

**Homegrown Minneapolis**  
**Subcommittee on Community, School and Backyard Gardens**  
**Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009 from 8:30-10:30 a.m.**  
**Currie Avenue Conference Center**

**Attendance:** Martin Adams, Jennifer Blecha, Kaitlin Busse-Wolfgram, Fred Dietrichs, Jesse Eustis, Jerry Foley, Stephanie Hankerson, Jim Howitt, Clyde Kane, Dianna Kennedy, Cara Letofsky, June Mathiowetz, Julie McGuire, Devin Quince, Susan Reed, Jennifer Ringgold, Carl Rosen, Kirsten Saylor, Terry Straub, Georgianna Yantos

**1. Introductions and Update**

Everyone introduced themselves and June Mathiowetz updated the group on the status of the recommendations and circulated a draft recommendations document.

**2. Guest Speaker on Soil Toxins**

Dr. Carl Rosen, a specialist on soil toxins from the University of Minnesota's Department of Soil, Water and Climate, spoke to the group for about ten minutes and then fielded twenty minutes of questions.

He reminded us that compost and organic matter helps to keep toxins out of plants. The healthier the soil, the less likely the plants are to draw in toxins. Healthy soils also have higher numbers of organisms that can work to break down toxins more quickly. Healthy nitrogen levels can help, and he noted that's why oil spills are often treated with nitrogen.

On the topic of lead, Dr. Rosen noted that the University of Minnesota's soil testing lab can not only test for the nutrients found in soil samples it is sent, it can also test for lead. He noted organic matter and compost help bind lead to keep plants from accessing it. Lead tends to be found near the top of soil and next to buildings, unless it has somehow been worked into the soil. Some plants accumulate more lead than others – leafy green crops and roots more so than fruits like tomatoes. If you have really high levels of lead in your soil, the Pollution Control Agency and Health Department can help you figure out the best approach to dealing with it.

He reminded us that organic compounds and today's herbicides – the most common herbicide being used is 2,4-d) - tend to degrade with time, many of them within a year. Others like dioxins tend to take 5-10 years to break down. Typically, herbicides are not typically found in manure, but antibiotics sometime are and these antibiotics can be detected in leaves of plants at very low levels. The greatest risks around soil toxins tend to center more around direct ingestion of soil by children and toxins left by treated wood (arsenic).

Dr. Rosen noted that A&L labs can do complete soil testing, but to test for all metals can cost upward \$1000. They also can measure other organic compounds but at a hefty price tag of \$1000-\$2000 per compound. They have also accessed a commercial lab connected with the University of Wisconsin to test soils for arsenic. It was also noted Hennepin County Environmental Services has provided some soil testing for gardening projects in the past like the Sabathani Community Center project.

**Minnesota Extension sheet by Carl Rosen on soil toxins:**  
[www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG2543.html](http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG2543.html)

**3. Recommendations Review**

The group spent the remainder of the time discussing the draft recommendations.

The meeting ended at 10:25 a.m.

**Homegrown Minneapolis**  
**Subcommittee on Community, School and Backyard Gardens**  
**Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from 8:30-10:30 a.m.**  
**North Point Health and Wellness Center**  
**1313 Penn Avenue North**

**Attendance:** Aliyah Ali, Martin Adams, Rebecca Bauman, Fred Dietrich, Tamara Downs-Schwei, Jerry Foley, Hilary Gebauer, Barb Grossman, Dianna Kennedy, Rob Luckow, June Mathiowetz, Jeremy McAdams, Julie McGuire, Amy Mondl, Edie Oates, Megan O'Hara, Mary Peterson, Gayle Prest, Susan Reed, Becky Rice, Julie Ristau, Kirsten Saylor, Terry Straub, Lara Tiede, Georgianna Yantos

## **1. Introductions**

The meeting began at 8:40 a.m. with everyone introducing themselves and making a few comments about their connection to gardening resources.

## **2. Current Backyard Gardening Resources**

Barb Grossman, Terry Straub, and Amie Mondl from the University of Minnesota Extension program were introduced and talked about current programs and resources related to backyard gardening.

Barb Grossman, Urban Operations Director, highlighted that 2009 is Minnesota Extension's 100th year anniversary and the Master Gardener program's 32nd year. Their work focuses on education and the practical application of University research-based information. Their primary funding comes from state and federal resources and from counties that decide to purchase certain services. Hennepin County has purchased specific services including youth development, leadership and civic engagement, Master Gardener program coordination, agriculture/environment education as well as a small portion of a nutrition education program within the County. Betsy Wieland, who has attended prior subcommittee meetings, is the Agriculture Extension Educator and has responsibility for the Farm Information line. If anyone has questions for her, she can be reached at 612-596-1175.

Terry Straub, Hennepin County Coordinator of the Master Gardeners program noted that there are currently 300 master gardeners in Hennepin County providing 13,000 hours of volunteer service each year. Master Gardeners often work with nonprofit and government entities. They also work with for-profit entities, but do so for a fee. The Master Gardeners are not a "workforce" in a manual labor sense; they serve primarily as transmitters of knowledge and education. The Master Gardeners program is aiming to put more edible garden information on their website. They are seeing an interest in fruit trees and even more interest in perennials for beautification.

One recent project on which Terry and the Master Gardeners have worked extensively is a community garden partnership with the Sabathani Community Center and Gardening Matters to grow vegetables and provide training. With Hennepin County Environmental Services, they were able to provide soil testing for the project. This program started in 2007 and now has 50 people signed up for its third year. A second project Terry has worked on was a pilot at Anwatin Middle School. There, two Master Gardeners adapted Junior Master Gardener curriculum activities to create a four week horticulture curriculum for the 2008 summer school session. Horticulture related activities such as composting, beneficial and pest insects, and soil texture and amendments were used to enhance math and science learning goals. Educators reported an increase in attendance on the days that Master Gardeners worked

with the group. Feedback from MPS staff was that they wish the program could be implemented at every school.

Master Gardeners also work extensively with libraries throughout the Metro area and are noticing increases in the numbers of people who want to learn how to garden. Further, they collaborate with Tree Trust on the City Trees program each year by volunteering and being available to answer questions during the 1000+ trees pickup that occurs over three days in May.

When asked about the potential of the program in the future, Terry commented that he thought there is capacity available to double the number of master gardeners in the future.

Lara Tiede asked about the diversity of the program. Terry noted it was an area they need to keep working on. Currently, there are more women than men. Age-wise, the program is attracting the full spectrum. Race/ethnicity-wise, they are still working on it and the Sabathani project was one of those efforts. Cost can be a barrier too. There is a \$200 fee for the program, although there are scholarships available. Location of the trainings can also be a barrier. The last one was held at the Minnesota Arboretum and was not a super-convenient location for City of Minneapolis residents. Next year's program (2010) will be at the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus.

