

Advancing Urban Farming in Vancouver

Project Introduction and Phase One Summary

An introduction to a lively project aimed at aiding urban farmers in developing viable urban farming businesses in Vancouver and a summary of Phase One of this three-phase project: the inaugural meeting of Vancouver Urban Farmers.

Chris Thoreau and Wesley Regan

December 2010

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Executive Summary

As Canadians become more and more aware of the effects of modern industrial food production on the health of the planet they are turning to alternative, more sustainable, food sources. Urban farming, a form of urban agriculture that is income generating, often collaborative, often coordinated across multiple sites, and frequently electronically documented is one of those alternative systems. With the City of Vancouver looking to support urban food systems and a green economy as two of ten areas of focus in becoming the Greenest City in the World by 2020, the time is ripe to engage urban farmers so as to identify their needs in order to build and maintain successful urban farming businesses.

Chris Thoreau, in collaboration with Building Opportunities with Business (BOB), and with the support of the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC), is coordinating a three-phase project aimed at gathering urban farmers together to collectively identify the barriers, challenges, benefits, and opportunities in urban farming in Vancouver. BOB and the VFPC have contributed funds to support this project and a grant application has been submitted to the Organic Sector Development Program (OSDP) program for matching funds for a total project budget of \$10,700.

Phase 1 involves an inaugural meeting to act as a who's who in urban farming in Vancouver. It offers the chance for urban farmers and urban farming supporters to introduce themselves and their projects to each other, and to start sharing ideas and challenges.

Phase 2 involves a series of professionally facilitated working groups which will offer the chance for urban farmers to start building on ideas in more detail, looking for solutions, precedents, funders, and collaborators. Indicators to track the status of urban farming will also be developed.

Phase 3 involves drawing on the information collected from the working groups to begin the development of a formal urban farming network.

Phase 1 of the project took place on November 22nd with the inaugural meeting of Vancouver's urban farmers. The meeting was attended by 50 urban farmers and supporters, representing 19 urban farming projects in Vancouver. Over dinner, participants introduced themselves and their urban farming projects or their support roles to urban farmers. After dinner they broke into groups to start identifying some of the challenges urban farmers face in Vancouver, which were subsequently broken into five overall categories:

- **Business Development**
- **City and Government Support**
- **Cooperation**
- **Land Issues**
- **Infrastructure and Systems**

After an enthusiastic first meeting, which has already generated related side projects, planning is now underway for the urban farmer working groups in early 2011, the results of which will be shared at a high-profile public event in the spring.

Section One

Introduction

The Relevance of Urban Farming

The Project: Phases One to Three

(A Short) Project History

Introduction

As Canadians become more and more aware of the effects of modern industrial food production on the health of the planet they are turning to alternative, more sustainable, food sources. Small, regionally-marketed farms have contributed greatly to this shifting paradigm in Vancouver and other communities across North America, allowing consumers to make more conscious decisions about the food they purchase as well as *who* they purchase their food from.

Complementing this shift towards supporting local farms is a change in how we perceive urban food production. While urban agriculture has long been present in cities in the form of community gardens, allotment gardens, and home gardens new entrepreneurial initiatives are quickly becoming more common. These new initiatives, which herein we call *urban farming*, are unique in that they are income generating – not only contributing to regional food security but also evolving into a unique new employment sector in cities throughout North America.

As a nascent, yet quickly emerging, employment sector urban farming has the opportunity to contribute not only to local economies, but also to local communities. Economically, urban farming can provide jobs and training, generate sustainable commodities, and keep food-related purchases closer to home. In the community, urban farming can contribute to diverse urban landscapes, community skill building, and knowledge sharing.



SOLEfood on Hastings

With urban farming showing many signs of promise in Vancouver, and the City looking to support urban food systems and a green economy as two of ten areas of focus in becoming the Greenest City in the World by 2020, the time is ripe to engage urban farmers so as to identify their needs in order to build and maintain successful urban farming businesses.

Urban farming is unique in that it is income-generating¹, but there are other characteristics that differentiate it from other urban agriculture approaches:

- It is often collaborative - either between individuals, households, or organizations
- Individual projects often take place on multiple sites
- It is often documented electronically through a website or blog

¹ Non income-generating urban farming projects include “urban homesteading” where homeowners and neighbourhoods are working towards a greater degree of food self-sufficiency, beyond the hobby or recreational aspects of urban food production.

These characteristics are important to identify as they also allude to the role that urban farming can play in community engagement and education. This community and education piece, which has seemingly always existed in urban agriculture, can help ensure that urban farming is more than just another typical job.

Urban farming also helps fill the urban agriculture sustainability gap that lies in the economic realm. While most urban agriculture projects focus on environmental (food miles, organic production) and social (community engagement, skill sharing) aspects, the economic aspect is often excluded. And while there is no doubt that urban agriculture in general has an economic impact on cities, its potential as an income-generating endeavour is rarely discussed.



