of 25-30 people to consider for discussion:

- 1) What purpose would a Minneapolis Food Policy Council serve and with what tasks would it be charged?
- 2) How could a Minneapolis Food Policy Council be designed to effectively address this purpose and its tasks?
- 3) What characteristics or skill sets should be sought out in recruiting people to serve on it?

Some of the comments that emerged included the following:

- History is important and we need to remember that some of Minneapolis was once farmland. In north Minneapolis, there is memory and mistrust of institutions so this effort needs to really reflect the community's input and will. There is a desire of people to participate in community and be able to take care of their families. Food is our common connector.
- Homegrown Minneapolis feels different than past programs – Homegrown is coming from the people to the government and the partnership that has been created has been unique.
- People who know the history of the food movement and have been involved in the Homegrown Minneapolis efforts need to continue to be included.
- Issues around race and class need to be addressed through the work.
- This work needs to continue to tap into real people and with real knowledge of the issues.
- The network and engagement needed for this work exists that tells us real needs are being met.
- There are people and populations in our city that have not had much say about the kinds of foods that are available to them. We need to educate people more about nutrition and its connection to disease.

- We need more programs in schools to create awareness with kids about eating healthy, local foods.
- The USDA currently requires a food policy council to exist in an area for entities to be able to receive their community-based program funding, so having a food policy council opens up more funding options for the community. It also demonstrates how the local foods movement is rising on the federal agenda.
- We need to move this work from traditional focus groups to other methods of learning, sharing and getting work done, creating more informal and fun party-type opportunities.
- The excellent promotora model is an engagement model that could be incorporated into the Homegrown work. Someone noted that some aspects of Homegrown already operate or are being structured similarly to the spirit of that model.
- The effort needs to have a solid connection to rural growers and St. Paul communities and ways to connect with other food policy entities.
- There is a need for a regional multi-jurisdiction food policy body and a local Minneapolis food policy council.
- The body needs to think of themselves as ambassadors. People with good communication skills are necessary to reach across diverse audiences.
- Faith-based entities have networks and understand how to reach out to get people involved and communicating. They could be more fully brought into this work.
- We need to think about how to bring big corporations to the table too as they have power and control to a large extent the current food system.
- It's important that we structure this work in a way that's sustainable.
- The meetings need to be open to the public to attend. There also needs to be a meaningful way for others to engage with a food policy council as non-official members, maybe through the subcommittees.
- It's important to find ways to increase the community's knowledge of new food safety legislation.
- It would be great if service learning opportunities through high schools and universities were opened up through this work as a vehicle for communication education.
- We are losing the experience and wisdom of elders and the connections between youth and elders – creating opportunities for their involvement and engagement in this work is important.
- We should think about creating the equivalent of school site councils with this work.
- It's important to consider how successful the leadership model of working groups has been in this effort – second phase working groups have been typically chaired by a council member, City staff person and a community member and first phase subcommittees were chaired by a community member and City staff person.

4) Pilot Homegrown Minneapolis Business Center

*Facilitator: **Bob Lind***

Bob Lind led a discussion and answered questions about the development of a new Homegrown Minneapolis Business Center being developed by the City's Planning Department in an effort to promote the local food economy and foster the development and expansion of businesses that promote sustainable agriculture and food production within Minneapolis and the surrounding region. The Center will provide financing and technical assistance to Minneapolis-based businesses that process and manufacture local food products. Loans of up to \$10,000 will be available for business projects that involve the production, distribution, marketing and manufacture of food products that include a minimum of one ingredient grown within approximately 200 miles of Minneapolis. It is proposed that Homegrown Business Development Center be launched on a pilot basis.