When asked about the qualifications to become a master gardener, Terry explained that they are looking for folks with good communication skills. The core course is intensive 50 hours long and provides extensive training in how to find resources that a Master Gardener might need.

Amie Mondl, one of Hennepin County's two 4-H Coordinators, briefly described the 4-H youth development program noting that there are 16 community clubs and various school partnerships which provide youth leadership, learning and engagement opportunities. The clubs have a community-based structure and are supported best with parent and neighborhood involvement. One of the projects 4-H youths can be involved in is the Jr. Master Gardener program (it's a University of Texas certification). Amie would love to have a youth plot at the Queens Community Garden, which she coordinates.

Julie McGuire from City of Minneapolis Public Works noted the City's STEP UP program that provides summer youth with jobs and trains them for employment might be a good point of connection for her. [http://achievempls.org/whatwedo/programs\\_managed/step-up-summer-jobs-program/](http://achievempls.org/whatwedo/programs_managed/step-up-summer-jobs-program/)

**Related Extension websites:**

Minnesota Extension Services:

[www.extension.umn.edu/county/template/index.aspx?pID=5&countyID=27](http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/template/index.aspx?pID=5&countyID=27)

Extension publications on vegetable growing:

<http://shop.extension.umn.edu/ProgramList.aspx?CategoryID=63>

Master Gardener program: [www.extension.umn.edu/gardeninfo](http://www.extension.umn.edu/gardeninfo)

4-H Project Learner Form on Vegetable Gardening

[www.fourh.umn.edu/resources/plussheets/4H734.pdf](http://www.fourh.umn.edu/resources/plussheets/4H734.pdf)

4-H Project Record Keeping Forms on Flower Gardening:

[www.extension.umn.edu/county/Hennepin/news/FLOWER\\_GARDEN.pdf](http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/Hennepin/news/FLOWER_GARDEN.pdf)

Fred Dietrich noted that the school district continues working on developing a policy related to schools and gardens. There are currently 3 neighborhood gardens on school property: Cityview/McKinley, Dowling and Lind community gardens.

### **3. Metro Blooms Program**

Becky Rice, Executive Director of Metro Blooms, talked briefly about the Metro Blooms program. It is a nonprofit volunteer-based educational organization that partners with others to promote environmentally sound gardening and landscaping practices to improve the health of our land and water resources. It is currently in its 25<sup>th</sup> year and sponsors the annual Blooms Day event recognizing the top gardeners in Minneapolis. This year Blooms Day is on May 16<sup>th</sup>. They had 800 people on their waiting list, so they are offering 20 rain garden workshops this year throughout the metro area.

Becky noted that a Metro Blooms' proposal was recommended for funding by the LCCMR, but still needs approval from the State Legislature. If funded, this project will install 150 rain gardens in one subwatershed and research its impacts by measuring the outflow changes from two storm drains. They will not know if the project has been approved until the end of the 2009 Legislative Session.

The organization does not currently promote food production, but the potential for doing so does interest them. They are especially interested in opportunities to integrate food production with rain gardens and other stormwater collection practices and in reaching populations who are less interested in flowering rain gardens and more interested in food crop raingardens. More research needs to be done to determine what types of foods potentially could be grown in these environments. [www.metroblooms.org](http://www.metroblooms.org)

Becky was asked if Metro Blooms might consider adding a category to their garden contest around food production. Becky thought it was an interesting idea to consider.

### **4. Discussion**

When asked about how Extension works to minimize use of chemicals in gardening, Barb Grossman noted that integrated pest management techniques are encouraged. Susan Reed noted the need for more to be done around organics and how to grow vegetables intensively through SPIN (small plot intensive) techniques. There is also a need for more public education around how people can grow food in containers if they don't have good soil.

One person noted more efforts need to be employed around how to water gardens more efficiently using rain water.

Gayle Prest pointed out that compost bins and rain barrels are currently being sold through the Recycling Association of Minnesota and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. [www.recycleminnesota.org/](http://www.recycleminnesota.org/)

Barb Grossman shared that Extension is currently working on an Urban Research Ag grant for the USDA designed to help develop seeds that will grow in lower light/shaded areas. She also noted that there is a new metro area staff person, Elena Yippis, that will be working on food safety issues.

Kirsten Saylor noted that Gardening Matters taught food preservation techniques through the Twin Cities EXCO (Experimental College) project at Macalester College last year. [www.excotc.org/node/5](http://www.excotc.org/node/5)  
One person noted Fresh Girl currently offers presentations on how to preserve food for a fee.

It was further noted that MISA at the University of Minnesota is discussing creation an urban ag center.

### **5. Recommendations**

Kirsten Saylor provided an overview of the list of approximately 100 recommendations. She described the themes/ categories which have emerged so far:

**Campaign** -- this is about communicating and spreading the word about gardening people. While it does not necessarily need to be supported by programming, a communications campaign will require research and collaboration in order to be effective.

**Food Program** – this is about education and infrastructure being bound together, and in effect, creating an ongoing learning support system for city residents that will enable people to make deeper changes toward supporting a local food system. It would be focused on how adults learn best - by sharing experiences and doing.

**Center** – this is about a potential urban agriculture training center and clusters. The idea of the clusters may not be obvious yet on this list. To my mind, a food program would be delivered via geographic-defined Clusters (sections of the city that are bigger than neighborhoods), and essentially make the food program more effective by delivering classes and resources at the neighborhood level. The urban ag training center would essentially support the clusters and enable food & farming organizations to work more efficiently.

**Collaboration** -- a lesser alternative to the Center (or a step toward the Center?)

**Land Tenure** -- There are a number of recommendations around accessing land in both the short and the long term. Land Tenure is really a category of land access which the city has more direct control over. .

**Planning** -- this is more long-range planning for establishing community gardens and schoolyard gardens and urban ag in the city. Again, thinking of planning (regulations/zoning/plans) as tools to help guide land-use within the city. The categories of **Planning** and **Land Tenure** seem different from each other. It could be that some recommendations should be rearranged, or they sit in the grey area between the two.

**Team** -- While this could be called collaboration, it would be something the City does unto itself...building institutional knowledge and experience around urban food systems. In that way, Homegrown can become more integrated into the operational behavior of city staff.

Kirsten also noted potential exists in connecting people around composting, a food program, improving how assessments are done, land tenure, taxes and insurance costs, creating new incentives around how we design our buildings.

The meeting ended at 10:10 a.m.

