

Minutes
Mayor's Initiative for a Healthy and Sustainable Food System
October 12, 2012
City Hall, Room 209, 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

1. Introductions of meeting attendees.

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves. Present: Mayor Michael Brennan, Councilor David Marshall, Tim Fuller (Healthy Portland-City of Portland), Jim Hanna (United Way), Troy Moon (COP), Ian Houseal (COP), Bethany Sanborn (COP), Craig Lapine (Cultivating Community), Isabel Mullin (Representative Pringree's Office), Tyler Frank (Garbage to Garden), Kevin Roche (EcoMaine), Anna Sommo (Cultivating Community), Mike Dickson (Citizen), Monique Coombs, Lisa Fernandes (Eat Local Foods Coalition), Jeremy Bloom (Internet Farmer), Christopher Tripp (Intern, COP Mayors Office), Alexandra May, John Naylor (Rosemont), Ralph Carmona (Maine Global Institute), Ron Adams (Portland Public Schools), Jackie Potter (Citizen), Jonah Fertig (Local Sprouts Cooperative), Mike Dixon (Citizen), Joe Fournier (Rosemont).

2. Review and approval of the minutes from September 13, 2012.

The minutes from the September 13 meeting were reviewed and approved by the group.

3. Presentation by Ecomaine on regional composting feasibility study.

Kevin Roche presented on behalf of EcoMaine. EcoMaine consists of 21 owner communities and is a quasi-governmental agency. Portland owns the largest percentage of EcoMaine at 20% with the smallest town ownership percentage being .5%.

Kevin presented about Food Waste Composting (or organics recycling or recovery). A Composting Committed was started in Portland in '06-'07 to begin the conversation. EcoMaine is currently conducting a feasibility study to look at the best practices associated with organics recovery (food, yard and pet waste), and plans to investigate/consider all options. EcoMaine has put out an RFP for the study and received 10 proposals. Applicant interviews will be conducted over the next week. The study, which is scheduled to take 6-8 months will examine best practices and development opportunities, as well as overall project costs and costs for owner communities. Study outcomes around cost and preferred practices will be disseminated back to owner communities.

Kevin Roche stated that, in his opinion, it is not *is* this type of community-wide organics recovery program going to happen, but *when*.

Discussion around current community compost practices also took place. Two meeting attendees noted that individuals can already do home composting and that there is an educational component that needs to be attended to (both to encourage backyard composting, as well as educate about alternatives), although this may not be EcoMaine's responsibility. Roche responded by saying that EcoMaine supports backyard composting, but feels that a larger structure must be in place for those

who are unable or uninterested in composting. Also, there are larger entities in the city where backyard composting would not work (specifically food waste from large hospitals)

Craig Lapine mention that the city may want to play a role in providing incentives to encourage citizens to compost. For example, one main incentive of the current recycling program is the price of blue trash bags. Is there a similar incentive program that can be established for organics recovery?

4. Presentation by Garbage to Garden Composting.

Tyler Frank presented on Garbage to Garden composting, a small business collecting organics from Portland area residents and delivering them to Benson Farms. Currently there are 500 customers. Need to be able to transport the organics safely and to a licensed facility.
(www.garbagetogarden.org)

5. Group discussion on two presentations.

Jeremy Bloom asked what the group could do to be helpful. Kevin Roche responded that the best thing would be to keep an open mind. Review the feasibility study. He stated that we need to do the right thing, in the right way, as not to run into problems, such as odor. Spreading the word and educating about organics being the next big thing that can be removed from the waste stream. Many big cities are already participating in such projects (San Francisco, Toronto, Seattle, to name a few).

Councilor David Marshall asked Kevin Roche if he knew of existing facilities in other areas that capture methane gas for energy use. Kevin Roche's response was that the process of anaerobic digestion allows for the capture of methane gas. It was noted that recent price decreases in selling electricity would make it difficult to get a return on investment of capturing and selling methane gas for energy. There would need to be a subsidy to make this process economically feasible.

Ron Adams made the suggestion that the committee could support education around composting and organic waste management in the community. Committee members discussed the following:

- 1) the city's potential in education around yard waste and organics recycling
- 2) what items to compost
- 3) what to do about odor and rodent infestation (specifically around backyard composting)

Lisa Fernandes mention that Cooperative Extension is looking to develop a Master Composter certification program in the future.

Troy Moon from the City of Portland Public Services was asked about what the Riverside Facility currently has related to composting and organics recycling. Responded that Riverside has a small composting facility that is currently used by local schools, some restaurants and a few grocery stores, and is in the process of growing.

6. Updates:

a. **Farmer's market.**

Ann Freeman, an Attorney with the City of Portland, provided an update on the farmers market. Current city ordinance requires that changes to the market must include input from the Farmers Market Association (FMA). Recently the FMA approached the city with proposed ordinance changes, specifically restructuring the control of the market to a hybrid option, joint control by the FMA and the city. The option discussed would give the FMA a license to operate the market rather than the City Clerk granting licenses to individual farmers. This has become a common practice among many other communities. The city reviewed the by-laws and the structure and felt comfortable with this structure. This was also reviewed and approved by the Public Safety, Health and Human Services Committee members and the committee tasked city staff to draft a new licensing agreement with this new structure. Farmers requested a delay in the process to talk with other members and get through the growing season. The current plan for the license agreement is that the PSHHS Committee will vote during the January meeting. Timing was an important consideration as license renewals are due in March. Ann Freeman will send a draft to Ian Houseal for distribution.

Councilor David Marshall stated that he has heard feedback from some farmers would like the current structure and anticipates discussion at the January 2013 PSHHS Committee meeting. Feedback is appreciated before the January meeting as we are looking for a good, transparent system.

Many committee members expressed their interest in having a broader discussion involving farmers and other stakeholders about options moving forward. Councilor Marshall indicated that meeting attendees can and should engage with Councilors on the PSHHS Committee before the January meeting if a broader discussion is desired. Interest was also expressed in an earlier discussion on this subject as well.

Monique Coombs mentioned that fisheries should be part of this conversation as well. Questions were raised about how fisheries become part of the market and if this is possible. Some raised the question of whether Maine Law allows for fish to be sold at markets. Overall assumption was yes, but currently unconfirmed. Monique Coombs is looking for a possible contact to start this discussion. Councilor Marshall suggested initiating policy discussions that would happen with elected officials.

Jackie Potter suggested a subcommittee of this group hold a discussion session with interested parties, including farmers. The Portland Food Enterprises subcommittee, chaired by Potter, will convene and interested parties should contact her. The group agreed to hear back from the subcommittee on information and suggestions to the Council.

Tim Fuller shared the success of the SNAP Program at the Farmer's Market. Since August 2011 over \$60,000 in SNAP benefits have been redeemed. It should be noted that as of 10.10.12 the market is no longer accepting SNAP benefits due to constraints on personal and time. Further discussion of this should take place.

b. Deputy Secretary of Agriculture's visit to Portland.

This item was not addressed due to insufficient time.

c. Farm stand ordinance.

This item was not addressed due to insufficient time.

d. School kitchen.

This item was not addressed due to insufficient time.

e. Subcommittee activity.

Please take a look at the subcommittee list. If you would like support from City Staff please contact Ian Houseal at ihouseal@portlandmaine.gov. Ian will send out information to those who have decided to chair committees.

7. Confirm date for next meeting: The next meeting is scheduled for November 9, 2012 at 10:00 AM.

The next meeting is Friday, November 9, 2012 from 10-11:30 in Room 209 at City Hall.