



Community Gardens Demand Workgroup

Meeting Notes – January 14, 2010

Attendees: Jason King, Chair, Maren Murphy, Rodney Bender, Caitlen Blethen, Cindy Dietz, Marlys Mock, Jenny Holmes, Amber Baker, Leslie Pohl-Kosbau

The meeting began shortly after noon with an update from Jason and Maren on the mapping project. Updates did not happen over the holidays but they do have information from several organizations which they will be adding. The group reiterated the desire to be sure the Declaration of Cooperation includes a commitment by some entity to be the “keeper” of the data and to ensure that the mapping stays up to date. They agreed that the current community garden program does not have the capacity to do this, and it is unclear where a budget would come from to keep up the mapping. Other possibilities mentioned were Steve Cohen’s office in the Bureau of Planning & Sustainability, or the new regional “hub” for urban agriculture which is a goal of the Oregon Solutions process.

Jason and Stephanie reported on the workgroup chair meeting with Commissioner Fish and the “stage 1”, “stage 2” approach to first shore up the existing community gardens program and then focus on building a regional hub. The Commissioner talked about trying to pull together various bureaus in a Task Force to be established by the Mayor to meet commitments in the Climate Action Plan, including making 1000 more garden plots available by 2012. The Commissioner also committed to speak with the Chair of the Parks Foundation board about ways to help the Friends of CG board build capacity. The Commissioner is interested in the Regional Arts Commission as a potential model for a future organization; Demand workgroup members mentioned the Coalition for a Livable Future as another possible model.

The group discussed the \$625,000 budget proposed by the Resources workgroup and the viability of raising the \$200,000 from outside the city that is contemplated by that budget. The group agreed that it will be important to quantify need and demand to advocate for budget support and fundraising. Demand for growing food is not clearly defined outside of the demand for garden plots. Stephanie will send out an email to various groups on the Oregon Solutions Team requesting any data they have for 2009, 2010, 2010 that will help quantify need for growing food/gardens. The group also discussed the desirability of collaborative fundraising and grant writing, particularly in pursuit of federal grants. The

city community gardens program already does some collaboration, e.g. with Zenger Farm and Depave, but does not have the capacity to do as much as they would like.

The group made a list of potential ways to meet demand and potential barriers. The list will be provided to the task force that is working on how to meet the needs of the immediate growing season and reduce the waiting list.

Opportunities:

- Existing Portland community garden program
- Shorter term (temporary) Portland community gardens
- Rooftop, balcony, container gardens
- Putting in a garden at home yourself or with gardeners for hire
- Yard-sharing
- Small farm businesses in the city
- Gardens provided by other institutions: schools, non-profits, private developments, businesses

Barriers:

- Money to develop and maintain gardens
- Liability
- Access to land
- Access to expertise
- Public policies
- Lack of knowledge about options for growing food
- Lack of gardening/growing food communication network
- Organizational competition/turf protection

Mention was made of the need to coordinate with the Multnomah Food Initiative and Stephanie reported that coordination meetings have occurred and that Kat West will make a presentation at the January 22 Oregon Solutions Team meeting on the MFI. The MFI Food Summit has been set for April 17, 2010.

The workgroup did not schedule another meeting, although Jason will be participating in the task force and will provide information from the mapping project to the task force.

Homework assignments: Jason to provide mapping info to the short-term task force; Stephanie to send email request for data to quantify need – groups need to respond before January 22.