

TORONTO/EAST YORK LOCAL HEALTH COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday, January 15, 2008

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: 277 Victoria Street – 5th Floor – Room 504

PRESENT: Fiona Nelson (Chair)
Aldo Gatti
Bryan Heal
Marvin Greenberg
Penny Marrett

Liz Janzen
Lino Grima
Bernard Blais
Kate Hoffmann
Roman Polochansky

REGRETS: Evadne Wilkinson
Marlon Merraro

Jeanne Jabanoski
Soma Chattfrjee

GUEST: Brian Cook, TPH Research Consultant

1.0 MINUTES

Bryan Heal moved the adoption of the minutes of November 6, 2007, seconded by Marvin Greenberg, all in favour – carried.

2.0 NEW BUSINESS:

2.1 “The State of Toronto’s Food”

Brian Cook, TPH Research Consultant gave an overview of the discussion paper “The State of Toronto’s Food” which provides insight into a wide range of food system issues. Brian briefly discussed the development of the discussion paper and relevant statistical data, and the distribution of the paper to community stakeholders, TPH and city staff. The paper does not recommend specific strategies or actions but provides background information for broader conversation around the development of a Toronto Food Strategy. Brian highlighted information from the paper including:

- the key role and connections between food and health and well-being, and economic, social, cultural and environmental health
- the City of Toronto’s leadership role in food policy and it’s power to influence positive developments in the food system
- the development and goals of Toronto’s Food Charter

- an overview of Toronto's Food including:
 - o production
 - o processing and manufacturing
 - o transportation and distribution
 - o retail, marketing and purchasing
 - o preparation and consumption
 - o disposal

Brian requested LHC members give their input via the questionnaire at the back of the paper which would help in defining future direction and the development of a Toronto Food Strategy.

Committee members enthusiastically endorsed the discussion paper and acknowledged the complexity and broad range of food issues, although there was some discussion regarding the lack of definition of priorities, objectives and timelines in the paper.

LHC members offered comments and suggestions to Brian re the following food related topics:

- food processing, i.e. wrapping and waste
- urban farming/community gardens/farmers markets/food deserts
- teaching basic food preparation, i.e. preparation from scratch of affordable nutritious foods
- zoning of food retail establishments in new community developments
- access to food for new immigrants
- food sustainability/access in relation to climate change, natural disasters
- need for short term projects and strategies to engage the community/encourage behavioural changes at an early age
- need for provincial/national food policy
- need to accomplish shift in income and social structure to enable low income earners to buy better food
- to develop a different food strategy there is a need to bring to the table people from all different strata of society and to ensure inclusion of poor people or advocates for the poor, and
- consideration should be given to formatting straw dogs which people could react to, possibly in in-focus groups
- a think-tank process whose constituents would come from a broad base including store operators, small food vendors, landowners, school boards, government, the city's Economic Development Council, economists, health professionals, and youth

LHC members endorsed the following motion which will go to the Board of Health on January 21, 2008:

“The Toronto/East York Local Health Committee commends unanimously the draft discussion paper on Toronto Food Strategy and urges its continued development with the objective of establishing the first broad food strategy in Canada.”

3.0 BUSINESS ARISING

3.1 Board of Health/DMT Retreat

Liz reported that the retreat had been a success and the key areas and advocacy issues suggested by our Committee were all raised. A Toronto Public Health team will compile a document detailing five or six priority advocacy issues and a very brief summary to go back to the Board of Health.

3.2 Board of Health January 21/08 Agenda Review

Fiona informed the committee that some of the priority items on the upcoming agenda are as follows:

- Smoke Free Vehicle legislation
- Dog/Cat Licensing
- Pandemic Preparedness

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, February 19, 2008
 277 Victoria Street
 5th Floor – Room 504
 6:00 p.m.

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