My Urban Farm at the Wednesday farmers market at Main and Terminal

As part of his undergraduate thesis work at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Chris Thoreau has initiated this project to gather urban farmers together to collectively identify the barriers, challenges, benefits, and opportunities in urban farming in Vancouver. From this, urban farmers can develop strategies and initiate collaborative projects to address these challenges and capitalize on the opportunities. The strategies resulting from this project can then be used to guide the grassroots formation of a formal urban farming network that would serve urban farming businesses and their surrounding communities.

As an urban farmer himself, Chris is well aware of the challenges that urban farmers face in establishing and maintaining viable urban farming businesses. Now collaborating with Building Opportunities with Business (BOB), and with the support of the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC)², Chris is aiming to engage and involve urban farmers to ensure that the information being generated is coming directly from the farmers themselves. This in turn ensures that the issues being addressed are the ones that are being seen on the ground regionally and are not just theoretical issues being applied in a blanket manner from the top down.



Inner City Farms' Peter Salvador transforming lawn into garden

² For more information on project organizers, see Appendix 1

The Relevance of Urban Farming

In most mainstream literature and media, urban agriculture (the growing, processing, and distribution of food in and around cities) is too often used synonymously with community gardens. But community gardens are just one component of many along the continuum of scale in urban agriculture. Other components include home sprouting, window gardens, backyard and kitchen gardens, processing such as yogurt making and fermentation, and of course, urban farming.

The most noticeable distinction of urban farming is its economic component – the generation of income. With its focus on food production to generate income, urban farming can play a crucial role in regional food security. But it can also contribute significantly to the education and social aspects of food security – which is currently one of the great contributions of community gardens in our urban food system.

Urban farming contributes to food security and sustainability in a number of ways:

- Urban farming provides jobs and training on all aspects of food production – a difficult skill to acquire in the city. But these skills can stretch well beyond food production into business planning, marketing, record-keeping, community outreach, and more. Such skills can be taught to anyone – opening the door for collaborations with community groups in the city.
- Urban farming may be a long way off from feeding the city, but it can help provide fresh, high quality food to the city's restaurants, grocers, public institutions, community centres, and farmers' markets – which is much appreciated by consumers.
- By working with businesses such as restaurants and grocers, urban farms can help promote the importance of urban food production in regional food security, encouraging more citizens to take notice of their food consumption habits.
- Urban commercial food production can contribute to the city's economy. By working with restaurants, grocers, and farmers markets, urban farmers can see that more money spent on food stays in the city.
- Urban farms are in a unique position to collaborate with community groups to demonstrate the principles of sustainable food production. For example, school groups can now visit a working farm without leaving the city, perhaps without even leaving their neighbourhood!
- Urban grown food can be harvested and delivered to customers the same day, often within hours of harvest. Food can only be fresher if you harvest it yourself.
- Urban farming contributes to the diverse landscapes of the city, often transforming wasteful lawn (often belonging to someone other than the farmer), or parking lots into productive soil.
- Urban farming contributes to the idea of *neighbourhood*, as most urban farmers will confirm. Though sometimes met with resistance, urban farmers are more often met with smiles, conversation with passers-by, and compliments on their efforts to beautify our city and make it more sustainable.
- Amongst all this, urban farming can be a bridge to bigger community values, most impressively demonstrated by SOLEfood in the Downtown Eastside. It is the first, we are sure, of many such projects to come.

One of the great potentials of urban farming, especially with the support of a formal urban farming network, is to generate effective indicators relating to the production of food in the city. This allows many aspects of urban food production to be recorded (with the input coming from urban farmers themselves) such as:

- Gross sales
- Number of people employed
- Area of land in food production
- Amount and types of food sold
- Community participation by urban farmers

Developing these indicators and tracking them over time is one of the many long-term visions of this project. Such indicators can play a significant role in monitoring the success of urban agriculture initiatives and contribute to the city's Greenest City Initiative. These indicators can also be used in community gardens throughout the city – expanding our ability to effectively track the food production potential of Vancouver.



Hard at work at SOLEfood - a model community-based urban farm on Hastings Street

The Project

The overall approach to this project is to facilitate conversation and idea generation amongst urban farmers in an attempt to identify the major challenges and benefits associated with urban farming in Vancouver. This will be greatly achieved through a series of working groups to be held in the New Year. During this process a set of indicators will also be developed that can be used to establish a baseline of information regarding the current status of urban farming in Vancouver. These data can then be used to help determine the success of future initiatives aimed at supporting urban farmers.

