



City of Prince George  
September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021  
Consultation with Local Food PG Society  
7:00 pm via ZOOM

### Consultation Notes

This is a summary of feedback from September 23<sup>rd</sup> 2021 consultation with the members of the Everyone At the Table (EAT) Collective and members of the Local Food Prince George Society (LFPGS). Please note these notes are not verbatim. It was difficult to capture every comment and aspect of the conversation during the timeframe, on Zoom and because of the intensity/speed of the conversations.

To Participants, please provide any comments/observations that may have been overlooked to ensure accuracy and that everything relevant to the discussion around food policy councils is included.

Meeting: commenced 7:00 pm via ZOOM (adjourned at 8:45 pm)

In attendance:

- Del Myers
- Eileen Myers
- Dave Rempel
- Catharine Kendall
- April Ottensen
- Alex Rowan
- Terri McClymont
- Roanne Whitticase
- Guest: Sarah Brown, CPG

A. Introductions

B. Consultation

Sarah Brown overviewed the direction from Council for administration to consult with EAT/LFPGS to gather feedback on option 3: the Independently Led Action Oriented Round Table/Committee approach, led by grassroots organization(s), roundtable or project committee which was approved at the July 12, 2021 Council meeting.

1. Please tell me about the Local Food PG Society and the EAT collective. Are these separate entities? Are there key similarities and/or differences in mandate/vision? What are they?

### LOCAL FOOD P.G. SOCIETY (LFPGS)

- LFPGS - has about 30 members, a group of volunteers /producers / farmers / restaurant owners that are a “think tank” / brainstorm ideas.
- Initial interest came from trying to locate a permanent venue for the Farmers Market – realized there was more work needed to address the food system.
- Fall of 2017, first meeting, year later incorporated as a Society.
- Like-minded individuals come together to discuss food issues.

- Also to consider is that it was born from Food First- which was grassroots.
- In 2019 they proposed a food charter to the City, definitely a template, more consultation was recommended- that's where it stalled.
- The Society is actively looking to promote food security while contributing to the community's health and the economy.
- <https://www.facebook.com/LocalFoodPG>

### **EAT (Everyone At The Table) Collective**

- EAT was formed in March 2021 when a number of volunteers came together to discuss sharing resources, names of farmers, local food producers/sources and matching to consumers to help address food security and build on what initiatives / direction that needs to be formed to create a food policy.
- In March 2021, approached LFPGS to offer to write a funding proposal to Canada Healthy Communities Initiatives. The LFPGS board suggested writing a proposal for a MyPG grant instead. This was done collaboratively by the initial group of 3, in consultation with the LFPGS board. When the funding proposal was partially successful (a community consultation process was funded), an action committee of mostly non-members of LFPGS was brought together by one of the proposal writers to make it happen.
- Focus on bringing everyone together that fits into the [food system diagram](#) (adopted from Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit).
- Not incorporated on purpose (not what our Region needs). There is so much going on and another Society is not needed.
- As a result, defining membership has been tricky and is still evolving. Most recently, EAT defines membership as someone who contributes work to the collective.
- EAT- created a survey (through LFPGS MyPG grant) and now bringing together various parties to a Food Policy 101 workshop on Sept 29.
- Volunteers – come and go to EAT as their knowledge / resources/expertise is required.
- [facebook.com/letseatlocalpg](https://www.facebook.com/letseatlocalpg)
- <https://www.letseatlocalpg.com/>
- Established Facebook page and website to share information, resources, create dialogue, showcase programs and projects (i.e. partnering with UNBC to provide “Good Food Box”).
- Interested in being research based.

### **Similarities & Differences**

- The obvious key similarity is a commitment to local food security.
- LFPGS directors have advocated for a food charter and a food policy council and worked in community gardens for many years.
- The key difference that led to EAT becoming its own thing is that, LFPGS identifies as a think tank (big picture), while EAT is motivated by collaborative action.
- Both have volunteers with perspective, information, and knowledge to share with others.

