

Urban Agriculture Conference: “Urban Agriculture: London's Food Future” – Debrief document

Executive summary:

- On a shoestring budget of \$2297, this conference more than achieved its goals of raising awareness and serving as a forum for public consultation and empowerment on the topic of urban agriculture in London
- It brought together 12 leading voices in urban agriculture from London, southern Ontario and internationally
- The conference was visited by over 250 people over the course of the day (plus 65 people went to the conference special presentation on Friday night)
- The conference organization was based on a highly successful collaborative effort of three City Hall advisory committees, London Public Library, City of London – Planning department, and Urban League of London
- Helped to launch a new citizen organization to serve as a connector of people, projects and policy in urban agriculture (Friends of Urban Agriculture London <http://fual.weebly.com>)
- Generated lots of media coverage in print, radio and TV
- The conference talks, posters and brochures are archived at <http://fual.weebly.com/ua-londons-food-future.html>
- Tom Cull, Poet Laureate of London wrote and recited a lovely poem for this special event
- Urban League of London hosted a special Pints and Agriculture session after the conference

Goals of the conference:

- To raise awareness on the current state and future potential of Urban Agriculture in the City of London
- To serve as a forum for public consultation and empowerment to move the agenda of Urban Agriculture forward

Conference themes:

- Urban Agriculture Policy for Municipalities
- Food Security through Urban Agriculture
- The Economics of Urban Agriculture
- Appropriate Technology for Urban Agriculture
- The Role of Fruit and Nut Trees in Urban Agriculture
- The Role of Animals in Urban Agriculture

Date: November 19th, Saturday, 10am to 3pm.

Venue: Central Public Library: Wolf Hall, Stevenson Hunt room, Tonda Room, Hallways

Organizing committee: Sarah Brooks (ACE), Carolyn Doyle (London Public Library), Skylar Franke (AAC), Susan Hall (ACE), Leif Maitland (City of London), Patsy Morgan (London Public Library), Megan Paquette (London Public Library), Gabor Sass (ACE), Diane Szoller (ACE), Wes Kinghorn (Urban League)

Schedule: November 19th, 10am to 4 pm

http://fual.weebly.com/uploads/9/7/0/1/97017932/ua_conference_brochure_1_.pdf

- 10:00 introductions (overview of London's commitment to Urban Ag) Tanya Park, Ward 13 Councillor for City of London & John Fleming, City of London Chief Planner
- 10:10-10:50 plenary speaker (Big picture comments on Urban Ag) Lauren Baker, Toronto Food Policy Council
- 10:50-11 break
- 11-12 breakout sessions (3 sessions, each with two speakers and a facilitator)
 - Urban Agriculture Policy for Municipalities (Lauren Baker, Toronto Food Policy Council & Ellen Lakusiak, London Food Policy Council)
 - Appropriate Technology for Urban Agriculture (Gary Wozniak, Recovery Park Detroit & Terry Nother, Local Sustainability Entrepreneur)
 - The Role of Fruit and Nut Trees in Urban Agriculture (Suzan Poizner, Orchard People Toronto & Jessie Robertson, Wildcraft Permaculture)
- 12-1 lunch
- 1-2 breakout session (3 sessions, each with two speakers and a facilitator)
 - Food Security through Urban Agriculture (Angela ElzingaCheng, FoodShare Toronto & Becky Ellis, EarthMagic Permaculture)
 - The Role of Animals in Urban Agriculture (Lorraine Johnson, Edible City Toronto & Celeste Lemire, Urban gardener)
 - The Economics of Urban Agriculture (Robert Orland, Backyard Bounty Guelph & Aaron Lawrence, On the Move Organics)
- 2-4 Call to Action! – Public Consultation and Networking (Wes Kinghorn, Urban League of London; Leif Maitland, City of London)
- 4:00 – 5:30 Pints and Agriculture – Continuing the dialogue at Fox and Fiddle pub (Wes Kinghorn, Urban League of London)

(Most of the conference was audio-taped and the presentations are available at

<http://fual.weebly.com/ua-londons-food-future.html>)

Attendance: Over the course of the day approximately 250 people visited the conference. The following is an approximate breakdown of numbers by sessions.