The working groups will provide a plethora of information which will help create the context for the development of a more formal urban farming network. Such a network would continue with initiatives to support urban farmers and build relationships with other community organizations. While such a network may be focused on urban farmers, it would no doubt offer benefits to other food security projects in Vancouver and throughout BC, especially when it comes to education and training initiatives.

This project will take place in three phases:

Phase One: Urban Farmer Meeting - November 22, 2010 – COMPLETE!

- This initial meeting will act as a who's who in urban farming in Vancouver. It offers the chance for urban farmers to introduce themselves and their projects to each other. It is also a chance for urban farmers to see who some of their supporters are.
- This meeting is also the first opportunity for urban farmers to start collectively sharing their stories and generating ideas about how to advance urban farming in Vancouver.

Phase Two: Urban Farmer Working Groups - January to March 2011 – PLANNING IN PROGRESS

- These working groups offer the chance for urban farmers to start building on ideas in more detail, looking for solutions, precedents, funders, and collaborators.
- While engaged in working groups farmers will also start developing a list of questions to be used to create a set of indicators for urban farming. These indicators will include land use, economics, community engagement, and other aspects of urban farming that can be reasonably measured.
- The information from the working groups and initial meeting will be presented to the public in a high-profile meet and greet event in the spring.

Phase Three: Initiating an Urban Farming Network or Collaboration – WE'RE GETTING THERE...

- Assuming such an initiative is supported, and drawing on the information collected from the working groups, the development of the urban farming network and a mandate can now begin.
- Failing the desire to develop such a network, collaborations could begin with already existing organizations to initiate projects to address urban farmer needs identified in the working groups.

(A Short) Project History

Out of the Gates

This project began in a number of places somewhat simultaneously.

In August 2010, Chris Thoreau was developing an undergraduate thesis proposal on the topic of urban farming, with the tentative end goal of establishing a formal urban farming network to support urban farmers in Vancouver. Chris had previously done two other directed studies at UBC on the topic of urban farming with a focus on developing profitable urban food production systems – one of which is now a profitable small business. In the summer of 2010 Chris had the opportunity to talk with a number of urban farmers who were all interested in the idea of an urban farming network.

On October 5th, 2010, Building Opportunities with Business convened a meeting with a small group of people (including Chris) from various groups around the Lower Mainland to explore the idea of an urban farming network and the role BOB, as a community economic development organization, could play in such a network. As a community leader in supporting local business development and increasing job opportunities for inner-city residents, BOB felt their resources and expertise could play a key role in promoting urban farming businesses in Vancouver.

Also in attendance at this meeting was Brent Mansfield, Co-chair of the Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC), which advises the city on issues relating to food security. Brent is engaged in extensive work with the Vancouver School Board, bringing food security and food policy issues into the classroom, and getting the classrooms out into the soil. Brent and the VFPC also had an interest in organizing an effort to bring urban farmers together.



Brent Mansfield getting excited about the urban farm cycle tour!

In support of Chris's three-phase project, the Food Policy Council committed funds to Phase One of the project - the urban farmer meeting - which was subsequently scheduled for late November 2010. BOB further contributed funds to the meeting and Phase Two of the project, as well as the expertise of Wes Regan – BOB's Business Development & Communications Liaison, who has committed 30% of his work time to the project.

Off and Running

The strategy for coordinating Phase One of the project was relatively simple:

- Identify and contact urban farmers and urban farming supporters in Vancouver
- Focus on pre-planning and pre-meeting networking to identify more urban farmers and supporters and work towards an inclusive process to solicit as much feedback as possible
- Invite everyone over for dinner and a chat about urban farming

Initially, ten urban farming initiatives were identified and invitations sent out to 24 urban farmers and supporters. Over the next several weeks leading up to the meeting that list grew to about 60 people, with 53 people eventually RSVPing for the meeting. By the time of the meeting, 19 urban farming initiatives had been identified in Vancouver and all but one of those initiatives were represented at the meeting.³

The original list of 24 urban farmers and supporters were also invited to a planning session which was held on November 1. This planning meeting was meant to help establish a framework and goals for the urban farmer meeting in late November. It was also a chance to solicit input from a wider group of urban farmers and supporters and get others involved in the organization effort.

The Effort So Far and What's to Come

Phase One of this project, the urban farmer meeting, took place on November 22nd in East Vancouver (summarized below). The meeting had a great turn out (on a chilly night) of 50 people and generated some great ideas for carrying forward with the project. A number of connections were made at the meeting and have already resulted in collaborations on other urban farming projects.

Planning for the working groups in the New Year is now underway. Key aspects of this planning include hiring a professional facilitator, adopting a working group model, finding additional funding, and exploring the start up of a new non-profit under the Society Act under which to operate the project. The formation of a society allows the opportunity for fundraising through donations and membership, while the building of a membership base gives us a louder voice.

