

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION



Sustainable Food Policy Board

Recommendation Number: (20130722-XXX)

Non-code recommendations - Code and Metrics Working Group, Urban Farms Code Coordination

WHEREAS, the Sustainable Food Policy Board (SFPB) has been charged by the City of Austin and the Travis County Commissioners to improve the local food economy, the availability, sustainability, accessibility, and quality of food and our environment; and

WHEREAS on February 26, 2013 the City's Planning Commission acted on the Sustainable Food Policy Board's recommendation to "initiate an ordinance to amend Chapter 25-2 of the City of Austin Land Development code to clarify, update, and revise regulations related to urban farms, livestock, size of farm, employees and dwelling" on;

WHEREAS the Code Coordination & Metrics Working Group of the SFPB spearheaded this task with input from city staff and a robust public engagement process; and

WHEREAS through the course of the public engagement effort, which included four public meetings including a Town Hall, (each attended by more than an average of 70 people) as well as numerous meetings with stakeholders, clear related needs surfaced, which led to these recommendations that are outside of the scope of the land development code;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY BOARD recommends that the Austin City Council:

Designate a City staff person to assist current urban farmers in expeditiously obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy as an Urban Farm as soon as changes to the related Land Development Code go into effect; and

Appoint SUACG program staff to create an easily-accessible Spanish/English guidance document for people interested in becoming urban farmers in the city of Austin, including information on how to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy and helpful contact information for key city departments (WPD, SUACG, Office of Sustainability, Code Compliance, etc.); and

Designate a City staff person, such as PARD's Community Transformation Grant Coordinator, to provide technical assistance to urban farm stands so that they are able to accept SNAP, WIC, FMNP and other farmers market incentive program benefits. Allocate \$15,000 to support getting 5-10 farm stands

equipped with Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) technology in Fiscal Year 2014 in order to support the affordability and accessibility of food produced at urban farms; and

Investigate and utilize current City resources to diversify Austin's community of farmers and empower more women, people of color, and other historically oppressed groups to grow food throughout the city. Examples of such resources include the Minority-Owned Business Program, the Small Business Development Program, and potential future farm incubator programs; and

Appoint a task force of relevant city departments, including Watershed Protection Department and the Sustainable Urban Agriculture & Community Garden (SUACG) Program, to create a Spanish/English best-practices guidebook for sustainable urban farming practices, which is easily available to the public.

Date of Approval: July 22, 2013

Record of the vote:

Attest: _____

(Staff or board member can sign)