

# Urban Agriculture Task Force

Minutes

November 13, 2013

12:00 PM

Ward 6 Office

3202 E. 1<sup>st</sup> St.

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

### Attendees:

*City Staff:* Adam Smith (PDSD)

*Task Force Members:* Colette Altaffer, Ruth Beeker, Cathy Blough, Merrill Eisenberg, Tres English, Ronni Kotwica, and Alice Roe

*M/C Aide:* Amy Stabler (Ward 6)

*Audience:* Laurel Bellante, Alison Hughes, Steve Murray, Eric Shepp, and Lorien Tersey

## 2. Discussion of the proposed Urban Agriculture text amendments

### Community Gardens

*Comment #1:* Do members have to pay extra rent to keep chickens at a community garden?

*Response:* Staff didn't know.

*Comment #2:* Keep community gardens to growing of produce only. If a community garden wants to keep animals, the animals should be kept as a separate use in a separate fenced-off area with a specific person/group responsible for the care of the animals. The keeping of the animals would be governed by the Keeping of Small Farm Animal standards. (Ruth Beeker).

*Response:* The task force discussed this idea. Staff asked whether the animals would be allowed in an adjoining, fenced area to the community garden.

*Comment #3:* Once a community garden allows animals, it becomes a small urban farm and should be treated as such (Colette Altaffer).

*Comment #4:* How are community gardens on school grounds regulated? Many “community gardens” on school grounds have animals as part of the learning experience (Merrill Eisenberg).

*Comment #5:* Clarify that a community garden is not an urban farm (Ruth Beeker).

*Response:* Staff will prepare a draft proposal for review by the task force at the meeting in December that includes the distinction between a community garden and urban farm.

### Farmers’ Markets

*Comment #1:* Identify the type of accessory uses are permitted at a church and whether they are required to comply with the zoning code (Colette Altaffer).

*Response:* Staff will report back to the task force at the December meeting.

*Comment #2:* Make a distinction between farmers’ markets that are operated by a for-profit business and those run by a community group or non-profit organization (Colette Altaffer).

*Response:* Under consideration.

### Keeping of Small Farm Animals

*Comment #1:* The keeping of animals should be prohibited in the front yard (Ruth Beeker).

*Response:* The task force agreed that animals should be kept in the side and rear yards only in compliance with yet-to-be finalized setback requirements. Future drafts will prohibit the keeping of small farm animals in the front yard.

*Comment #2:* The proposed 20’ setback from adjacent residences should be expanded to include guest houses and patios (i.e. outdoor “living” spaces) (Ruth Beeker and Colette Altaffer).

*Response:* The task force discussed the inclusion of patios and outdoor living spaces. There was concern that to require setback from outdoor living spaces is too ambiguous and could include so many features, such as gazebos, outdoor fire pits, and pools, as to severely limit the ability to keep of small farm animals. One suggestion was to require a 20’ setback from any “habitable space” as defined in the Building Code.

*Comment #3:* Do not allow setbacks to be reduced via sign-off from an adjacent property owner (Ruth Beeker and Colette Altaffer).

*Response:* This will be discussed at the December 11<sup>th</sup> task force meeting.

*Comment #4:* The number of animals permitted should be based on the amount of open space available on a property, not the lot size (Ruth Beeker).

*Response:* This will be discussed at the December 11<sup>th</sup> task force meeting.

*Comment #4:* Merrill Eisenberg explained the rationale behind the proposed Animal Unit approach, which is to allow a more nuanced approach that takes the type of animal and the varying size of lots into consideration as variables when determining the maximum number of animals permitted. Many of the other cities that allow the keeping of small farm animals place a fixed cap on the number, regardless of lot size or type of animal. While this is a simpler approach, it does not make a distinction between larger lots where it would be acceptable to allow more animals and smaller lots where it may not be acceptable. It also does not allow the flexibility to reasonably keep a variety of animals. (Note: Merrill is one of key people who drafted the Animal Unit approach).

### **3. Call to the Audience**

There were no speakers at the call to the audience.

### **4. Next Steps**

The meeting concluded at 2:00.

The next task force meeting is Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 12 pm at the Ward 6 Office (3202 E. 1<sup>st</sup> St.).