**Homegrown Minneapolis**  
**Joint Subcommittee Meeting on Homegrown Minneapolis Land Issues**  
**Tuesday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009 from 8:30-10:30 a.m.**  
**Currie Avenue Conference Center**

**Attendance:** Aliyah Ali, Martin Adams, Michael Anshel, Julie Aponte, JoAnne Berkenkamp, Karin Berkholtz, Dayna Burtness, Kalle Butler, Robert Clarkson, David Denhau, Tammy Dickinson, Fred Dietrich, Tamara Downs-Schwei, Ila Duntemann, Greg Finzell, Jerry Foley, Hilary Gebauer, Barb Grossman, Stephanie Hankerson, Melissa Hochstetler, Jim Howitt, Larry JaBell, Dianna Kennedy, Kristen Klingler, Denise Leezer, Cara Letofsky, June Mathiowetz, Aimee McAdams, Jeremy McAdams, Julie McGuire, Stefan Meyer, Ana Micka, Ruth Murphy, Lara Norkus-Crampton, Brian Noy, Edie Oates, Megan O'Hara, Scott Pampuch, Aly Pennucci, Lindsey Rebhan, Aaron Reser, Neisha Reynolds, Jennifer Ringold, Julie Ristau, Kirsten Saylor, Heather Schoonover, Sarah Shankle, Terry Straub, Betsy Wieland, Georgianna Yantos, Erin Yudchitz

### **Introductions**

The meeting began at 8:30 a.m. with 15 minutes for people to network and introduce themselves to each other.

### **Land 101 Presentation**

**At 8:45** there was a fifteen minute Land 101 briefing by Karin Berkholtz, Community Planning and Economic Development. Karin described how the City's comprehensive plan, The Minneapolis Plan for Sustainable Growth ([www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/mplsplan.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/mplsplan.asp)), serves as a guide for future development and redevelopment in the City. She pointed out that under the umbrella of the comprehensive plan, there are small area plans (an example is the Lyndale-Lake plan), site-specific plans, and citywide topical plans (examples are housing, transportation, industrial, and cultural topical plans).

Karin provided two policies from the comprehensive plan as examples of how City policies support community gardens: 1) Support creation and improvement of community garden and food markets which sell locally and regionally grown foods; and 2) Where appropriate, support the planting of edible fruit and vegetable plants.

She also noted that a community garden is a principal use identified in the zoning code. This means that community gardens are allowed in all zoning districts in the city except in two small areas – the Downtown B4 and General Industrial (I3) areas. The zoning code doesn't regulate the duration of the use in these allowed areas – it can be there for any length of time.

Karin also talked briefly about how zoning impacts farmers markets. The following specific development standards/zoning currently exist around farmers markets:

- They are permitted in the high density office residential zoning district (OR2);
- They are permitted in all areas in commercial or downtown zoning districts;
- They are permitted in light industrial (I3) and medium industrial (I2) zoning districts;
- The licensing requirements depend on the size of the market; and
- The code distinguishes between farmers markets (local food products sold) and public markets (more than food products sold).

On the issue of urban agriculture and zoning, Karen noted that “commercial gardens” are not specifically addressed in the current Minneapolis zoning code. At this time, however, they are subject to the same development standards that apply to community gardens which include:

- Overhead lighting is prohibited;
- Signage is limited to a single, non-illuminated, flat sign of four feet square;
- No more than two vehicles shall be parked on-site, excluding those parked within an enclosed structure; and
- Retail sales shall not be permitted, except as an approved temporary use.

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Once the City begins to experience expanded food growing activities that no longer look or act like community gardens – they “tip over” into something that appears to be or acts more like urban agriculture – new zoning code language may need to be developed to assist the community in defining the boundaries it will tolerate around urban agriculture (such as how many delivery trucks can visit the site each day). These are questions of size, scale and intensity of use and the City has not had cause to develop policies around it to date. It was noted that some cities, like Cleveland, do have an urban agriculture zoning definition.

Karin then focused on City land, explaining that the City owns land to provide essential services such as police, fire, water, or sewer. It also owns land to achieve goals for growth and development (right of ways, housing and business development). The City acquires land by purchasing it, tax forfeitures, or other means to gain site control for redevelopment and other public purposes (blight removal, for example). In general, the City seeks to quickly return a property to a tax-generating use or other purpose to help grow the City according to the comprehensive plan. The City’s Disposition Policy [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/policies/Disposition%20-%20Development%20Procedures.doc](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/policies/Disposition%20-%20Development%20Procedures.doc) informs how this process occurs and includes requirements that land be sold at fair market value and for purposes consistent with the comprehensive plan.

Karin noted she has been hearing concerns about the permanency of gardens. There may be green space available on municipal property for community gardens and urban agriculture, but the idea needs further exploration. New policies and procedures will need to be developed to ensure success and will need to take into account consistency, compatibility, cumulative effects and unintended consequences.

Available resources for understanding City policy include the following:

- [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/comp\\_plan\\_update.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/comp_plan_update.asp)
- [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/zoning/code](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/zoning/code)
- [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/docs/Land Use and Zoning Overview.pdf](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/cped/docs/Land_Use_and_Zoning_Overview.pdf)
- [www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp](http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/dhfs/homegrown-home.asp)

#### Small Group Discussions

**At 9:00** the group was given fifteen minutes to discuss the presentation and land-related concerns, and submit three questions to be asked of a panel of City and Park Board staff. A full listing of all the questions submitted follows these minutes.

At 9:15 there was a fifteen minute break.

#### Panel Discussion with City and Park Board Staff

**From 9:30-10:20** there was a panel discussion moderated by Kirsten Saylor and including the following participants:

- Karin Berkholtz, Community Planning and Economic Development (CPED)
- Jennifer Ringold, Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB)
- Julie McGuire, Public Works-Property Services

The following questions were asked of **Jennifer Ringold** from MPRB and the group responded with a few follow-up comments:

**What would it take for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) to consider putting community gardens on existing park land?**

Jennifer explained that in 2002 the Park Board approved an action that allows the MPRB to hold land for community gardens. A key reason for not putting community gardens on existing park land is that it designates public land for exclusive use by an individual for an extended period of time and/or food production. Holding new land for

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community gardens prevents this issue because the land has been acquired specifically for this purpose. The crux of the issue is exclusive use of public land for private benefit.

Jennifer also noted that the MPRB is only one piece of the puzzle and there are already very high demands on park land for many forms of recreation. It is important that other agencies help find a solution for land as well. Perhaps, if all other options for accessing land - including full utilization of the MPRB's ability to hold land for community gardens - were exhausted, it might be time to reconsider.

**Follow-up comment from the group:** Public land being used for farming can benefit the public through aesthetics.

**Follow-up comment from the group:** Does the public really see a community garden as a private use? Has this assumption been challenged? Is it possible the public could view it as a public benefit? Aren't gardens generally set up so people can walk through them and anyone can participate?

Jennifer noted that it all boils down to the issue of public land being used for private purposes.

