

February 12, 2014

TO: Plan Commissioner

FROM: Council President Stuckart

ISSUE: Urban Farming

Please review the draft copies of the ordinances and provide feedback at the workshop.

Process:

The process started in April 2013 with a Local Food Economy Conference with over 200 attendees and national local food expert Ken Meter presenting local data. Over 50 individuals signed up at this conference to work on an Urban Farming Ordinance. The planning dept staff and City Council held an Open House in May at the Downtown Library. This meeting had 88 people in attendance and they were offered a presentation focusing on current code and examples of Cleveland OH, Toronto OT, Seattle WA and Portland OR. They used visual preference surveys and white sheets to give comments. These comments were then tabulated and a working group was formed. 10 people representing various neighborhoods, farms, health district, parks and other interested citizens met 4 times over the summer to suggest changes to the code. Each meeting was 2 hours long and focused on animals and gardens. Once these suggestions were accepted City Council worked with code enforcement, SCRAPS, WSU and the health district to review the suggested changes. Once these were incorporated neighborhood outreach started. By the end of February 24 of 26 neighborhoods will have seen the presentation.

Comments to consider on Small Livestock Ordinance:

- Spokane County Regional Animal Protection (SCRAPS) – The director of SCRAPS and staff were invited to participate in the following manner. SCRAPS was invited to the ordinance writing work group, individual meeting and email communication of ordinance language four times. Constant communication has led to a process where they have identified no immediate concerns and Nancy Hill, Director, has stated that this will be good for Spokane. Her agency is in charge of enforcement within the County currently and none of the issues that arise will be new or overly burdensome to their agency.
- Code Enforcement – During a 2 hour meeting with Code Enforcement it was identified that there may be more complaints but no new employees are required. We will continue to monitor any negative effects.
- Police – The Police Chief and numerous officers have been consulted. The only worry is an increase in loose animals but not a significant concern.
- Health District – Many members of the health district have been consulted and the normal issues of smell and unsanitary conditions were raised. The Health District is satisfied that the class by WSU will minimize these issues. We will continue to work with them as we move forward.

Comments heard from the first workshop with the Plan Commission on January 22, 2014 with a short response:

- Concern about open spaces in East Central – I agree, but that is WSDOT issue and we are actively working with Senator Billig on this exact location

- Why limited to 4,000 square feet? Working group recommended this size. Limits were also placed by Cleveland and Toronto, which are considered model ordinances. Options still exist to expand.
- Why limit to owner/operated? If you do not limit to owner/operated you are competing with farmer's markets. That is something we want to avoid. This also provides close supervision.
- Comprehensive Plan policy? There is support for urban agriculture in the Comprehensive Plan (below). For full policy discussions and to view the Comprehensive Plan go to www.spokaneplanning.org.
 - In the Economic Development Chapter: **Goal ED3, Strong Diverse and Sustainable Economy: Stimulate economic growth by supporting the formation, retention, expansion, and recruitment of businesses.**
 - *Policy ED3.3 Enterprise Opportunities: Create economic development opportunities utilizing tools available to the city which will foster the growth of Spokane's economy.*
 - *Policy ED3.7 Home Businesses: Encourage opportunities for teleworking and home businesses that are compatible with residential neighborhoods.*
 - In the Natural Environment Chapter, **Goal NE8 Agricultural Lands: Preserve land and provide opportunities for farming that generates produce for local markets and supports the farming economy.**
 - *Policy NE8.3 Compatible Agricultural Activities: Allow agricultural activities adjacent to urban uses without compromising farmers' rights to farm their land.*

There is Comprehensive Plan policy which discusses Agriculture use in terms of larger scale agricultural production and the preservation of agricultural soils. See LU 1.11, Agriculture for this policy and discussion.

There are draft policy recommendations on the topic of Food Security in the Social Health Chapter, but these policies are not yet through the review process or adopted; if you are interested in these draft policies, go to http://www.spokaneplanning.org/CP_update.html

- Why restrict to CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) Neighborhoods? The technical group advised that starting in a limited section of the city provides a reasonable test of this idea, in addition this is an economic development policy and CDBG needs it more.