

Community Meeting

Monday, May 18, 2009

Martin Luther King Park Recreation Center

6:30pm – 8:30pm

Meeting Summary:

Total participants = ~40 (5 Steering Committee members, ~2 Stakeholder/Subcommittee members)

1. Welcome: Tri-chair, Julie Ristau, welcomed the group and gave a brief overview of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative including the mission, organizational structure, timeline, and partners involved. She introduced the evening's facilitator, Elsa Batica.

2. Interactive Dialogue about Healthy Food in Minneapolis (Facilitated by Elsa Batica):

Participants were asked to introduce themselves by giving their name, which neighborhood they lived in, and a response to the question **“How do you find healthy foods in Minneapolis?”**

Summary of responses*

- Farmers' markets: 20 responses (Midtown, Global Market, Kingfield, Seward, Linden Hills, Wedge were mentioned by name)
- Co-ops: 27
- Grocery stores (Cub, Byerly's, Lunds, Kowalski's were mentioned by name): 11
- Convenience/corner stores: 1
- Community garden: 4
- Backyard garden: 19
- Home canning/preservation: 0
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): 9
- Local restaurants: 1
- Other (directly from farmers, barter, etc): 4

**participants were allowed to share multiple responses to this question*

Participants were also given the opportunity to share their thoughts on a second question **“What would you need to help you grow, eat, and buy healthy foods in the city?”**

Summary of responses

- Allow vacant lots and foreclosed properties to be used for community gardens and to grow food (for personal use, to donate to food shelves, for sale at market, etc)
- Remove insurance barrier – allow people who want to garden the opportunity to sign a waiver that releases the City from liability
- Be a leader in the areas of soil remediation and composting of food waste
 - Provide a compost system (central location or at the neighborhood level) including curb-side composting program or empower residents to do their own composting
 - Provide clean soil and compost for community gardens
- Allow for and teach people how to build hoopouses and greenhouses
- Establish a better labeling system for local foods (where does it come from, is it sustainably grown, etc?)
- Ban cosmetic pesticides (those used for optional purposes, like weed killers)
- Support youth agricultural programs and youth gardens
- Provide educational opportunities like workshops taught by successful urban gardeners so that residents can learn from each other

- Compile information about all existing local foods/urban ag efforts and try to coordinate with them to avoid duplication of services
- Help gardeners connect with available land (land matching service)
- Offer grant programs to help low-income families start community gardens (funding to cover soil, tools, seeds, water, etc)
- Direct funding for local foods jobs/green jobs to low-income areas
- Use boulevards for planting fruit trees, perennials
- Get healthy foods into school lunches, encourage school gardens
- Encourage political leaders to support the identity of Minneapolis as a local foods city
- Help overcome language barriers in immigrant communities (provide educational materials in multiple languages, interpreters, etc)
- Work with MPRB to encourage community gardens on park land

Throughout the course of the conversation, participants also discussed barriers to accessing healthy, local food; existing resources; and ideas for improving the local food system. These ideas were similar to those brought up in the first community meeting.

Summary of responses

- Affordability - Organic food, healthy foods (fresh fruits and vegetables) are expensive
- Education - People don't know how to cook fresh, whole foods or what to do with the foods that are available at the farmers' markets
- Accessibility
 - Lack of grocery stores in the area and inconvenient to get to stores in other areas
 - Lack of healthy foods in grocery and corner stores that *are* nearby
- Convenience
 - Fast foods and packaged foods are more convenient
- Culture – there is a language barrier at farmers' markets (can't ask if they have used sustainable practices or how they grow their food – no common labeling)
- Lack of sustainability for gardening efforts (community gardens do great in the beginning then die out)
- Land access for community gardens (zoning code is prohibitive – some land is zoned residential that could be used for community gardens)

3. Discussion of Draft Recommendations: Tri-chair, Megan O'Hara, presented a summary of the Homegrown Minneapolis draft recommendations. There are 6 broad recommendations with sub-recommendations that provide more details and guidance. Participants were asked to offer comments based on the following questions: **“Out of these recommendations, what matters most to you?”** and **“What’s missing from these recommendations?”**

Summary of responses

- Need to address the issue of food security – what happens if the traditional food pipeline shuts down? Teach sustainability, empower residents to provide for themselves, encourage food preparedness at all levels
- Use this initiative to promote and partner with other organizations who are doing this work (ex. Twin Cities Urban Ag Connection – tcurbanag.org)
- Education is key – the City should provide educational opportunities to residents who want to grow and preserve more of their own food
- Urban-rural connection is a key component

4. Next Steps and Opportunities for Involvement: Homegrown Minneapolis coordinator, Kristen Klingler, explained next steps for the initiative.

- All comments from a) the stakeholder group meeting, b) Homegrown Minneapolis website, c) two public meetings, and d) various City and community advisory groups will be compiled and discussed by the Steering Committee in order to further refine the recommendations and develop a final report which will be presented to the Mayor and the Health, Energy, and Environment Committee of City Council in June. All specific subcommittee recommendations will be included in the final report (as appendices) along with the broader

recommendations presented in the draft document. We will ask City Council to pass a resolution supporting the local foods movement and directing specific City departments to begin implementing recommendations from the report.

- Interested community residents can continue to be engaged in the following ways:
 - Comment on the draft recommendations via the Homegrown Minneapolis website through May 31st.
 - Sign up for the Homegrown Minneapolis email directory to receive updates and announcements.
 - Continue to check the Homegrown Minneapolis website (<http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp>) for updates, the final report, and other important information.
 - Call, write, or meet with your City Council representative to advocate for Homegrown Minneapolis and local foods efforts. Talking points will be generated and distributed for our partners' convenience.
 - Attend City Council public hearings (more details to follow on the website) to voice support for Homegrown Minneapolis and local foods efforts.

