

Parks and Environment Committee

Meeting No.	22	Contact	Dela Ting, Acting Administrator
Meeting Date	Thursday, February 5, 2009	Phone	416-397-7769
Start Time	9:30 AM	E-mail	pec@toronto.ca
Location	Committee Room 1, City Hall	Chair	Councillor Paula Fletcher

Confirmation of Minutes

On motion by Councillor Karen Stintz, the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parks and Environment Committee held on January 16, 2009, was confirmed.

PE22.1	Presentation	Referred		Ward: All
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Presentation by Expert Panel on Urban Food Production

Decision Advice and Other Information

The Parks and Environment Committee:

1. referred the presentations from the Expert Panel on Urban Food Production and submissions filed to the Director, Toronto Environment Office and General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, with a request that they identify main themes, suggestions and challenges raised by the presenters to be addressed in the development of the City of Toronto's urban food production policy; *(Moved by Councillor Cho)*
2. requested the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to consider adding a pilot of edible planting in one of the City of Toronto's decorative planting areas; and *(Moved by Councillor Fletcher)*
3. thanked and applauded all the presenters for their excellent and informative presentations.

Lawson Oates, Director, Toronto Environment Office; Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation; and Peter Dorfman, Manager, Health Promotion, Policy and Planning, Toronto Public Health, provided an overview and addressed the Parks and Environment Committee.

(A copy of the presentations submitted is on file with the City Clerk's Office.)

Summary

In keeping with Toronto's commitment to environmental leadership, work is underway to develop a comprehensive strategy to address emerging issues related to the field of urban agriculture and increase lands for urban food production. Food strategy is an important component of the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan, which was unanimously adopted by City Council in July, 2007.

In an effort to provide an educational forum for Committee members, other members of Council and the general public, a number of experts in the field of urban agriculture have been invited to make presentations about current issues arising in the field of urban food production and how the City of Toronto can best support the urban agriculture movement while considering important constraints and opportunities.

Staff Presentations and Updates – 10 minutes

Lawson Oates, Director, Toronto Environment Office: Mr. Oates will provide an overview of the relationship between urban agriculture and the Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan.

Brenda Patterson, General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation: Ms. Patterson will provide a summary on the efforts Parks, Forestry and Recreation are making to increase food production in community space in Toronto.

Carol Timmings, Acting Director of Policy and Planning, Toronto Public Health:

Ms. Timmings will provide an update on the process to develop a Toronto Food Strategy.

Expert Panel Presentations from:

(a) Lauren Baker – Director, Ontario Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming:

Ms. Baker will speak about the land use and regulatory barriers related to urban food production, including zoning, taxation and composting.

(b) Solomon Boyé – Community Gardens Program Coordinator, City of Toronto:

Mr. Boyé will speak about community and allotment gardens in the City of Toronto and the Black Creek Urban Farm.

(c) Paula Sobie – Owner/Operator of City Harvest, a SPIN (Small Plot Intensive) Farming business:

Ms. Sobie will discuss SPIN-Farming and the business City Harvest, which she started and ran for the past two years in Victoria, BC using this farm model. She will also share her insights regarding regulatory barriers and urban food systems along with capitalizing on community support.

- (d) Rhonda Teitel-Payne – Urban Agriculture Manager, The Stop Community Food Centre:

Ms. Teitel-Payne will touch on the opportunities and barriers for urban growers to market their products and will discuss the need for more greenhouses and better access to existing greenhouses in the city.

- (e) James Kuhns and Joe Nasr - MetroAg, Alliance for Urban Agriculture:

Mr. Kuhns and Mr. Nasr will discuss and highlight the creation of a Toronto Urban Agriculture Centre at Parc Downsview Park to show the partnerships emerging around urban food production.

- (f) Debbie Field – Executive Director, FoodShare:

Ms. Field will propose a partnership structure between government and community groups to expand community gardening, edible landscapes and fruit trees, thus increasing production of fresh produce for personal consumption in Toronto which will improve health and provide income substitution in these difficult financial times.

Background Information

Councillor Paula Fletcher, Chair, Parks and Environment Committee invitation to the Expert Panel on Urban Food Production

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18650.pdf>

Gardening Workshop

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18651.pdf>

Lawson Oates, Director, Toronto Environment Office

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18903.pdf>

Peter Dorfman, Manager, Health Promotion, Policy and Planning, Toronto Public Health

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18904.pdf>

Lauren Baker, Director, Ontario Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18905.pdf>

Solomon Boye, Community Gardens Program Coordinator, City of Toronto Rockcliffe Yard

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18906.pdf>

Paula Sobie, Founder, City Harvest

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18907.pdf>

Rhonda Teitel-Payne, Urban Agriculture Manager, The Stop Community Food Centre

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18908.pdf>

James Kuhns and Joe Nasr, C/o MetroAg Alliance for Urban Agriculture

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18909.pdf>

Debbie Fields, Executive Director, FoodShare

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/pe/bgrd/backgroundfile-18910.pdf>

Communications

(January 28, 2009) e-mail from Anne Freeman, Coordinator, Toronto Farmers' Market Network (PE.New.PE22.1.1)

(February 4, 2009) e-mail from Oliver Couto, Beekeeper (PE.Main.PE22.1.2)

(February 5, 2009) submission from Solomon Boye, Community Gardens Program Coordinator, City of Toronto Rockcliffe Yard (PE.New.PE22.1b)

Speakers

Lauren Baker, Director, Ontario Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming, c/o Sustain Ontario
 Solomon Boye, Community Gardens Program Coordinator, City of Toronto Rockcliffe
 Yard (Submission Filed)
 Paula Sobie, Founder, City Harvest
 Rhonda Teitel-Payne, Urban Agriculture Manager, The Stop Community Food Centre
 James Kuhns and Joe Nasr, c/o MetroAg Alliance for Urban Agriculture
 Debbie Field, Executive Director, FoodShare (Submission Filed)

Motions

Motion to Refer Item moved by Councillor Raymond Cho (Carried)

Thursday, February 5, 2009

Councillor Paula Fletcher, Chair, Parks and Environment Committee

Meeting Sessions

Session Date	Session Type	Start Time	End Time	Public or Closed Session
2009-02-05	Morning	9:40 AM	12:20 PM	Public

Attendance

Date and Time	Quorum	Members
2009-02-05 9:40 AM - 12:20 PM (Public Session)	Present	<i>Present:</i> Cho, Fletcher, Moeser, Nunziata, Stintz, Walker <i>Also present (non-members):</i> Councillor Shelley Carroll, Ward 33, Don Valley East, Councillor Joe Mihevc, Ward 21, St. Paul's, Councillor Joe Pantalone, Ward 19, Trinity-Spadina, Councillor Gord Perks, Ward 14, Parkdale-High Park and Councillor Adam Vaughan, Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina