

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING COMMENTS

3.1 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING – Allowing “Farm Gate Sales” on Lands within the Urban Growth Boundary (Z-9060)

- *Mayor E. Holder asking a couple of questions if he can; asking staff what is the big driver, what is really compelling this initiative to go forward, we obviously have retailers out there, farmers who retail through Covent Garden Market, through various chains and through their own distribution systems, what is driving this initiative here at this time.); Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner, indicating that one of the objectives of the Urban Agriculture Strategy is to make food more accessible to people so right now they would have to grow their food, take it to a market somewhere else in the city and sell it there but the Strategy actually says make it more accessible to people, have it in more of a neighbourhood type of function where you can sell food in the neighbourhood and actually grown on the property so it is just to make it more accessible to people; (Mayor E. Holder indicating that he is not sure what making more accessible means, he is not trying to suggest this is a bad idea, but he is trying to understand how is food not more accessible, there is various, except for Downtown, where we do not have a retail location, how is food not accessible throughout the city with the various retail locations that they have, his sense is that you mean something more than just that because he is a little bit confused by that comment that food is somehow not accessible, is there something beyond that that you are saying, can you help clarify that for his understanding, please.); Mr. J.M. Fleming, Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, stating that an Urban Agriculture Strategy was brought to Council and Council approved the Strategy, it was a fairly extensive public consultation process and what people expressed is that they wanted to grow food in their neighbourhoods and wanted the opportunity to be able to sell it in their neighbourhoods as well; there is a series, out of that Urban Agriculture Strategy, there were a series of initiatives or actions that they indicated that they would follow and that schedule of things was approved by Council so this is one of those things as Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner, pointed out, they have a Steering Committee which is made up of members of the community who are very heavily involved in this urban agriculture drive and they are also helping them move things forward in priority and this is one of the priority items; they also have, as Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner, pointed out a really good example of an urban farm that is inside the urban growth boundary on urban reserve lands and there is an obstacle right now, that is really what this is, is removing a barrier which is currently the Zoning By-law where somebody cannot sell food that they are growing on their urban farm in the urban growth boundary; finally, because there are a number of initiatives here, one of them is being able to sell food that you grow in your garden, they also know that food is a great community binder so it is not just about community access to food in the way that a supermarket is, but people in the neighbourhood growing food and being able to sell it legally on their driveway as part of a community type of event is something that they did not want to get in the way of and removing those barriers; (Councillor A. Hopkins reminding the Planning and Environment Committee that these are technical questions for now.); (Mayor E. Holder indicating he will keep it technical because it seems like they are looking at one situation in particular and trying to formulate a whole policy around that which respectfully he gathers has certainly been dealt with to some degree but a couple of questions; one is to do with consumer safety, he would say to the Committee that as a family who has a bakery and a retail outlet and the Middlesex-London Health Unit certainly pays a lot of attention to all retail establishments from a health and safety concern standpoint, to what extent would staff be concerned about how issues around health and safety of the products that are being sold be dealt with since this is what we are trying to deal with now.); Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner, responding that on the Urban Agriculture Working Committee they have a member of the Middlesex-London District Health Unit on that Committee to advise them of any health concerns; (Councillor A. Hopkins interrupting, she is not sure where the question is going but she just wants to remind the Committee that there is a Committee member here that may have to, depending on where this conversation goes, recuse himself, does she have that right, Councillor Turner.); (Councillor S. Turner responding that he is an employee of the Middlesex-London Health Unit and food inspection is within his portfolio and in past he has recused in certain circumstances, in this circumstance, since the item in the agenda has not mentioned the Middlesex-London Health Unit he has not declared a pecuniary interest, he will continue to watch the conversation if there is a pecuniary interest; the definition of pecuniary means that it might financially benefit or be disadvantaged as a result of discussion and he does not think that they are in that situation right now but he would just ask that we treat that sensitively if*