Project Funding

This project has thus far received funding from the Vancouver Food Policy Council and Building Opportunities with Business. The VFPC contributed \$400 to Phase One of the project - the initial urban farmer meeting; BOB contributed \$365 to Phase One of the project and a further \$1700 to Phase Two.

On November 12, 2010 BOB submitted a grant application to the Organic Sector Development Fund (OSDP), for the amount of \$5350.00 to carry out Phase Two of the project – the urban farmer working groups. \$1700.00 of this was a request to match the funds committed by BOB, and the remaining \$3650.00 to match funds yet to be acquired. In the next several months we will work to secure the remaining \$3650 in matching funds for the OSDP grant for a total project budget of \$10,700.

³ See Appendix 2 for a complete list of meeting participants and Appendix 3 for a list of current urban farming projects in Vancouver and their contact information.

Section Two

Phase One Meeting Summary

Meeting Achievements

General Themes in Meeting Discussion Groups

Phase One Meeting Summary

The inaugural meeting of urban farmers in Vancouver took place on November 22, 2010. Perhaps that will be an important date some day!

Meeting Preparation

The meeting was held at Little Nest, a small restaurant on Vancouver's East Side catering to families with young children (but we put away most of the toys for the night). The agenda for the evening included arrival and social time; a short introduction to the project; dinner and introductions; dessert and brainstorming groups; and a group wrap-up and more socializing.

At meeting time, Little Nest was all set up and ready to host an excited group of urban farmers and supporters. Prior to the meeting, a number of people helped prepare a few visual treats to add to the evening's excitement. Ben Stevenson, of AIDS Vancouver, made up spectacular name tags for every guest, each containing a vegetable illustration to aid in expediting the process of breaking into groups. Katherine Oblock, from Farmers on 57th, helped prepare flipchart-sized descriptions of each urban farm which were hung around the room. Ilana Labow, Philip Be'er, and Tegan Adams, Chris Thoreau, and Wes Regan all arrived early to help set up the restaurant. Marta Becker made some lovely candle displays using cedar boughs from just outside the restaurant. (Thanks everyone!)



Ben Stevenson preparing name tags for the event

Wes Regan took on the role of facilitator for the evening, determined to keep the rowdiness to a minimum. He had the "goose" and the "rattlesnake", his strategic noisemakers, in hand to help control the masses when things got out of hand. Luckily he did not need to use them much – so no one got hurt! Wes's ease and enthusiasm when addressing the group was sufficient to prevent the rowdiness that so often takes place at farmer meetings.

Introductions and Dinner

Before commencing with dinner and introductions, Chris Thoreau gave a brief introduction to the project, talking about its goals, its scope, and timeline (somewhat as described above). Afterwards, Wes talked about Building Opportunities with Business, their mandate, and their role as funders and enablers in this project. Wes was followed by a brief talk from Brent Mansfield, Co-Chair of the Vancouver Food Policy Council. Brent talked about the Council's role as advisor to the city on issues related to food systems and food security, and gave a lively description of his urban farm cycle-tour project idea, which got everyone in the room smiling!

From there the evening moved right into dinner and introductions. We took a few minutes to get the food out on the tables (a beautiful spicy tomato chickpea soup) and then started working our way around the room listening to each guest describe his or her project or role in urban farming in Vancouver. This turned out to be an enlightening experience (you know, like levitating during meditation). As the guests shared the details of their projects or how they were ready to support urban farming, a bigger picture of urban farming in the city began to emerge.

Projects ranged from several backyard CSA's utilizing dozens of residential yards to several bicycle-powered initiatives to a community-oriented enterprising non-profit to SPIN farming. And the diversity of approaches and perspective on urban farming was just as diverse as the farms themselves. Equally inspiring were the supporters of urban farming, excited about how they can help.



Listening intently to introductions

Discussion Group Summaries

After dinner we broke into seven groups to start the discussion on urban farming and eat dessert – delicious chocolate brownies! The discussion groups were asked the following simple questions and asked to write down as many ideas as they could on flip chart paper provided:



Group discussions – the Onions

- **What do urban farmers need to be successful?**
- **What would an urban farming network look like?**

The ideas varied quite remarkably amongst the groups with a number of ideas showing up in many groups. But all the groups also had a number of original ideas, which leads us to believe there are a lot more ideas to come. Each group's points are listed in Appendix 4.

Although the goal of the discussion groups was to generate ideas and input regarding urban farming, they also served as an opportunity for meeting participants to engage with each other and learn more about each others' projects. A number of groups had to be scolded to get back to work as they wandered off in conversation, intrigued with each others' projects. But the digressions were well worth it since making connections was one of the meeting's goals.

Once the groups had finished their discussions they each shared their points with the rest of the groups. This was the first chance to see the range of ideas urban farmers had to share as well as the number of shared values and challenges between farmers.