5. **Wrap up:** Participants were given the opportunity to ask any remaining questions, voice any concerns, or offer additional suggestions in writing or verbally.

Food provided by Cub Foods in North Minneapolis (701 W Broadway Ave)
Coffee donated by Peace Coffee (www.peacecoffee.com)

Community Meeting

Tuesday, May 12, 2009

North Commons Park Recreation Center

6:30pm – 8:30pm

Meeting Summary:

Total participants = ~35 (7 Steering Committee members, ~4 Stakeholder/Subcommittee members)

1. Welcome: Tri-chair, Megan O’Hara, welcomed the group and gave a brief overview of the Homegrown Minneapolis initiative including the mission, organizational structure, timeline, and partners involved. She introduced the evening’s facilitator, Claudia Fuentes (City of Minneapolis Mayor’s Office).

2. Interactive Dialogue about Healthy Food in Minneapolis (Facilitated by Claudia Fuentes): Participants were asked to introduce themselves by giving their name, which neighborhood they lived in, and a response to the question **“How do you find healthy foods in Minneapolis?”**

Summary of responses*

Farmers’ markets: 14 responses

Co-ops: 15

Grocery stores (Cub, Rainbow, Whole Foods, Trader Joes were mentioned by name): 10

Convenience/corner stores: 0

Community garden: 1

Backyard garden: 13

Home canning/preservation: 2

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA): 3

Local restaurants: 1

**participants were allowed to share multiple responses to this question*

Participants were also given the opportunity to share their thoughts on a second question **“What would you need to help you grow, eat, and buy healthy foods in the city?”**

Summary of responses

- Establish distribution sites and/or buying clubs at schools, churches, community centers
- Help foster a sense of ownership in the community for local foods ventures (like a co-op)
- Help start school gardens (help with insurance, get kids involved)
- Create policy that prioritizes vacant land for food production (especially for youth)
- Emphasize permanency of community gardens
- Work with and encourage residents who want to do food production and SEUA (many people at this meeting expressed frustrations re: dealing with the City about this)
- Help convenience stores sell produce and healthy foods
- Provide land for food production in the city so that residents don't have to drive to the suburbs
- If the City is paying for mowing and other maintenance of vacant or foreclosed properties, they should think about putting that money toward paying a farmer to come in and garden or helping neighbors handle start up costs of a community garden
- Provide a more supportive regulatory environment for starting new food-related businesses
- Establish more community gardens in North Minneapolis
- Establish a warehouse on the Northside – food wholesaler for residents or businesses who want to purchase bulk food items

- Allow vacant lots and foreclosed properties to be used for community gardens and to grow food (for personal use, to donate to food shelves, for sale at market, etc)
- Remove insurance barrier – allow people who want to garden the opportunity to sign a waiver that releases the City from liability
- Support youth agricultural programs and youth gardens
- Use boulevards for planting fruit trees, perennials

Throughout the course of the conversation, participants also discussed barriers to accessing healthy, local food; existing resources; and ideas for improving the local food system

Summary of responses

- Affordability - Organic food, healthy foods (fresh fruits and vegetables) are expensive
- Education - People don't know how to cook fresh, whole foods
 - People need to taste fresh, healthy foods so that they understand how good they are
- Accessibility
 - Lack of grocery stores in the area and inconvenient to get to stores in other areas
 - Lack of healthy foods in grocery and corner stores that *are* nearby
 - Convenience stores sell “stuff” not food
 - No place for employees in North Mpls to get fresh, healthy foods while at work
- Convenience
 - Fast foods and packaged foods are more convenient, especially for single parents
- Safety
 - Good idea to put grocery stores in low-income areas but how do you make them safe?
- Culture – markets and grocery stores and other food outlets aren't necessarily representative of the populations they are supposed to serve
- Land access for community gardens - Residents don't understand how to start community gardens or work with the City and they are getting different responses from different parts of the City government

3. Discussion of Draft Recommendations: Tri-chair, Stella Whitney-West, presented a summary of the Homegrown Minneapolis draft recommendations. There are 6 broad recommendations with sub-recommendations that provide more details and guidance. Community members reviewed a summary handout that distilled the draft recommendations down into simple statements. Participants were asked to offer comments based on the following questions: **“Out of these recommendations, what matters most to you?”** and **“What’s missing from these recommendations?”**

Summary of responses

- Recommendation 2 is very important to many in this audience, especially small business owners who are trying to be successful in a challenging regulatory environment
- Good organization of the recommendations – they seem to follow and build on one another
- Residents want to get back to growing – sense of pride and empowerment
- Recommendations are great but the City needs to follow up with resources to implement them – Urban Agriculture needs to be a City budget item
- If the City contributes funding and resources to start this movement, the community will follow
- Education is key – the City should provide educational opportunities to residents who want to grow and preserve more of their own food

4. Next Steps and Opportunities for Involvement: Homegrown Minneapolis coordinator, Kristen Klingler, explained next steps for the initiative.

- All comments from a) the stakeholder group meeting, b) Homegrown Minneapolis website, c) two public meetings, and d) various City and community advisory groups will be compiled and discussed by the Steering Committee in order to further refine the recommendations and develop a final report which will

be presented to the Mayor and the Health, Energy, and Environment Committee of City Council in June. All specific subcommittee recommendations will be included in the final report (as appendices) along with the broader recommendations presented in the draft document. We will ask City Council to pass a resolution supporting the local foods movement and directing specific City departments to begin implementing recommendations from the report.

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