we could.); Mr. J.M. Fleming, Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, pointing out that this is not processed food, this is actual product that is grown on the property so there is a distinction there; (Mayor E. Holder indicating that he is not sure what the distinction is between food that is sold at Covent Garden Market which comes out of whatever process that that is and that is not processed food, that comes out of the ground.); (Councillor A. Hopkins reminding the Mayor that they are at technical questions right now, the technical question is.); (Mayor E. Holder trying to stay on that but he is finding that when staff brings back to a different issue he is trying to respond to the issue that they have brought up, he would rather stay with the technical points hence why he was asking if one Inspector, does staff feel that is sufficient for the health and safety of Londoners to deal with this consumer product will exclude the Health Unit or any other process but is there sufficient inspection and he would ask what the technical liability would be since they have given permission for this to happen if someone was to get sick or lodge a complaint as a result of food that was purchased in the driveway of some urban dweller, he would like to get a sense of that, please, from a liability standpoint; (Councillor A. Hopkins the first question being is there sufficient inspection, is one Inspector enough, and then the liability if something happens.); Mr. J.M. Fleming, Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, responding that what Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner, was saying not that there is an Inspector that was to be inspecting what is going on with respect to this initiative, it was just somebody that was on the Steering Committee that can provide intelligence to the group with respect to health and safety issues; there are farm gate sales throughout the city in many different forms already and as Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner, said it is not uncommon to see those by the side of the road in the agricultural area; part of this initiative is simply to allow for it within the urban reserve designation where currently there is a barrier and you cannot; with respect to the smaller pieces, his understanding is, you will see, at certain places throughout the city there are Hawkers and Peddlers, he believes is the licensing term, where people sell fruits and vegetables and flowers and those sorts of things and with the same sort of he would suggest health and safety type of issues that would go along with what we are proposing here so his sense, from what he has heard from the work that his team is doing there are no issues from a health and safety perspective of selling this kind of produce, as he said it is not processed food where, for example, if they are preparing food and making relishes and those sorts of things and there is a whole series of health and safety type of issues that do require attention that are separate from selling in this way; (Mayor E. Holder, that response does not give me as much confidence because certainly with Hawkers and Peddlers licenses to use that term, you know where they are because they have actually applied for a license although, from time to time, he can tell you from flowers and other products, flowers are not consumable, just so you know we at least know where they are supposed to be where as if you want to follow up where is if someone chooses to sell produce at the end of their driveway we do not necessarily know when those happen unless by inspection and he is not confident that we have or want to get that kind of reinforcement of inspection but a separate question may be and you will tell me if this is a technical question but he knows when he thinks of Trails End and he thinks of the Western Fair District Farmers Market and he thinks of Covent Garden those people for their purpose not only of licenses but they pay taxes as well, is that the intent of this as well, that is there any thought that these people would pay any form of tax on this or is this just independent of all of that process.); (Councillor A. Hopkins reiterating that the technical question is are taxes applied to the sales.); (Mayor E. Holder, you are very articulate Madam Chair and he thinks she said it better than me.); Mr. J.M. Fleming responding that they would leave that to either if we are talking about provincial tax, for example, to those that apply it and similarly, with respect to municipal taxes, if we are talking about real estate values that would be done through the typical assessment; (Councillor A. Hopkins so this amendment does not apply to any taxes.); (Mayor E. Holder, final comment relating to this and then he thinks he has got it.); (Councillor A. Hopkins, if I may, just keep it to technical questions for now we can always have follow up with comments later.); (Mayor E. Holder, fair enough; he asked the question earlier with respect to consumer safety and the health and safety concerns that are put upon retailers that are not put upon these individuals and his concern from a technical standpoint is that that is not being observed in this case.).