Winding Down

After the groups shared their ideas there was another chance for folks to mingle and share more about their projects. It was also a time for friends to catch up with each other. With the night running a bit behind schedule, it was satisfying to see so many people staying through to the end of the night. Many people expressed excitement at where this project could lead and were looking forward to the working groups in the New Year. And after a bit of clean up we headed off for a few pints to debrief.

Meeting Achievements

This inaugural meeting was a fruitful one, realizing a number of achievements. As a first step in connecting urban farmers, the night was a smashing success, which:

- Introduced urban farmers and their projects to each other and to urban farming supporters
- Catalyzed conversation between urban farmers and supporters
- Gathered the thoughts and ideas from a diverse group on how to advance urban farming in Vancouver
- Catalyzed immediate connections between projects which have already branched into new related projects
- Generated excitement over the possibilities of urban farming in Vancouver
- Supported and promoted a local restaurant (Little Nest) which supports local farmers
- And last, but not least, this meeting allowed us all to see who is involved in the bigger picture of urban farming in Vancouver.

As a first meeting of urban farmers in Vancouver, it was a pretty good start...



This is a totally staged shot...relatively happy looking bunch, huh?

General Themes in Discussion Groups

Shortly after the meeting Chris Thoreau and Wes Regan transcribed the groups' flipchart notes into an electronic document and began grouping the ideas into broader categories. These categories of topics will be used to help establish topics of discussion for the urban farmer working groups in the New Year.

These categories are preliminary and are open to change, expansion, and deletion as more input and feedback comes in from meeting participants. The five categories that we identified, including the points that made them up, were:

1) Land Issues

Mapping, rooftops, land access (5), land tenure(3), land stewardship, inventory, soil (quality, contamination, access to) (3), aesthetics vs. practicality

2) City Support/Government Support

Bylaws, zoning, business licenses, recognition (promotion), home owner and business incentives, land use policies, building legitimacy, UF benefits, Parks Board support?, boulevard gardens/orchards (city fruit tree white paper).

3) Cooperation

Social Justice (3), restaurant relationships, buying clubs, network or professional association?(3) Common challenges (2), sharing stories (3), knowledge sharing (4) extension officer or community liaison (6), website, listserv and online communication (14) CSA Sharing and other resource sharing (3), monthly meetings, registry (also appears in business dev) resource sourcing, community involvement (3) collaboration with other groups (3)

4) Business Development:

Financing (4), marketing (9), alternative economies, certification, best practices, events, legitimacy and public voice (marketing and communications), business planning program (2), agricultural benefits, legal advice, registry (also appears in cooperation) small farmers markets, limit bureaucracy, education (4) 'dispelling the local food is expensive myth', entrepreneurship, public image

5) Infrastructure & Systems:

storage (3), warehouse (2), greenhouse, compost, tool storage/sharing, moveable gardens, distribution, centre, SPIN, issues of governance

A 6th issue already coming up is Governance. This needs to be deferred until we know what we need governance for i.e. a network, a professional association, a co-op or another body.

A 6th issue alluded to is governance, though we felt that perhaps this topic needs to be deferred until we know what we need governance for i.e. a network, a professional association, a co-operative, or another body.

In Closing

With urban food systems being a popular topic at the municipal level across the country, and the City of Vancouver aiming to be the World's Greenest City by 2020, the time to promote urban farming could not be better. This project is aiming to take a ground up approach to finding what role urban farmers can play in supporting the city's urban food and green economy goals.

The key to the success of this project lies in participation from Vancouver's urban farmers. Without input from urban farmers, it is hard to initiate projects, policies, or research with any certainty they will serve the urban farming community. The November meeting was a good first step towards identifying the needs of urban farmers. And as the project continues we can start to identify how urban farmers can help contribute to the needs of Vancouver communities.



Developing the farm at the George Pearson Centre (Farmers on 57th)



Out with the lawn, in with the food

Appendix 1 – About the Organizers

Wes Regan (wes.regan@bobics.org) is Business Development & Communications Associate at Building opportunities with Business Inner-City Society (BOB). BOB was formed in 2005 as a comprehensive Community Economic Development agency providing employment, training, and business development services in Vancouver's inner-city. Completing his Associate's Degree in Geography at Langara College in spring 2009, Wes continued his studies at Simon Fraser University, specializing in Urban Studies and Political Geography in the school's new Faculty of Environment.

In the final semesters of his undergraduate studies he is a member of the Simon Fraser Public Interest Research Group and a member of Golden Key Honours Society. Having been hired on at BOB in January of 2010 through SFU Co-op, Wes brings several years of communications, marketing and management experience as well as a passion for urban planning, sustainability and community economic development. He is a director on the Board of the Vancouver Aquafarm Society, a non-profit dedicated to the promotion of aquaculture in urban environments, and a member of the Hastings Crossing BIA Formation Committee. Wes is also on the Board of Directors for the Langara College Alumni Society.