Session name	# of people
Keynote session	155
Fruit & Nut trees	25
Animals	30
Food Security	38
Technology	70
Economics	80
Policy	70
Pints and Politics	30

Final budget: The conference was made possible by countless hours of volunteer work, a few thousand dollars of in-kind donations and \$2297.19 spent using various sources of funds.

Income Source	Amount pledged	Amount spent
Councillor Tanya Park	300	302.43
John Fleming	200	150
TFAC	300	274.58
AAC	500	450
ACE	1300	1083.38
Donations (cash)	47.55	36.8
Total	2647.55	2297.19

In-Kind Donations

London Public Library

- Space: Wolf Hall, plus Stevenson and Hunt Room and Tonda Room, foyer/display space outside of Wolf Hall, meeting space for conference prep
- Publicity: Ad in Access magazine, poster (design and printing)
- Registration: through LPL
- Day of conference: Tables, chairs, display boards, flip chart paper, book display, clip boards as needed
- Staff time

Tanja Rohn Mackenzie of Tangerine Photography Inc.: Photography for poster and flyer

Penny Jediseh at Hire Minds Inc.: conference flyer design and poster design

Patrick's Beans: coffee and set up for the event

Terry Nother: two bushels of apples

Photo contest prizes:

- Hawthorne Farms: seed packets
- Reforest London: 3 fruit trees
- Sprout World: 1 bean sprout kit

Media

- Glen Pearson article in London Free Press <http://www.lfpress.com/2016/12/02/pearson-londoners-are-hungry-for-urban-agriculture>
- Chris Montanini article in Londoner <http://www.thelondoner.ca/2016/11/14/londoners-have-a-chance-to-weigh-in-on-upcoming-urban-agriculture-policy>
- Interview on CBC Radio (Gabor Sass)
- Interview on Rogers TV (Skylar and Patsy)
- John Fleming Interview on CBC Fresh Air <https://youtu.be/x5TtnPMOn2E>

Other outcomes of Conference:

- Conference follow-up meeting at Central Public Library on January 25th to form working groups in urban agriculture <http://fual.weebly.com/ua-conference-20.html>
- Establishment of Friends of Urban Agriculture London (FUAL) <http://fual.weebly.com/>

Summary of feedback from attendees, speakers and organizers:

- Great working with everyone, event went really well, high quality of speakers, turnout was good, enough volunteers to complete all the tasks, well-coordinated. Inspiring speakers and participants.
- Received good feedback from the community; incl. Glen Pearson.
- Recap at end of day was a really good idea - summarized all the sessions
- Poetry was really good, Tom Cull is awesome. Pint and Politics went really well, good turnout and people stayed for 2 hours. Acknowledgement statement regarding First Nations from Carolyn was a good idea.
- Some people wanted to go to all 6 sessions, maybe make it different style so everyone can attend all of them.
- Apples were really good, people appreciated coffee and snacks.
- Nice mix of people who attended. 250 people attended.
- Announcement of City process was really interesting, good to find out how they are moving forward.
- Two Councillors were in attendance: Councillor Tanya Park and Councillor Michael Van Holst
- Man who has fruit tree seedlings in yard and found people to share them with.
- Food went well - everyone was fed.
- AV worked in every room, internet was good (should have sent out the wifi in advance to speakers if possible)
- Too bad we couldn't get the video done in all sessions, next time we should just get the sound taken
- City of London – Planning department feedback
 - Don't usually go to someone else's event. Was good to attend to get interested people
 - Good targeted audience from the CoL position
 - Good to hear from the community
- Library perspective
 - Loved it. Partnership was really good.
 - Table with books went well