- EAT is a community platform and event to discuss what we can do together to enhance food security, create a landscape for sourcing food locally, and supporting a homegrown food system here in Prince George. Action based. Created resource of local producers, community gardens, food groups, farmer markets.
- EAT now identifies as a collective independent from LFPGS, but accountable to LFPGS for the MyPG grant.
- This shifted the role of LFPGS to that of a fiscal sponsor of the MyPG grant, EAT continuing to take responsibility for the implementation of the project, and LFPGS's treasurer disbursing funds as needed based on receipts.
- LFPGS - more big picture- looking at overarching issues related to food system thinking.
- There's lots of overlap- not a competition.
- This question is irrelevant. We should be focusing on our strengths and what we each bring to the work around food security and food systems in the region.
- This isn't about a compare and contrast- we are both working on the same goal.
- There are strengths in our differences- certain people like to do certain things- there's a role for everyone based on their interests, strengths (one likes to be in the garden, the other likes to do research- role for each).
- We need to talk more- ½ the town doesn't know what the other half is doing.

**2. Is the establishment of a Food Policy Council a priority for the Local Food PG Society and/or the EAT collective? Why or Why Not?**

- EAT- got to work right away on organizing the Food Policy Council 101 workshop to inform the community's reflection on what may be the best food policy model for our region.
- Because it is not our approach to speak for the entire community, we invested a lot of time in inviting diverse voices from the community to that workshop.
- Are we going to have a conversation about what FPC could look like outside of what Council is directing us (reference to option 3: roundtable/independent led)?
- For EAT we would like to see developed a guide food-related decisions and actions. It is an approach to understanding and addressing the linkages within food systems and a plan for making decisions about food.
- When a significant food problem is identified (as seen with Covid-19 / transportation / delivery across board / fire these all affect stores receiving food to keep shelves full), the need for policy guidelines to be developed to ensure the protection of health and safety.
- Effective food policies can drive change in all parts of the food system. At local, the national and global levels, incentives for farmers to grow sustainably and the expanded use of food stamps at farmers' markets can help reduce food insecurity.
- We are not going to wait for the City to direct us or to get on board, we are not going to wait- my focus is that I want everyone in our community to be ok with food- and with covid-19 and/or another emergency- is this the case? Food secure for all.
- There's lots of issues to deal with and that's where the Food Policy Council would come in.
- A Food Charter would also need to be a priority as it is a big part of food policy and connected.

3. If a Food Policy Council, led by a grassroots organization were formed, what would you envision the motive to be (i.e. maintaining the viability of local farms, addressing barriers to food access, etc.)?

- A Charter is very important.
- Safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food.
- Affordable, available, and accessible to all.
- Produced, processed, marketed, consumed, and waste products reused or managed in a manner that is: Financially viable, Protects the health and dignity of people, minimal impact to the environment.
- public policy concerning how food is produced, processed, distributed, and purchased.
- this often includes decision-making around production and processing techniques, marketing, availability, utilization and consumption of food, in the interest of meeting or furthering social objectives.
- Locally: to protect the poor from crises, work to help improve food sustainability, to develop long-run markets that enhance efficient resource use, and to increase food production that will in turn promote an increase in income to farmers.

4. If a Food Policy Council, led by a grassroots organization were formed, should a local government representative (City or RDFFG) be appointed to the Council? Why or why not?