Chris Thoreau (myurbanfarm@gmail.com) operates My Urban Farm, a unique urban farming business in Vancouver specializing in growing sunflower sprouts. In his second year he has built the business into a profitable and respected contribution to the local food chain. Chris is currently finishing his undergraduate degree in Agroecology at UBC with a focus on soils, urban farming, and plant breeding. Prior to his time at UBC, Chris operated *Influence Organics* – a small Certified Organic farm on Vancouver Island (IOPA #1315). Here he utilized no-till soil management techniques in conjunction with permaculture principles to grow a variety of food for local markets, restaurants, and CSAs. He simultaneously spent six years volunteering and working with the Victoria Compost Education Centre as the on-site gardener, while also developing and delivering workshops for the public. During his time in Victoria, Chris spent two years on the Islands' Organic Producers Association (IOPA) board of directors and certification committee, and two years on the board of the Moss Street Market. He has helped organize and host a number of community events including workshops, conferences, and farm tours. Chris is also an IOIA-trained organic inspector and a member of the Vancouver Food Policy Council.

Brent Mansfield (brentmansfield@gmail.com), in his role as an elementary school teacher and garden project coordinator, is interested in working to see school food systems transformed. After working as an elementary school teacher within the Vancouver School Board for almost three years Brent is now working in two roles involving schools as central elements within the context of working towards a healthy, sustainable and just food system. He is the Community Liaison for the Think&EatGreen@School Project, a community university research alliance project based out of the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at UBC in partnership with the Vancouver School Board and many other community organizations. He also gets to get his hands in the soil regularly through his role as the Garden Project Coordinator of Cultivating a Health Community in the Grandview/ᐃuuqinak'uuh Garden, a project funded by Vancouver Coastal Health. Brent feels privileged to be able to bring his passion and energy to the Vancouver Food Policy Council as one of the co-chairs. The Vancouver Food Policy Council (VFPC) is an advisory group to Vancouver City Council, comprised of passionate people from various sectors of the local food system.

Appendix 2 – List of November 22 Meeting Participants

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Kevin Cooper (Market Cargo) | 40 Peter Ladner |
| 2 David van Seters (SPUD) | 41 Marc Schutzbank (Loutet Park Urban Farm) |
| 3 Art Bomke (UBC) | 42 Justin Faubert (LandWaterFork) |
| 4 Rubina Jamal | 43 Brian Harris (FF/CF) |
| 5 Brent Mansfield (Food Policy Council) | 44 Mark Bomford (UBC Farm) |
| 6 Ross Moster (FPC, Village Vancouver) | 45 Anna Rallings (Natural Urban Growers) |
| 7 Ben Stevenson (AIDS Vancouver) | 46 Georgia Stanley (BCAFM) |
| 8 Philip Be'er (Be'er Necessities) | 47 Curtis Stone (Green City Acres – Kelowna) |
| 9 Clelie Murray-Chevrier (Backyard Bounty) | 48 Elizabeth Quinn (BC Association of Farmers Markets) |
| 10 Katherine Oblock (Farmers on 57th) | 49 Wes Regan (Building Opportunities with Business) |
| 11 Ilana Labow (Fresh Roots Urban CSA) | 50 Chris Thoreau (My Urban Farm) |
| 12 Ward Teulon (CityFarmBoy) | |
| 13 Tegan Adams (Inner City Farms) | |
| 14 Grant Watson (Grant's Gournet Gardens) | |
| 15 Gray Oron (Fresh Roots) | |
| 16 Peter Salvador (ICF) | |
| 17 Will Valley (ICF) | |
| 18 Andrew Fleming (ICF) | |
| 19 Erin Innes (Permaculture Designer)) | |
| 20 Camil Dumont (ICF) | |
| 21 Kris Dimnik (ICF) | |
| 22 Craig Heighway (Kitsilano Farms) | |
| 23 Karen Hawbolt (Sweet Digz Urban farm) | |
| 24 Duncan Martin (Backyard Bounty) | |
| 25 Scott Bell (UBC Farm) | |
| 26 Seann Dory (SOLEFood) | |
| 27 Matthew Kemshaw (EYA) | |
| 28 Les Lavkulich (UBC) | |
| 29 Jen Rashleigh (farmers on 57th) | |
| 30 Rudi Krause (Urban Pilgrim Farm) | |
| 31 Kimi Hendess (Sweet Digz) | |
| 32 Ryan Weemhoff (Urban Pilgrim Farm) | |
| 33 Chris Mills (ICF) | |
| 34 Sasha Faminoff (Rich. Sharing Farm) | |
| 35 Julia Hilton (Two-Block Diet) | |
| 36 Michael Levenston (City Farmer) | |
| 37 Emi Do (Southlands Farm) | |
| 38 Seaton (FarmCity) | |
| 39 Arzeena Hamir (Richmond Food Security Society) | |