**Follow-up comment from the group:** St. Paul has examples of alternate ways of managing park land and encourages development of community gardens on existing park property. A baseball diamond is a counterexample—they take up a lot of space and are used by smaller groups that pay fees.

Jennifer noted that a community garden is a different concept than a baseball diamond because it has a much narrower scope. A baseball diamond can be reserved (for a fee) for a short period of time and can be used by all baseball players. When games are not in session, other park patrons can use the space. In general, a community garden is designated for use by a few individuals over an extended period of time.

Jennifer also indicated that there has been discussion about whether the MPRB's recreation centers could be used on weekends to host an "excess produce exchange" between gardeners.

**Follow-up comment from the group:** Could the kitchens be used to process food such as canning, making jams and jellies, etc?

Jennifer noted the MPRB hasn't considered that option.

**Follow-up comment from the group:** Does the Park Board policy about holding land in trust apply to enterprise?

Jennifer commented that it hasn't been ruled out and the MPRB would be willing to discuss it. Also, the Missing Link Project of Grand Rounds has a new park with an eco-business focus. Perhaps there are potential opportunities for collaboration with food production there.

The following questions were asked of **Karin Berkholtz** from CPED:

**What would it take to get a longer-term lease for urban agriculture or community gardening purposes? How can food production become a highest and best use as opposed to only an intermediary use?**

Karin noted that there needs to be a deliberate policy project taking the food production discussion beyond what we've identified in the Comprehensive Plan. Urban agriculture is not currently addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Discussions around food production raise questions about the use of land for housing and other purposes versus a garden and agricultural use. While the Plan doesn't currently have language about urban agriculture in it, there is still enough space in it to open the door for this discussion.

There has to be some framing of the discussion. There is a paradigm shift underway and we need to understand the multiple objectives different groups have for land. There are also huge liability issues around land that would need discussion if changes are to be made. Who will bear those responsibilities? The City doesn't currently have all the

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answers to these questions and CPED is willing to have a conversation about them. We also want to honor the community engagement process and see what comes out of the Homegrown Minneapolis recommendations.

**Follow-up comment from the group:** This isn't just about growing food, it's about building community. The City needs to value this and maybe give it an economic value.

**Could gardens be required as part of high density housing developments?**

Karin commented that it is important for us to engage the private sector. Asking the question of how we can provide incentives for the private sector to act differently and include food production in their developments is a good one. Also, it's important to note that green space and community gardens are very different issues. Jennifer Ringold added that some cities already have "dedication ordinances" in which every development is required to set aside land or money for open space.

**Has CPED looked at other cities for examples?**

Karin noted that topical planning practices begin with a scan of other best practices from around the globe. Then the ideas have to be put into the context of Minneapolis realities, such as our laws and governance structure. Then CPED assembles a technical advisory team that guides and leads the process. CPED also forms a community advisory team and a business advisory team, and then there is a required public/community engagement process as well. The City does not currently have a topical plan for gardens.

### **Is there a place for zoning in this discussion? What is it?**

Karin provided the following example: Suppose a community gardener decides to process his/her tomatoes into a sauce which becomes very popular and the number of people stopping by to purchase the sauce increases substantially over time. This situation may create additional traffic into the neighborhood that could eventually become a nuisance because the size, scale and intensity of use is changing/transitioning to something else. Where should that enterprise go? It doesn't belong in an area zoned as an urban neighborhood. Does it need to go to an industrial zone? A commercial or business zone? The success of a community garden reaches a tipping point (or transition point) where it becomes an urban enterprise.

### **Follow-up comment from the group: Are there positive sides to the tipping point? Is it only a negative thing if a garden becomes an enterprise?**

Aly Pennucci from CPED-Zoning clarified that currently there isn't a designation for an urban agriculture enterprise in the zoning code, so if the enterprise's activity is similar to a community garden then it would likely be permitted anywhere a community garden is permitted. If you start to put up structures to accommodate a business or there is increased traffic, delivery trucks (pick-up or drop off), etc. then the use is no longer substantially similar to a community garden and the zoning administrator would need to make a determination for a particular situation. There may need to be a designation for something in the middle but the existing code does not list urban agriculture as a use. Note that greenhouses are already allowed in the city through the zoning code.

Robb Clarksen from CPED-Zoning added that the difference between a community garden and a "substantially similar" use like urban agriculture is primarily scale and context of the operation. In reference to the potential impacts such as those highlighted in Karin's tomato sauce example, Robb clarified that it's important the group not leave today with the perspective that the City views community gardens or urban agriculture as inappropriate land uses. We wouldn't all be here today if that were true. Rather it is the City's job to ensure that neighborhood livability is protected by looking at all the potential impacts of a particular use of land. In the future, if a community garden or urban agriculture plot goes in near your house, you may find yourself relieved that the City protected livability issues.

Robb emphasized that the reason this discussion is taking place is because there is recognition that good things result

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from the addition of community gardens in certain contexts. It just happens that most of our time is spent on considering what regulatory measures should be taken because, as in the example Karin described, the focus quickly shifts from personal use to impacts on the broader community. Experience shows that these impacts may not all be positive in spite of the positive outcome. The challenge for the

City is to make the best decisions possible about which activities should be authorized or restricted in any given proposal. He also pointed out that the zoning code does include some pretty specific descriptions of how a property may be used under the guise of a temporary use permit approval.

Karin commented that a PowerPoint on green jobs exists on the City's website.

The following questions were asked of **Julie McGuire** from Public Works-Property Services:

**Are there examples from history that could inform this discussion about the interplay of land for community gardens and the City?**

- The Adopt-A-Lot program which used to exist at the City had some successes and also some failures.  
It provided some lessons about where policies and partnerships need to be strengthened and improved. The focus of those lots was more about flowers and beautification than growing food. It could be reworked into a better program.
- The City used to allow people to garden on City land, but once the “champion” of the garden moved away or stopped gardening, the land often became a problem again. Gardens are great when the champion is around, but things can really fall apart when they leave. How the gardens are maintained and look was an issue, because some of the gardens eventually became eye sores.
- Other challenges included the need for insurance to avoid liability issues with the City. Also, it's important to think about what the added value is for the City and for the land if it is converted to food production purposes.

**At 10:20.** Kirsten Saylor made the following announcements:

The next stakeholder meeting is scheduled for this Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at the Sabathani Community Center from 2:00-3:30 p.m. The next Community, School & Backyard Garden Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at North Point Health and Wellness Center at 1313 Penn Avenue North from 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Kirsten opened the floor for any final comments and one person noted that a guide to starting an urban agriculture enterprise in the city would be helpful to those trying to navigate through the system. Another comment made was that food shelves are in need of fresh vegetables.

The meeting ended at 10:25 a.m.

