

Urban Agriculture: notes on a City Staff Report May 28 2009

p.1. “there is increasing demand from City park users to allocate additional city lands, particularly parkland, for the purpose of gardening and food production. Community groups [which?] and organizations experienced in urban food production [which?] have continued to make urban agriculture a valuable community building exercise as well as endeavoring to address the food security issues that are prevalent in Priority Neighborhoods.”

“This report...provides a platform to continue the policy development work needed to support the increase of opportunities for food production in the City, with a focus on maintaining collaborative working relationships among City Divisions and community organizations. [which?]”

“Urban agricultural activities.”

July 16-19 2007: council voted to “establish an **Enviro-Food Working Group** to develop and implement actions to promote local food production, review City procurement policies, increase community gardens and identify ways to remove barriers to the expansion of local markets that sell locally produced food.” [who is on it?]

June 16 2008: Board of Health directed the MOH to “convene a panel of community food experts [who?] and senior city staff [who?] to develop a Toronto Food Strategy, a food action plan to ensure a healthy Toronto. The **steering group is considering** food from a broad health perspective including how food solutions can address diet-related disease, the recession, hunger and climate change. The recommendations will focus on building on our city’s existing, and often underused, assets.”

September 2008: Toronto Environment Office established an **interdivisional working group**, with reps from City Planning, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, PFR, Social Development, Finance and Administration, TCHC, Environment Office, Public Health, Food Policy Council, TRCA, and Transportation (Clean and Beautiful). Task: “the development of a cohesive urban agricultural policy, information collection and discussion of issues as they relate to their respective divisional programs.”

The two departments in charge of this – PFR and the Toronto Environment Office – were directed to write this urban ag report on Feb.5 2009.

Ward 18:

1999: The Community Garden Action Plan recommended the installation of a community garden in every ward. Perth-Dupont Community garden was installed in ____.

2001: The Food and Hunger Action Committee “sought to address issues of food insecurity.” Dufferin Grove got two grants in ___ and spring 2003 to put community kitchens into the rink house. In December 2003, Health and Safety inspectors said it was dangerous to have a kitchen connected to the zamboni garage and asked for its removal.

Additional inspections by Fire and Public Health concluded that this removal was not warranted.

2008-9 – at DGP – fence repair difficult or impossible to get for gardens. We buy our own. Also – no official support for rec staff “children’s gardens” programming,

p. 5 City of Toronto, mainly PFR, “operates 52 community gardens [list] and 12 allotment gardens [where?] in several City parks, as well as an urban farm on TRCA owned land. PFR provides community outreach, technical support, and training in urban agricultural practices and seedling production to numerous community organizations.” [which?] ...PFR “will be expanding its existing community and allotment garden spaces in 2009 (where opportunities and demand warrant). The Division is also developing a policy framework to increase opportunities for urban agriculture in City parks and other open space areas, building upon current practices and implementation criteria. [which practices and criteria?] If approved, the framework would consider such activities as: the creation of more community garden and allotment spaces in parks and open space areas for growing food; providing more opportunities for selling locally grown food; the installation of more bake ovens in city parks and; [sic] other initiatives.”

PFR Division “will be reporting back on a proposed urban agricultural strategy for City owned parkland.” [when?]

p. 7 Insurance for “claims that might arise”: “Currently, urban food projects on City lands are covered under the City’s general umbrella policy.”

p.8 The Toronto Environment Office recognizes “the need for not-for-profit community groups to secure numerous sources of funding to make their urban agriculture projects viable...”

p.10: “It is clear that additional money and staff resources are necessary to move forward with the development of divisional strategies that support urban agriculture activities....”

The Food Security Investment Program (FSIP). Started in 2005, managed by the Social Development, Finance and Administration Division. Annual budget of \$300,000: that is, \$118,000 to Foodshare to pay food animators, and about \$20,000 each for nine organizations to have “local gardens, community kitchens and market projects..” [who?]

p.11: who does what:

PFR: supports community, allotment, children’s teaching gardens and an urban farm, also bake ovens and farmers’ markets.

Public Health: manages school food gardens and footprint gardens program, which supports 20 food gardens on school property [where?]; partnership with Foodshare.

TCHC: “hosts some of the most successful community gardens in the City.” [which?]

Toronto Environment Office 2009 “Funds to Increase Lands for Urban Food Production”

\$500,000 in total (2008 carry forward and 2009) One-time fund.

\$170,000 for 23 community garden projects to be installed or expanded in 2009 by TCHC and Public Health. [where? Who is doing it? Presumably Sandra and Carmen]

\$105,000 to Toronto Environment Office for “projects that focus on local food production and consumption.” [where?]

\$215,000 to PFR to:

- expand the Children’s Garden Program
- upgrade the septic system at Black Creek Urban Farm
- repair Rockcliffe Yard greenhouse
- environmental testing
- expansion and upgrading of existing community and allotment gardens

\$10,000 to City/TDSB/York U partnership for a feasibility study for an urban farm on school lands.

p.12: “In 2008, urban agriculture projects received \$335,087 in [Toronto Environment Office “Live Green Toronto Community Investment Program and Capital Projects] funding.” [Breakdown?]