Appendix 3 –Urban Farming Projects in Vancouver

	Farm Name	Organizers	Contact
1	CityFarmBoy	Ward Teulon	wteulon@gmail.com
2	Kitsilano Farms	Craig Heighway	contact@kitsilanofarms.com
3	Fresh Roots Urban Farm	Ilana Labow and Gray Oron	ilana@freshroots.ca
4	My Urban Farm	Chris Thoreau	myurbanfarm@gmail.com
5	SOLEfood	Seann Dory	solefood@unitedwecan.ca
6	UBC Farm	Scott Bell, Mark Bomford, Andrea Morgan, Gemma Clark, Tim Carter, Amy Frye	farmteam@interchange.ubc.ca
7	Two-Block Diet	Julia Hilton, Kate Sutherland and neighbours	ladyfiddlehead@gmail.com
8	Farmers on 57 th	Jen Rashleigh, Katherine Oblock, Karen Ageson, Jess Henry, Tess Wetherhill	jkrashleigh@gmail.com
9	Inner City Farms	Will Valley, Peter Salvador, Andrew Fleming, Kris Dimnik, Camil Dumont, Chris Mills,	wcvally@yahoo.ca
10	Southlands Farm	Emi Do	emi.f.do@gmail.com
11	Urban Pilgrim Farm	Rudi Krause, Ryan Weemhoff	anothersparrow@hotmail.com
12	Backyard Bounty Collective (4)	Clelie Murray-Chevrier, Dylan Stan, Duncan Martin, Jodi Peters	info@backyardbountycollective.com
13	Sweet Digz Urban	Karen Hawbolt, Kimi Hendess	auntiekareno@hotmail.com
14	24 Carrots Co.	Martin Gunst	martingunst@gmail.com
15	Market Cargo	Kevin Cooper	kcscooper@gmail.com
16	FarmCity Food Gardens	Seaton	seaton@farmcity.ca
17	Grant's Gourmet Gardens	Grant Watson	grant@gourmetgardens.ca
18	Environmental Youth Alliance	Matthew Kemshaw and Co.	info@eya.ca
19	Duncan's Backyard henhouses	Duncan Martin	DailyEggs@gmail.com

Appendix 4 – Discussion Group Notes

Carrots

- Accessibility of land. How to access land? Database of lots available
- Value food production vs. housing?
- Building roof top gardens
- Degentrification campaigns
- 31,000 sq. ft roof top - a rooftop garden that was recently built in Montreal. www.lufa.com .
- and yes, it is a 31000 sq ft greenhouse downtown Montreal
- Co-operative purchasing; tool lending; cold storage
 - o What type of co-op model?
 - o Facilities to support different connections
 - o Sharing resources – land
 - o Skill share
 - o CSA – cooperatives – cooperative selling
- Map - where are all these businesses? Community mapping urban farms
- \$ support from city – to support mapping project (UBC, City Farmer)
- Alliance – Community Urban Farm Alliance – pay a membership, website, communication, access land to members
- Appeal to wider audience as an alliance
- Financial
 - o Farmer sustainability and farm family sustainability
- How to create income to support family
- Gender? Imbalance?
- Rent. Full time jobs – not enough work – fear of quitting jobs – high cost of housing
- Emotional community support from other urban farmers
- Start up \$; loans
- Lack of land security
- Winter support – skillshare – support
 - o Distribution including backyard gardeners
- How does Sustainability affect my farming?
- Winter finances. Why quit your job when you'll be unemployed in winter - what can be grown with any regularity in the wintertime?
- Alliance – support, website, discussion forum
- Cooperation
 - o Resource sharing , purchasing, mapping, collection
 - o Land availability

Asparagus

- Buying clubs
 - o Collective buying
- Land Inventory
 - o Role of financial incentive for land use
- Space
 - o For compost
 - o For storage

- o For projects
 - o Chris Diplock on Village Vancouver has put out a call to people interested in starting a tool library (Has this begun?)
 - I (Chris T.) chatted with him about this briefly but nothing has arisen yet.
- Professional association of urban farmers
 - o Evaluate/certify urban farmers
 - o Legitimacy
 - o Farmers' institute – model?
 - o Advocacy
 - o Public voice
- How can we make it grow
 - o Secured land or movable gardens
 - o Role of public land
 - o Systems for use in temporary land areas
 - o Connect to city services
- Who is our market?
- Policies for land use
 - o Professional relationships between cities and urban farmers
- Business Planning Program