**List of All Questions Submitted by Small Groups for Panel Discussion**

- ♣ How do we accommodate/encourage root cellars so people can keep food year round? Root cellars in parks near the recreation centers
- ♣ What has history told us? What can we learn from Victory gardens and city records?
- ♣ Could you talk more about your assumption underneath the ‘tipping point’ concerns?
- ♣ How do policies and procedures to address these concerns evolve?
- ♣ How does CPED learn from other cities? What models could be explored?
- ♣ How would a per person amount of garden space advance the development of Homegrown? (there is a tension/friction between food access and land use efficiency).

- ♣ Urban Farming: What kind of proposals need to be submitted for land use? How will selections be made?
- ♣ Would the city be interested in developing a multi-use venture that includes farming in it?
- ♣ How do you get people involved in gardens/green space ideas when they don't want plantings near their housing?
- ♣ Is there an inventory of open land adjacent to city buildings (as part of Fire Stations, Police Stations, Sectors, Public Works) other non-city agencies (MAC, MNDOT)?
- ♣ Is there an inventory of roofs in the city that are ready for garden enterprise?

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- ♣ What are the opportunities for on-site composting at medium/larger farms/gardens in the city? In other words, how can we remove obstacles and create supportive policies to encourage at-the-source or onsite composting?
- ♣ Will soil testing/annual re-testing be required?
- ♣ Parks: Discussions around use of city or parks land for growing seems to have focused on public use (community gardens, non profit growing projects) but what about private (for profit businesses) use of city/parks land for urban agriculture?
- ♣ Build: What are the requirements/opportunities for garden space to be required as part of high density (residential) development?
- ♣ How can access to gardens space be part of the housing/development process?
- ♣ Putting tax-generating revenue asides as a measure of success for a piece of land, how else can a piece of land benefit the city? How else is land valued?
- ♣ How could the city promote and support roof top gardens for growing food?
- ♣ What does it take to create new zoning categories?
- ♣ How is permanency determined?
- ♣ Is urban agriculture considered urban development?
- ♣ Could land trust be part of the equation?
- ♣ Are there ways to employ right of way to support urban agriculture?
- ♣ What is the process for developing new cooperative arrangements to support urban agriculture planning and implementation?
- ♣ If city land is used for growing, other needs for that growing space will soon show up: water use, need for permanent structures, need for electricity (refrigeration). Will this be allowed and accounted for in zoning?
- ♣ The zoning law says that retail sales are not permitted except as approved temporary use. Is there a way that this can work with commercial urban agriculture that vegetables can be sold on site?
- ♣ Are urban agriculture projects seen as more useful as temporary projects on a specific site or as permanent projects?
- ♣ Clarification on urban agriculture and zoning slide: Regarding “retail sales not permitted except as an approved temporary use” - what is considered temporary use- farm stand on site? Farmers market?
- ♣ Which City department(s) own land for community gardens? IS there reason to arrange things so that only one department has responsibility for community gardens?
- ♣ What are the regulations around large scale composting and how can we help facilitate it?
- ♣ How do we change the ordinance so bee-keeping can be carried out in the City(nurturing small enterprises)?

- ♣ What will it take for the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to encourage, or at least support/host gardens as St. Paul does?
- ♣ What would have to happen to reconsider incorporating community gardening on existing park land?
- ♣ How can food production become the ‘highest use’ on particular pieces of CEPD property, rather than an interim use without a sense of permanency/security for gardeners?
- ♣ When can we talk about ‘plans’ that are encouraging gardens. What is being done/what approaches are being taken to intentionally promote versus waiting for community requests to develop gardens? (i.e. South Minneapolis may have 20 requests for different lots, SW Minneapolis may have 3, North may have 1, therefore the need in the North may be greater)
- ♣ Where do the changes need to be made to encourage a more long-term view of gardening/urban agriculture land use rather than temporary? For example, leased land used for gardens is often leased year-to-year or even month-to-month, ignoring that gardening is a long-term (or at the very least seasonal) endeavor.
- ♣ The City’s concern around garden permanence revolved around the ongoing maintenance and use of the land. The community is concerned about how to obtain land and insurance. Does a long-term (5- year) lease with an annual review make sense?
- ♣ What is the “thing” that would determine when the garden should be re-located/removed?
- ♣ What about tax breaks for lots converted to community gardens (for privately owned lots)?
- ♣ How will the city incorporate into the “tax-generating use” calculation the indirect tax benefits, increasing property values and reduced costs such as police, maintained on vacant lots ( i.e., a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis)?

**Homegrown Minneapolis**  
**Subcommittee on Community, School and Backyard Gardens**  
**Tuesday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from 8:30-10:00 a.m.**  
**Pillsbury House Conference Room**

**Attendance:** Martin Adams, Joe Alfano, Aliyah Ali, Tara Beard, Jen Blecha, Fred Dietrichs, Tamara Downs-Schwei, Hilary Gebauer, Barb Grossman, Stephanie Hankerson, Daren Johnson, Starla Krause, Cara Letofsky, Jeffrey Loesch, Geoff Maruyama, June Mathiowetz, Aimee McAdams, Jeremy McAdams, Ruth Murphy, Brian Noy, Gayle Prest, Susan Reed, Julie Ristau, Carrie Ruhl, Kirsten Saylor, Zoe Sommers Haas, Amanda Stoelb, Susan Telleen

The meeting began at 8:35 a.m. with introductions.

The purpose of this subcommittee meeting was to focus on gardens on school property. The current relationship and experience between community gardens and the District as well as community gardens and individual schools was discussed to determine current strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. General comments from the discussion are below.

### **Role of the District**

The Minneapolis Public School District currently has no overall policy toward land use for community gardening. The District allows community gardens maintained by the community on school property. Individual schools make decisions about the school grounds and work with the Facilities Department to arrange for a formal lease or license with gardeners through a community organization, often a neighborhood association. The relationship between community gardens and schools varies depending on administration and teacher interest. Partnerships with community organizations are important to successful school gardens because schools are not able to maintain most gardens on their own, especially during summertime. Not all gardens have an arrangement with an individual school or a neighborhood organization. Dowling Community Garden, for example, has no arrangement with Dowling School and negotiates a lease directly with the District without neighborhood organization involvement. It has used the Green Institute as the signatory for their current lease and is in the process of identifying a different legal entity to sign a new agreement for the upcoming gardening season. Community interest is the major driver for keeping established gardens and starting new gardens on school property.

### **Background Checks**

Background checks are a new requirement as part of the MPS Community Partners agreements for people who are directly working with children. The District needs background checks to help manage risk and monitor who is in and around the schools. Currently individual gardeners are being asked to undergo a background check regardless of whether they have any involvement with school children. This, collectively, may be expensive for community garden organizations with a high number of gardeners. Background checks are considered a gray area by gardeners like those at Dowling who do not come into direct contact with school children. This issue is currently under review.