- There was varying views on this question.
- There could be value from the perspective of a liaison to elected officials who could help support policy development/implementation.
- To function as a bridge between citizens and civic officials, coming together to work on food policy initiatives that benefit all residents.
- The Food Policy Council would meet regularly (City Hall / other venue) to discuss and make recommendations to affect changes to current food policy, hear presentations by community groups engaged in food issues, and facilitate new policy development related to the food system.
- Yes- it would prevent miscommunications such as what happened at Milburn Garden. That was a cruel mistake and it should not have happened. The FPS would be where these conversations would happen and prevent these types of mistakes from happening.
- The individual would need to have an interest and care about the issue- not just, because they were “told to do this as part of their role”.
- There are advantages and disadvantages to both- access to city tools etc. but then it is restrictive too (reference to City Committee structure/process etc.).
- If the community consensus from the Food Policy 101 workshop supports something other than option three, (roundtable format for FPC) then it could change/evolve into a Committee of the City of Prince George.
- Feedback from that workshop will help determine what the FPC structure will look like

- I'm a fan of the grassroots approach to advance our food sovereignty, self-reliance, sustainability.
- What we want is momentum to keep getting things done.
- What roles would the City rep play? As an example, if the city were to hire a staff/appoint an existing staff and pay them to come to our meetings and "tell us how to frame up" then we would rather the funds directly to support our work in the way we determine.
- Interested in a stream of funding/is there any?
- It would support 2-way communication between the roundtable membership and City Council.

5. If a Food Policy Council, led by a grassroots organization were formed, would it need the support of local government (City or RDFFG)? If so, what would this support look like?

- Funding (maybe not for both groups required)- but funding is a priority.
- Did City provide Air PG with \$40,000? Joe G said that was the case. They would be interested in funding amounts such as that-to direct to enacting projects.
- Support/Partnership from the City to apply for grants as co-applicants or for the City to be the Financial Lead on Projects.
- Recollection from July 12<sup>th</sup> meeting one of the Councilors (reference: Councillor Frizzell) said there could be other funding options besides applying for a myPG grant because likely food policy councils can't run on grant funding such as small amounts provided by a myPG Grant.
- We looked to the City to be a Financial agent for an application and they decline- but options to have the City support financial sponsorship.
- Space to hold meetings or hold events (i.e. the civic centre is prohibitive- the City could cover the cost of the venue).
- Provide resource staff doing public involvement processes and civic events, funding, meeting space / event space.
- We need to be able to document all of our work (meeting notes etc.).
- City sign boards for promotion/advertising.
- Information that goes out in the City mailers (property tax notices/ garbage collection notices).
- Promotion on the City's website on food policy.
- City to host surveys on their website but have the information go to the group (i.e. REAPS had an arrangement like this for Annual City wide clean-up event).
- Support from the City's communications Dept.
- Reach to all members of the community via city channels and cover the cost.
- Reduce barriers to access land- support urban growing projects and community gardens
- Access to water in different locations -to support gardens.
- Protection of land (I think in reference to agricultural reserve lands).
- Bring water to community gardens-from curb to garden site.
- Provide winter shut-off and spring turn on.
- Regional District would also be an important partner as part of a Food Policy Council.

- RD is participating in Food Policy 101 workshop.
- RD is planning to do some agricultural land use planning coming up (Catharine has more details on this).
- Food Policy 101 session is full- thinking about a round 2 of the workshop.
- If anyone from the City is involved with a Food Policy Council that person should want to be there not as a duty of employment but because they care about the issue and want to contribute.

#### **Other conversation threads that arose throughout the discussion**

- Agricultural Reserve Lands
- Milburn Garden destruction
- West Coast Olefins- land use prioritization
- Official Community Plan not being adhered to/implemented/actionable
- Food planning as part of emergency planning- what is the City doing?
- City has all these plans: Poverty Reduction, Smart Growth on the Ground, the OCP, Select Committee for a Healthy Community recommendations - in relation to food security- none of it is happening
- City's expectation of insurance coverage for community gardens is unreasonable (context of Milburn Garden)

#### **Summarized Themes:**

- Citizens should have a say on the creation of a Food Policy Council- hence feedback coming from Food Policy Councils 101 session being coordinated by EAT collective. (Sarah provided options to share to Council; request to appear as a delegation/correspondence to Mayor and Council).
- A Food Charter is also critical- should be informed by the citizens as well.