- (Councillor P. Squire, thinks this is a technical question so what he thought he heard in the presentation was that if someone is in a residential area, growing tomatoes and stuff in their backyard, that there is some limit to them only being able to sell twice a year from that residential property; then he heard from Mr. J.M. Fleming, Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, what he thought was something different which is we do not want to stop people in residential areas from having an event or selling produce from their house so what he wants to know is, the phone calls that he receives about this and surrounding this technical question, he did get complaints from people who are saying look people are having farm sales on their driveway every weekend, every Saturday they are selling produce on their driveway; if all that produce comes from their own garden in their house can they do that every weekend.); Mr. J.M. Fleming, going to attempt to answer it and he does not think he is doing Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner, any favors but he is going to try anyway; so the report identifies three different areas, one is farm gate sales and what is being discussed there is or large scale type of sale of produce which you will see in the agricultural area fairly regularly but is not allowed in the urban reserve zone so he is not talking about necessarily residential areas, he is talking about urban reserve so that is sort of the first item there, that is the urban farm where there is a regular sale of the produce from the farm on the site of the farm in the urban reserve zone; the second is in parks, neighborhood parks, so this is opening up the opportunity for more sale of produce that is grown by neighbours in their park spaces again, this is something that is seen as the Urban Agriculture Strategy suggested there is a great opportunity for food to be a social binder and something bringing people together, for people to be growing produce in their yards and come together in the neighbourhood park and sell it to their neighbours, it is seen as a very positive thing from a community perspective and then the third is with respect to people selling food on their driveway a little bit like your garage sale and right now there are already provisions in place that allow you to have a couple of garage sales a year and what they are saying is that may be too onerous in terms of selling food and so they are trying to eliminate that regulation by saying if you are selling food that you grew in your own yard, you can do that on your driveway without encumbrance in terms of the Zoning By-law views and with respect to all of the other health regulations that would be, those are regulations that we are not dealing with from a planning point of view, they would be as they are right now through the appropriate channels that regulate health and safety of food.); (Councillor P. Squire, just to clarify, is that one of the amendments that is coming before us today, to change it from you can only sell from your driveway twice a year your tomatoes in your backyard or whatever that might, he likes tomatoes so he keeps mentioning them or is that something we are going to look at possibly in the future because he is not sure people realize if it is coming right here today he is not sure people realize that.); Mr. J.M. Fleming, Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, indicating that it is not today, Mr. C. Parker, Senior Planner, was indicating there are a couple of amendments that are coming, one is very soon which is the farm gate sales, the larger one he thinks that was the next cycle of the Planning and Environment Committee and the question as you said of changing the regulations around selling food on your driveway, for example, that is something that is not here today and there is a process that they are looking for direction to get that going and we will have our normal process and engage the public on that before we come forward with that; (Councillor P. Squire, thank you; that makes it quite clear for him.)
- Carter McCrindle, 181 McMaster Drive - stating that his question was everyone seemed to be really concerned about with we do health and safety inspections if we are going to start selling this more; advising that he is a little uninformed so he is wondering if we do health and safety inspections already on the current sales like two times a year when you sell tomatoes from your own home in your own garden; (Councillor A. Hopkins we will follow up with the answer to your question but you can continue with your comments.); you just want to know like how he feels about this; (Councillor A. Hopkins please, yes.); he does not know, it seems like a pretty good idea; feels like it gives a good chance to farmers to make more money, they can sell

more products if they are going to be putting their livelihood in to you know producing all these things every day they might as well be able to sell them more often in an easier way to people right away; that is really all he has to say on the matter; appreciates the chance.

- Jeremy Horrell, Board Member, Urban Roots London - the not-for-profit farm that currently is in the City of London and so what he encourages you to think about is when you look at farm gate sales he heard a lot about markets, markets are a place you can go to buy local food, what about experiencing your food and he thinks that there is a connection that the community has lost often with experiencing their food and having an urban farm and having farm gate sales as an opportunity for people to come congregate, gather around food and experience that connection to the land, to other people, and to affordable food is really important.