### **Liability Insurance**

Liability insurance is required for a community garden on School District property. Currently, gardens have to get liability insurance either on their own or by a third party (such as a neighborhood

association) In the past, some gardens were covered together under a separate organization and the cost was much lower.

Jeffrey Loesch suggested that the most useful thing the City could do for community gardens - whether located on school property or elsewhere - would be to help provide an umbrella-type organization for liability insurance. The insurance is quite expensive if purchased by individual gardens, but a policy for multiple gardens quickly reduces the per-garden cost.

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The Green Institute used to provide a rider (which means the community gardens were added on to its already existing policy) for \$1 million in liability insurance. The Institute stopped this practice and encouraged community gardeners to work with their local neighborhood associations to get insurance. Recently the state required an increase in liability insurance from \$1 million to \$1.2 million. Because liability insurance is sold in \$1 million increments, insurance must be purchased for \$2 million in coverage. Most organizations have only \$1 million in coverage. This resulted in the Dowling Community Garden being required to pay \$600 for insurance to cover the increased cost of Longfellow Community Council's purchase of \$2 million in liability insurance coverage. Prior to this, the LCC did not charge Dowling for this insurance rider.

Because the city is self-insured, it was suggested that such an arrangement would probably have to be done through some city-sponsored organization, perhaps one that arises during the pending Neighborhood Revitalization Program re-organization. Whatever the organization, the "umbrella" function could be done at no cost to anyone except the gardens themselves, each of which would save considerably as a result of the arrangement.

### **List of School Related Gardens Needed**

There is a need for a resource list to be developed of all gardens currently connected to schools so the community can identify and connect with them to learn how they work and how to improve them.

### **School Gardens and Curriculum**

The District and community gardeners share an interest in finding ways to improve their partnership, including increased clarity and procedures around school gardens so everyone understands the relationships, responsibilities and potential opportunities involved.

Teachers need support around gardening curriculum. Joe Alfano from the District assists in developing grade-appropriate gardening curriculum for the classroom. He noted that there is great opportunity to expand the current connection between curriculum and gardens, but the State's education standards affect how this is carried out. The current demands around standards make it difficult to apply this resource in a more effective, consistent way. Finding ways to create garden spaces within community gardens that would support teachers' efforts to incorporate them into classroom use is important.

Some teachers have contacted individual schools about interest in after-school programs about gardening. If there is not a community garden at a school for a teacher to plug into, however, it is challenging for a teacher to start one.

Constant staff changes at schools pose continuity issues and disincentives for a solid curriculum or after-school garden relationship. Some teachers in the past have worked to start small gardens only to be moved to a new school after a great investment in time and energy to develop a project.

Because the growing season overlaps the school year at the beginning and end, a partnership with community gardeners or organizations is needed in order for the garden to be successful.

There are innovative ways to connect students with what they are eating as part of school lunches and what is being grown in the gardens. The Kids Cook program provides hands-on experiential classes teaching children about cooking and eating the fruits and vegetables they have grown from their schoolyard garden.

### **Other Items Discussed**

\*There is interest in developing more community gardens, especially the Cleveland North side area.

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\*The St. Paul District pays for water and heat into a greenhouse building used by Youth Farm. Youth Farm has classes and maintains the greenhouse in 3 seasons - it is hard to use the space in the summer due to lack of a cooling system.

\*Tree Trust and other programs have come into schools to educate the students on issues as well as to explain the ever growing concerns around energy use and conservation.

\*The University of Minnesota is starting gardens in hopes to train students for healthy eating and link this lifestyle change to the curriculum. They are starting this idea at Hmong Academy and Bethune.

\*St. Paul Youth Forum is working to link food and healthy eating into the curriculum at schools with gardens.

\*Starla Krause noted an article she had recently read called “The Child in the Garden: An Evaluative Review of the Benefits of School Gardening” by Dorothy Blair that was recently published in the *Journal of Environmental Education*, 2008.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:01 a.m.

**Homegrown Minneapolis**  
**Subcommittee on Community, School and Backyard Gardens**  
**January 6th, 2008 from 8:30-10:00 a.m.**  
**Corcoran Neighborhood Association Building**

**Attendance:** Aliyah Ali, Martin Adams, Tara Beard, JoAnne Berkenkamp, Jennifer Blecha, Ila Duntemann, Hilary Gebauer, Stephanie Hankerson, Melissa Hochstetler, Jim Howitt, June Mathiowetz, Aimee McAdams, Jeremy McAdams, Ruth Murphy, Brian Noy, Susan Reed, Sarah Reuben-Meillier, Neisha Reynolds, Linda Ridlehuber, Kirsten Saylor

### **1. Introductions and Looking Ahead**

After everyone introduced themselves, the group discussed its needs and ideas for the next four meetings scheduled for January 27<sup>th</sup>, February 17<sup>th</sup>, March 10<sup>th</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>. The next meeting will focus on schoolyard gardens. The Subcommittee Chairs are working to invite additional stakeholders to the table for that discussion. Anyone with recommendations on people that would be helpful to have present or ideas for agenda topics should be in contact with the chairs. The remaining three meetings will focus on land issues (tenure and trusts), capacity building (how to we strengthen gardening skills of city residents), and developing and refining recommendations.

### **2. Follow-up on Questions that Emerged at Previous Meetings**

June Mathiowetz reported on follow-up on questions raised at previous meetings on a potential bees ordinance, the requirements around the use of City water hydrants, boulevard garden requirements, how to retrofit a fruit cellar on to an existing house, and language referring to gardens in the Minneapolis comprehensive plan.

Status of ordinance allowing bees to be raised in the City - Currently, the City does not allow the raising of bees. Council Member Benson's office has been working to change the ordinance and a draft of a new bees ordinance is circulating through the City. At this time, CM Benson's office is waiting for Animal Control to review and sign off on the language. The ordinance will need to pass through the PS&RS (Public Safety and Regulatory Services Committee).

Guidelines and requirements around use of the City's water hydrants - Currently there are 40 gardens accessing permission to use hydrants through Public Works. Boulevard gardens in front of people's homes are not allowed permits to access hydrant water. The permit requirements and regulations for the use of fire hydrants for watering gardens are as follows:

1. Letter of authorization from the public agency granting permission for the use of the land for the current year, or if it is an ongoing Agreement, a specific end date is required.
2. A permit fee of \$80.00 is to be assessed - \$55 for water use and the equipment installation and \$25 as a deposit on the equipment. A refund of \$25.00 to the applicant at the end of the season will be granted if the equipment is undamaged.
3. No other hydrant except hydrants so designated are to be used on this permit.
4. Hydrants are to be used for watering gardens on public property only, on hydrant side of street only.
5. The applicant is to see that the valve furnished is secured by a padlock when not in use. (Padlock is to be furnished by the applicant.)
6. No hose will be allowed to cross a public street.

