



Oregon Solutions – Portland Community Gardens project
October 2, 2009
9 am – 12:00 pm
Portland City Hall – Rose Room
Draft meeting notes

City Commissioner Nick Fish welcomed the diverse group of approximately 30 people to the first team meeting of the Portland Community Gardens project. He began by thanking many people in the room (and Leslie Pohl-Kosbah on the phone) for their great work in leading us to where we are today with community gardens. So much has been done and this project is designed to build and support that work. This is our time to join together and develop creative and collaborative ways to meet the demand to grow food in Portland.

Participants introduced themselves, gave a brief background of their work related to community gardens and expressed how their work can fit in with the project. At the end of this meeting, Oregon Solutions collected one page information sheets from all participants outlining this information to assist in forming three workgroups from which the large group will be divided. (see work group list)

Stephanie Hallock, OS project manager, quickly outlined the Oregon Solutions process. Last spring, community members approached Oregon Solutions to conduct an assessment of this opportunity. Oregon Solutions interviewed many participants about the potential for collaboration and the key issues related to community gardens. Following the assessment, Oregon Solutions staff worked closely with Governor Kulongoski's office to prioritize this effort and designate the project as Oregon Solutions. Governor Kulongoski appointed Commissioner Fish to convene the effort. (see <http://www.orsolutions.org/metrohood/portlandcommunitygardens.htm> for the request letter from community leaders and Governor Kulongoski's designation letter.)

Oregon Solutions has worked with 60 communities throughout the state on projects that support Oregon's Sustainable Community Objectives. The Community Governance System that Oregon Solutions utilizes includes bringing together key public, private and civic team members to pool and leverage resources in order to capitalize opportunities. Stephanie provided the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center Declaration of Cooperation as an example of the culmination of an Oregon Solutions project. Team members sign a statement of commitment to implement the work identified by the Oregon Solutions team and within a period of time agreed upon by the team (perhaps 6 months or 1 year), Oregon Solutions will reconvene the team to review the status of implementation.

Commissioner Fish asked participants to discuss the goals of this project and potential work groups. Based on the Oregon Solutions assessment, three key collaborative opportunities emerged:

- (1) Develop governance options to maximize support of community gardens
- (2) Develop a public/private funding strategy
- (3) Develop a plan to meet demand

Participants gave their ideas about issues each of the work groups might address:

Governance Options

- What is the scope of this project – City, County or Region?
- Define the role of Portland Parks and Recreation and The City of Portland related to this project.
- An opportunity for internal city coordination and engagement with community partners.
- Research other public-private-civic partnerships including Philadelphia Green (but not just gardens, other types of projects)
- Develop a framework that is easy to see/use/transferable

Public/Private Funding

- Expand and grow the community gardens program, i.e., “Put it on Steroids”
- Maximize the City’s potential
- Measurable idea
- Developing a long-term sustainable plan
- Prioritize projects
- Managing/leverage volunteers
- Not just money
- Cast a broad net – focus energy and resources

Meet Demand

- Holistic
- City’s ability/capacity
- Meet demand to grow food
- Raise City program to next level
- Measurable idea
- What kind of demand? Need to categorize.
- Link with other Plans – Portland Plan, Metro Plan, School District Plan
- Equity decision-making and in distribution
- Involving people without necessarily getting a garden plot
- How do you make land available?
- Relationship and community building

Next Steps:

Oregon Solutions will work with Commissioner Fish’s Office to review information sheets for team members and form three work groups with a chair and co-chair for each group. The next meeting of the Oregon Solutions team will be held at the same time on November 13th (moved from November 20th). Prior to this meeting, the work groups will meet at least one time to further refine the scope and goals for the work group. Team members will be contacted by phone and/or email regarding scheduling and logistics for work group meetings to occur during October.