- Jeff Lucas, 85 Wilson Avenue, Blackfriars - advising that he grew up in London and has been away for forty years and he moved back about four years ago when he retired; he got really excited when the Urban Agriculture Conference was put on and, from that, the round table talks through the Urban Agriculture Strategy; he has been involved with farming and gardening for as long as he knows, his grandparents had farms; he has been involved in a lot of community gardens and started them and farm garden programs at different schools that his children went to; when he came back here he got involved with Urban Agriculture and we have a group of us that are trying to start a group of Friends of Urban Agriculture London that came out of that Conference and they have been meeting for the last two or three years; he put forward his name to be on the Urban Agriculture Steering Committee and he thinks they have done a lot of good work in the short time that they have been there and gone through a few planners so he thinks it is the important to this and to back up Jeremy's comments that, you know, we think we know where our food is coming from if we buy it even in the market or store and he just came a little bit late but he heard the health and safety concerns and if you look at all the problems that we have had, we have processed food whether it is even fresh greens and packaged meat or whatever, he means it is just that people have to take personal responsibility he thinks and not rely so much on inspection right and he knows there is a cost to the that so he is not too worried about that; he always sources out a farm or wherever he buys and he has always belonged to, if he has not grown his own food and he has to supplement it, it is called CSA, Community Shared Agriculture, where he buys a share and he helps support the farmer and/or gardener with the upfront cost and since she he came back he was at Blackfriars for a couple of years in an allotment garden but he belongs to community gardens which he finds again we share, that has been talked about, it just creates a whole different dynamic, whether you have a pot luck or you are helping people grow their food or learning how to grow different things and he thinks that is really important here and you know we talk lots in these Conferences about food deserts or whatever and he knows many gardeners that donate some of their food whether it is to the Food Bank or some of the food boxes that go out so he just thinks it is very important to keep this going and to spread that; his last comment is that he joined a group that we are starting an initiative, it will be the first self-managed community garden which would take the burden of the city because you know there is approximate twenty community gardens now and they can only start maybe one a year because the soil testing and all the upfront cost and then getting the soil prepared so we took on the project in West Lions beside the food forest that has been there a couple years and they are just getting the soil ready but it is exciting that you know, again, from the ground and to help show people what can be done and again to take some of the financial burden off the City and we still do all the things, you have to start with good soil to get good food and he just hopes that people can, because we need to supplement because it takes money every year to run a garden whether it is to seed or to mulch or whatever have you so it is important he thinks that they are allowed to do that and you know if there has to be some sort of inspection or some oversight they are totally open to that but the process to get bogged down just because of health and safety; he knows a lot more people get sick from food that has been inspected than from food that has not been inspected.

- Jessica Cordis, Deveron Crescent in Pond Mills – advising that in the last two years she has really become interested in urban agriculture and in my first dive into urban agriculture in London she found in 2017 that the Strategy had come out so since then she has been following this issue pretty closely; in the past two years growing her own garden she has been able to provide almost all of my own vegetables over the course of the Summer and into the Fall even eating a lot of preserved and frozen foods so kind of echoing what some of these other folks have said about the connection to the food that comes from urban agriculture practices; she thinks it is really key to understand that we are talking about more than just growing and selling food, we are also talking about building skills, building resiliency and let us not leave climate change out of the conversation because she thinks that a strong urban agriculture strategy and a strong local food system is absolutely critical to addressing climate change to mitigating its impact by enhancing our soil, by improving biodiversity and further, there is tons of benefits and the social side, building community, the social connections, the job skills that come from these types of grassroots projects that we have seen like the Urban Roots and the Wood Street Food Forest to name a couple in the city; she is really looking forward to seeing what comes about with that garage sale type of sales because she has far too much produce on her hands and it would be nice as an urban farmer to be able to sell a little bit of that, make a small profit; she does not think many folks in the city are looking to have urban agriculture become like a main source of income but she thinks it is a nice way to connect people enter a small income on the side.