7. A ¾ inch male hose bit will be provided.
8. Misuse of the hydrant, whether by the permittee or others, would void the permit, and no refund would be granted except for the equipment deposit.
9. The person making the application agrees to hold the City harmless for any damages resulting from the use of the hydrant apparatus and/or the water from the hydrant.
10. Hydrant location for this permit is: <<hydrant location>>

The City's primary contact for this issue is Rock Rogers in Public Works' Water Administration Division.

Boulevard Gardens - Boulevard gardens do not require a permit, but the stated restrictions in the ordinance are no vegetables and flowers can grow only to 3 feet in height.

Adding a fruit cellar onto an existing house - To add a fruit cellar on to an existing house, a person would need to follow the typical procedures for additions by going through the Minneapolis Development Review office's zoning approval and building permit processes.

The requirements include providing a site plan of the property showing the property lines, the house location, and location of the addition being sought. The dimensions need to be shown including identification of the property corners. A surveyor may need to be hired to measure/mark corners if not known (cost ranges from \$200-\$800) and show how far the project would sit from property lines. This information will need to be submitted to Zoning Approval at the City (no charge).

If zoning approval is received, the construction drawings need to be submitted to the Building Permits division at the City. If a building permit is obtained, there is a fee charged based on the value of the work being done (for example a \$10,000 project will likely have a building permit fee around \$350). If variances are requested, there will be additional fees. For more information or to be walked through this process, one can call the City's 311 information line.

Language existing in the Minneapolis Plan, the City's comprehensive planning document – Attachment A provides a list from the Community Planning and Economic Development Department of the references to gardens found in the Minneapolis Plan.

### **3. Small Group Conversations around Emerging Themes and Potential Recommendations**

Kirsten Saylor facilitated a small group exercise to begin discussing and drafting initial recommendations around land, capacity building and policy changes needed. A rough draft of evolving ideas for potential recommendations can be found in Attachment B. This list is a beginning draft of our conversations together up to this point and will need to be discussed and vetted further by the committee over the next several weeks.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

**Homegrown Minneapolis**  
**Subcommittee on Community, School and Backyard Gardens**  
**December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from 8:30-10:00 a.m.**  
**Green Institute, Conference Room A**

**Attendance:** Aliyah Ali, Martin Adams, Jennifer Blecha, Ila Duntemann, Hilary Gebauer, Sarah Greenfield, Barbara Grossman, Stephanie Hankerson, Jim Howitt, Geoff Maruyama, June Mathiowetz, Aimee McAdams, Jeremy McAdams, Brian Noy, Susan Reed, Linda Ridlehuber, Julie Ristau (Tri-Chair), Kirsten Saylor, Terry Straub, Lorrie Stromme

The meeting began at 8:33 a.m.

### **Introductions**

This committee's mission is to develop recommendations for the City to support greater food production via community gardens, schoolyard gardens and backyard gardens. A draft of our recommendations is due the end of March. A draft report of recommendations by all subcommittees is due out in April. A final report is due in June. With this in mind, this subcommittee plans to meet every third Tuesday on the following dates: **January 6<sup>th</sup>, January 27<sup>th</sup>, February 17<sup>th</sup>, March 10<sup>th</sup>, and March 31<sup>st</sup> at 8:30 a.m.** The co-chairs are looking into finding a slightly bigger conference room to accommodate the strong interest.

Our time was spent discussing three areas: 1) What's working? 2) What's not working? and 3) What's our vision?/How can we improve the local food system using community, school and backyard gardens?/What needs exist? General comments were as follows:

### **What's working?**

\*There is enthusiasm in north Minneapolis at three schools in particular (Cityview which has an active garden, Bethune (which does not have a garden), and Hmong International Academy (which has strong parent group and access to land).

\*There is a high level of interest among younger people and a growing general interest to expand knowledge in the area of food production.

\*There has been support from the city and county in a diffuse way. SooLine Community Garden has received valuable support.

\*There are a lot of people willing to volunteer to invest their time and energy in gardens.

\*Water has been accessible through the fire hydrants and stormwater credits through the City help keep costs low. \*Gardening Matters exists and has already done a lot of grassroots organizing around local food production and gardening. COMGAR, Gardening Matters' list serve, has already identified hundreds of community gardeners and others and serves as a vehicle for communicating and sharing resources.

\*Our gardens provide community engagement opportunities in addition to food production. They serve as meeting places for people and anchors for neighborhoods.

\*Surplus produce from gardens sometimes ends up at food shelves.

### **What's not working?**

Major themes that emerged included: 1) land and facility needs; 2) Further capacity building and education needs; and 3) Policy and system change/strategies needed.

## **Land and/or Facility Needs**

\*Land, land, land. There's not enough garden space and no permanency assigned to those that exist. There are few spaces and land available to meet the high level of requests, supply is not keeping up with demand. How do we make it easier for community gardeners to obtain land and keep it? How do we access foreclosed lands for potential gardens? How do we develop the concept of land trusts within the city? How do we raise funds to do it?

\*Preservation of school lands. How do we preserve schoolyard lands for transitions to gardens (such as Jordan Elementary's big parcel of land)? As the school system in the city undergoes closures, how do we ensure these spaces can be preserved for gardens?

\*Permanency of garden spaces. There is a need for long-term commitments to garden spaces. Gardens need to be thought of as essential elements of a community, not as interim uses of land. Soil is a resource that takes a long time to build and moving gardens around loses the quality ecosystem and safe, rich soil that has been built up over long periods of time. Gardens also cannot be moved without impacting the community's relationships nurtured through that space. How can gardeners have better input into what happens to gardens?

\*Gardens as integral to community living. What if every block or neighborhood had garden space for food production and storage space for excess produce?

\*Food Storage. What would community kitchens and community storage centers look like? (Current resources include home ec class rooms and church kitchens.) What about access to community freezers where everyone owns a basket, community vacuum sealers, community canning/preservation areas, flash freezing, community bread ovens, and other technologies? How does one retrofit a fruit cellar to an existing house? Better information is needed.

\*Security. Theft and vandalism of entire garden plots leave gardeners without produce and in need of new solutions.

\*Space for fruit and nut trees. Is there land available for orchards? Could the Park Board be interested in designating small areas for fruit trees? How can we organize to create mini orchards in our neighborhoods? Could the City plant, maintain and/or harvest trees for local food production? The Minnesota Project is rolling out a program on fruit trees.

