

TUG Annual Membership Meeting Minutes March 2, 2016

Recognition

- Joe Nasr introduced and thanked the Steering Committee for their work in 2015.
- Funders acknowledged: Ontario Trillium Foundation, City of Toronto (Toronto Public Health, Toronto Food Policy Council, Live Green Toronto), Metcalf Foundation, McConnell Foundation, Ontario Local Food Fund, Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance, Carrot Cache
- Total amount raised \$220,200 (14 months)

Two things to know about TUG's operating model:

1. We are about as virtual as you can get – the equivalent of 1 full time and 1 part-time staff, no office, no admin support, no tech support, no bookkeeper
 2. We rely on partner organizations to do two things:
 - a. Partner on our grants
 - b. Be the on-the-ground connectors in communities, developing and maintaining relationships with local growers
- Our two amazing partners for 2015 were **Greenest City** and **North York Harvest Food Bank**. Thanks to Ayal, Monique Kelemen, Ryan Noble and Sarah Watson
 - Also worked with partners in:
 - Rexdale – Jim Graham and Eleanor Jimenez from Panorama Community Garden Rexdale Community Garden Network and Tania Fernandes from Rexdale CHC
 - Access Alliance – Lara Mrosovsky and Ziadh Rabbani
 - Special kudos to city staff Lauren Baker, Josephine Archbold and Fenicia Lewis-Dowlin for their fantastic work on the CEED gardens. Lauren is taking a year's leave to work on the Global Alliance for the Future of Food. Josephine will be on maternity leave shortly.
 - Institutional partners – some provide funding, also work on programming together
 - City of Toronto – Toronto Public Health, Social Development Finance and Administration, Toronto Food Policy Council
 - Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance
 - Vineland Research and Innovation Centre

TUG Project Updates

See attached presentation

Recognition of local award winners – BUFCO, Arlene Throness from Rye's Homegrown and Johanne Daoust – details on TUG site under News

Wally mentioned Well Being in Toronto website <http://map.toronto.ca/wellbeing> as a great source of data, including the equity score for each neighbourhood

Amelia Rose recognized for his work creating the TUG Google group and earlier version of the TUG website

Questions:

CEED - instead of monetizing gardening, how about supporting barter and exchange instead?

A: Bartering is already very common in community gardens, CEED is about opening up a new opportunity

Who is installing the infrastructure in CEED gardens?

A: Combination of some City contributions, mostly the community agencies will be responsible

How will people gain access to the farms? A lottery system?

A: All will have slightly different but transparent application processes

Transitioning to a Non-Profit Organization - Arlene Hazzan Green, TUG Steering Committee member

- Transformation process of going from an informal network to more formal structure
- Incorporation as a not for profit, but not charitable
- Changes to TUG membership (see attached)
- Coordinators will send info about membership out to TUG members and Google group for feedback, people will have two weeks to respond

Questions

How will membership be accessible to seniors and the disabled?

A: Pay what you can option

Will you have office space?

A: Not in our current plans – keeping our expenses to a minimum

What's the expectation of being a member?

A: Participate in activities, promote TUG where possible, give feedback, vote at AGM, membership fee or in-kind contribution

How will TUG do advocacy when charities must limit advocacy work to 10%?

A: As a non-profit rather than a charity, we don't have to follow the 10% rule. We still need to be careful, we have member agencies who may be affected by our work. Need to have a discussion about how TUG can be most effective as an advocate.

Visitor Introduction – Henk Renting, RUAF Foundation

<http://www.ruaf.org/>

The RUAF Foundation is a global network with member organisations in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe together constituting a leading centre of expertise in the field of (intra- and peri-) Urban Agriculture and City Region Food Strategies. Since 1999, RUAF supports local governments, urban producer organisations, NGOs, CBOs, research centres and other stakeholders with training, technical assistance, action-research, policy lobby, advocacy and design in the field of urban agriculture and urban food strategies. RUAF publishes the Urban

Agriculture Magazine, books, technical and methodological guidelines and working papers on urban agriculture and city region food systems reaching about 800.000 readers globally today. In addition, we support local, national and international advocacy and learning activities.

Dinner

Maizal Quesadilla Café <http://www.maizal.ca/> are so committed to traditional Mexican food they grow their own corn with local farmers and grind it to make fresh tortillas.

Sonam's Tibetan momos & noodles – Sonam grows vegetables in a number of gardens in the west end, prepares food at the West End Food Coop and then sells it at WEFC and Sorauren Farmers Market.

Table Discussions

Growing Year Round

Note taker – Daniel Enkin

- Get a hoop house
- Plastic insulates
- Compost provides heat
- Second hoop inside
- Remy: cloth that insulates and lets light in
- Need energy to truly grow year round
- Some crops good for winter (kale, spinach)
- Use woodchips to insulate
- Don't use manure or city compost as they are full of toxins
- Drill geothermal type pipe to heat
- Black Creek
- Eliot Coleman – freeze water bottles in greenhouse to absorb cold (Winter Harvest Handbook)
- Coffee grounds are good for getting rid of slugs
- Plywood sheets on hoop houses for insulation
- Seed in late summer/early fall, harvest in December/January
- Biggest challenge is growing in winter (new growth)
- Need 10 hours of daylight
- Can't heat with stove top burner device from Canadian Tire

Education and Promotion of Urban Agriculture

- Educating children is crucial – getting into schools
- Food literacy curricula are being developed for elementary and high school students
- BUT waiting for kids to grow up and actively change systems takes a decade; how do we get parents directly involved?
- How do we market ourselves/events/workshops and ensure that the general public is interested and becomes involved?
- STRATEGY: Find a way to make your event free and advertise it as free

- STRATEGY: Attach yourself to a trendy cause/institution, and then bring the conversation back to what you are doing
- STRATEGY: Talk to local schools and see if they will send flyers home with their students
- Remember to keep accessibility – including language and translation – in mind
- As growers and food system workers we are too fragmented; we need to connect all of the different organizations across Toronto
- POSSIBLE ACTION: Identify and connect with other similar groups to build capacity
- POSSIBLE ACTION: Form a more powerful group with the financial backing (eg. from membership fees) to be able to buy ad time, produce targeted social media campaigns
- QUESTION: Is TUG a good candidate to become this group?
- When the garden map is finalized, it can be a great tool to make this happen
- STRATEGY: Create a catchy and wide-reaching social media campaign – aimed at the general public, and not the already converted
- QUESTION: How do we make content more accessible? Ie. Easier to upload to the website, to become involved remotely, instead of relying on being in a specific neighbourhood → simpler methods of knowledge transfer
- We need to make urban farming, food educating, etc. more respected professions
- Also make sure the general public recognizes these not only as professions but as crucial life school, and important components of other aspects of life (eg. institutional food, etc.)
- Ontario Minister of the Environment, Glen Murray, is developing strategies for reducing carbon footprints. His team has identified promoting urban agriculture as a strategy for individuals and households to reduce their carbon footprints. *** There is money being allocated to implement this strategy (\$20 million?)
- POSSIBLE ACTION: We need to get a slice of this pie! Propose an advertising/PSA campaign to promote urban agriculture across the province – it's about the environment, food access, health, respect, mindset, etc.
- Possible liaison in his office: Angus Affleck, constituency and outreach associate
- Possible lead from our discussion: Stephanie Conroy, Building Roots (stephanie.conroy@live.ca)