Cabbage/Lettuce/I'm confused

- Wondering about common challenges to urban food production
 - o Land, soil
- Re: not getting the benefits that rural farmers have (tax benefits, tax breaks, access to ag programs & services)
- Uncertainty of continuity on land
 - o Land owners may sell property, which is then re-developed
- Legal advice around tenure, etc...
- Land insecurity
- Sharing success stories (Curtis)
- Knowledge sharing – facilitating workshops
- Extension officer
 - o From within urban farming community
 - o Centre? Funding?
- Lobbying for municipal support at this current point
- Farm visits by neighbourhood
- Listserv and Online community building
- Advantages and disadvantages of marketing channels
- Best practices guide to CSAs.
- Providing support to each other
- CSA sharing – common drop off point
- Monthly meetings

Garlic

- Education vs. marketing
- How can we all benefit from a unified strategy?
- Big market for local food – distribution systems
- Network can help w/education. Marketing, distribution
- Restaurant relationships
- Perception that more expensive – dispel myth (when all factors are taken into consideration)
- A common language/voice
- Relation to say VCAN for instance
- Presence in food hub
- Entrepreneurial nature
- Models- non-profit, social enterprise, for-profit
- Address demand side for food- supply side
 - o Can be problematic – UA can also be catalyst for rural agriculture revitalization
 - o What does a sustainable business look like?
 - o Is UF sustainable?
 - o How can we make ourselves the “cool ones”
 - o How many people know a farmer
 - o Village Vancouver “Twin Harvest” project idea.
 - § Combining energy generation (geothermal) with urban farming
 - § EYA partnership w/ schools
 - o Some UFs doing OK; takes a lot of dedication
- How do you convince kids to go into farming when the examples of successful farming are very limited
- What would make UF more viable
- Network
 - o coordinate people doing it
 - o marketing strategy
- City cooperation –break down red tape, make it easy
- Subsidies to level playing field
- UF is social good - perhaps favourable policies
 - o Social good = values based marketing
 - o City can be customer – support with outreach
- Articulate advantages of really local food
 - o Crucial for survival of planet
 - o Sustainable, more resilient

Kale

- Incentives for urban farming
 - o Valuing home farms
 - o Tax breaks for owners
 - o Making backyards desirable
 - o Farming registry
- Backyard cooperative
 - o Knowledge sharing
 - o Resource sharing among homes and farmers
 - o Marketing
- Resource supplies and sourcing
 - o Networking and storage/warehousing
- How to connect farmers needs without creating more bureaucracy
 - o Don't want more waste/time sinks
- Network on soil contamination
 - o City managed map agro-testing; where to locate sites
- Bulletin board
- Professional association: standards of business
- Skill sharing
 - o Capacity sharing
 - o Coordinating hub
- Community engagement/liaison
- Virtual hubs/network coordination
 - o Indexing/archives; forums
 - o Customers brought in. skills/resources shared
 - o Stream lining information & dissemination from centralized resource
- SPIN farming message boards
 - o Very active
 - o Feedback from farmers
- Localized forum for Vancouver
- Markets for smaller producers
 - o Moving away from Van. Farmers markets
 - o Coordinating neighbourhood markets
 - § Need security and certification
 - o Mobilizing customers to smaller markets
 - o Piggy- backing on existing markets
 - o Designated urban farming market
- Home Growin

Onions

- Supports outside mainstream financial means
 - o Alternative economy model
- DTES food dollars
 - o One e.g. of making this accessible
- Volunteer model where people get farmers' market dollars
- Slow Food Terra Madre event in January highlighting local CSAa
- Similar event for urban farmers (network to provide pool of resources)

- o Website connections
 - o Marketing and media campaign
 - o Local giving fair
- Land use issues
 - o Connection to land audit
 - § Opening up land for urban farming
- Policy issues
 - o Gardens on boulevards
 - o Land inventory
 - o Remediation of land
 - o Vacant land left for so long becomes available
 - o Zoning: food growing rather than parking spots
 - o Incentives (tax breaks)
- In order for it to be sustainable it must be profitable
 - o Including community support
- Mentorship from more experienced farmers
 - o Production model
- Diversifying crops and markets
- Introducing people to new foods
 - o Education piece
- Subsidies for water collection
- Paradigm shift: from grass to food
- Linking energy in this room to groups like NFU, etc
 - o Farmers institute
 - § Like other around the province
 - § Common voice
 - § Shared resources
 - § To connect to other provincial issues

Radish

- Greenhouse space
- Tool storage and sharing
- Vehicle/gas-powered tool sharing
- Cooler space/produce storage
- Info on new initiatives
- Availability of produce for the public
- More capital
- A pooling of resources
- Aesthetics vs. practicality
- City policy that encourages urban farming
- Support from Parks board
- Availability of land
- Encouraging land owners to get involved