## **Capacity Building & Education Needs**

\*Greater capacity for outreach is needed to communicate opportunities to the public and to obtain enough support to keep gardens going. Who and how it will get done is the question. Stronger links/access to extension services would be helpful. One idea is to have a central educational site for food production and preservation like Vancouver's City Farmer program which has a demonstration-type site on one city lot which serves as a model for others. <http://www.cityfarmer.org/tour.html#CFtour>

\*What is the education capacity? What are the basics people need to know? How can we develop varying levels of expertise on topics? Does the Master Gardener program provide a model? How can inserts into utility bills be used to promote urban food production and to make people aware of how to ascertain soil safety? Does the Extension Service have the resources to help with backyard gardens?

\*How do we encourage the transition from backyard gardening to small enterprise urban agriculture? Possibly by improving education, increasing micro-finance loans and grants to get people started, and further enabling urban farmers by improving the regulations process and requiring grocery stores to carry a percentage of foods produced locally?

\*Project fatigue can occur with some gardens and volunteers wane. More help is needed to support the community within these gardens – more partnerships and more neighborhood participation. It is unclear how changes in NRP dollars and organization will affect neighborhood connections with gardens.

\*There may be opportunities for block clubs to engage more fully on gardens, food production and composting. How can block clubs become better engaged in gardens? What opportunities exist for neighborhoods beyond National Night Out?

\*Soo Line community gardens' surplus food sometimes goes to the food shelf, other times it does not. More networks for surplus food can be encouraged. Could churches be engaged to do the pickup and delivery to food shelves? Can we do more about bringing surplus produce to seniors?

\*Determining Soil Toxicity through prior use: Sanford Fire Insurance Maps are available at all libraries. They are block-by-block maps created in the 1800s by the fire companies showing how land was being used at that time. This may help some people determine the safety of their soil or at a minimum understand its prior use. Can gardeners find people to do the pro bono work of interpreting the history of plots. What resources are available to help people interpret soil toxicity test results?

-EPA superfund site issues. People located near EPA superfund sites have concerns about the safety of their soil for planting food. The extensive and, tiny printed EPA information that arrived at houses in the area is difficult to understand as far as what risks may remain. It would be helpful if a post-card could be sent out with graphic symbols explaining what is safe and what is not and simple ways to reduce risks for vegetable gardens from arsenic, lead paint, etc. and introducing people to local resources.

-How do people ascertain whether their soil is safe for food production? What steps can they take to minimize leeching of potential toxins in potentially contaminated areas?

### **Policy/System Changes or Needs**

\*There needs to be some parameters or a baseline of expectations established around gardens so schools know what can be expected of community garden relationship. Once those baselines are established, there are no limits to creativity.

\*Currently there are rather tight limits on the kinds of gardens people can develop – especially in terms of bees and hoofed animals. One vision would see a wider breadth of options permitted in the City by enlarging the list of permitted animals for backyard, community and other gardens.

\*The overall health of our population indicates that many people are not accessing food that is healthy. What is preventing this (research is needed) and what solutions are people using now to overcome barriers to healthier eating?

\*There are still many obstacles in place for backyard gardeners wanting to become commercial growers. How does zoning or other city regulations get in the way? Boston provides some good examples around zoning and gardens.

\*Soo Line garden is prohibited from selling food that was grown on tax-forfeited land.

\*How can community-wide organics recycling be accessed for building up soil?

\*How do we create a way to do decentralized, coordinated composting that eliminates creation of green house gases at the neighborhood level? How can we help minimize use of trucks and substitute wheelbarrows, wagons and buckets for more block-by-block composting points and community building? How do we turn composting into community engagement events?

\*Insurance issues. Right now each garden has to chase down insurance. The need for third party liability by community gardeners is in question. What exactly is essential? There has never been a lawsuit around community gardens. New York City has waived the liability requirement for community gardens on city property. There are also issues around requirements of a background check for all gardeners at community gardens located on school district property, such as at the Dowling Community Garden.

\*Heat capture and reuse. In Vermont, heat energy released from a coal plant is used to heat greenhouses. Does the City of Minneapolis have any similar potential situations?

\*Access to water – the city’s hydrant policy – sometimes it is difficult to get access to water via a hydrant depending upon who is requesting the connection.

\*Where does the city stand on promoting systems such as cisterns?

\*Food packaging. Cornucopia was unable to serve salad at an event because of City’s regulations. How do we work with these regulations to ensure safety and access?

\*What impacts will cuts to the City’s budget have on this project? If no or limited funding is available, what changes can still be implemented?

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

**Homegrown Minneapolis**  
**Kickoff Meeting Breakout Session**  
**Subcommittee on Community, School and Backyard Gardens**  
**December 10, 2008**

**Minutes:**

Introductions were made and the group discussed the date, time and location of future meetings. The group generally agreed that day meetings were better than night meetings and that meeting at the Green Institute would work as a meeting site. Subcommittee meetings will tentatively occur every three weeks on Tuesday mornings at 8:30 am and our next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 16th. This will provide us with an opportunity to meet up to six times before the end of March. If there is anyone missing from the subcommittee that people would find helpful to have in attendance, please send their contact information to the chairs so they can be invited or invite them yourself.

There was interest in understanding what already exists as far as city policies are concerned when it comes to community, school and backyard gardens. June Mathiowetz will work to compile any existing policy language for future meetings.

There was interest in seeing a map of existing community gardens. Kirsten Saylor noted Gardening Matters has a map of existing gardens from 2006. If the group needs something more than this, the subcommittee can discuss exactly what is needed at a future meeting and find ways to obtain that information.

There was also interest in the map of the corner grocery stores in the city that was mentioned in the earlier large group introductions. June will see if she can obtain a copy of that map from City staff.

One suggestion was that since the final outcome of our work is recommendations, let's start writing! If you already have thoughts and ideas regarding a recommendation you would like to see, please draft a statement in 50 words or less and send them to June Mathiowetz at [june.mathiowetz@ci.minneapolis.mn.us](mailto:june.mathiowetz@ci.minneapolis.mn.us) so they can be compiled for easier group discussion going forward. The co-chairs will also work to find ways to help the group brainstorm possibilities and draw out expertise and ideas of the group for other recommendations.

The approximately twenty minute meeting adjourned at 12 noon.

**Brief notes about this Subcommittee:**

The purpose of the Subcommittee on Community, School, and Backyard Gardens is to examine current resources and potential opportunities related to such gardens in Minneapolis. As defined in a "Roles and Responsibilities" handout at this Kickoff meeting, this group could develop recommendations related to increasing the number of community, school and backyard gardens throughout the community, linking City resources and programs to community gardeners, and simplifying the process by which gardens are developed and managed.

The timeline for our very specific task of coming up with recommendations requires us to complete our work near the end of March. A draft report of recommendations by subcommittees is due out in April. A final report on all recommendations from all subcommittee groups is due out in the month of June.

Kirsten Saylor of Gardening Matters and June Mathiowetz from the City of Minneapolis will serve as co-chairs of this subcommittee.