

East Point City Agriculture Plan Steering Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 18th, 2020 | 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Attendees

- **Steering Committee Members:** Denise Blake, Permeil Dass, Reynaldo Holmes, Tenisio Seanima, Fitzgerald Smith, Chelsea Townsend
- **City of East Point:** Maceo Rogers, Erin Rodgers, Tony Alston
- **Atlanta Regional Commission:** Anna Baggett, Rachel Will
- **Food Well Alliance:** Kim Karris, Sarah Benedict

East Point City Agriculture Plan Mission Statement: The East Point City Agriculture Plan aims to cultivate community pride and relationships amongst East Point residents, businesses, and local government. This plan builds, promotes, and sustains East Point's commitment towards socially equitable policies, programs, and sustainable land use practices that benefit the community food system, ensuring economic and ecological opportunity now and for future generations.

Desired Meeting Outcomes

1. Grounding process progress in the original shared vision for the City Agriculture Plan
2. Shared understanding of what is still needed to translate the preliminary recommendations into a draft plan
3. Shared understanding of the City of East Point's perspective on plan adoption
4. Review of timeline moving forward

Minutes

- **Welcome & Remembering the Vision - Kim Karris**
 - Racial equity has not been centered in this work so far
 - Intention was to address the lack of power and participation of residents and growers in policy decision making processes – especially Black residents and growers
 - Reminder of the City Agriculture Plan mission statement
 - What is one word that describes how you're feeling right now?
 - Kim – hopeful, responsible
 - Denise – encouraged about CAP, besieged overall
 - Chelsea – overwhelmed, at a loss
 - Holmes – numb, encouraged about CAP
 - Permeil – anxious
 - Tenisio – powerful
 - Tony – angry
 - Erin – exhausted
 - Maceo – optimistic
 - Sarah – reflective
 - Anna – heavy, reflective
 - Moving forward in the work is an act of resilience and courage in the face of all that's happening
 - FWA wants to pursue a serious evaluation of this process
 - FWA staff, external evaluator, survey? What is the Steering Committee comfortable with?
 - Reflecting on the process to avoid perpetuating inequities

- End goal to change systems, processes, and structures
- **Steering Committee Feedback on Preliminary Recommendations - Anna Baggett**
 - Everyone has had more time to sit with the preliminary recommendations and confirm that aligns with the Committee vision
 - Opportunity to set up one on one or group meetings to discuss thoughts instead of sharing comments via written feedback
 - Are any discussed priorities or interim steps identified that are not included in the plan?
 - Denise - branding
 - Announcement that this plan release is coming
 - Communicating with residents involved in process
 - Brainstorming what tagline could be
 - Dissemination/communication channels
 - Denise - identification of properties for growing spaces
 - Denise - sustainability of project
 - City rep? Nonprofit partner for fundraising?
 - Need to continue revenue generating process
 - How does Steering Committee formally continue this work? Urban Ag. Commission would ensure longevity and sustainability of plan priorities
 - Chelsea - start a demonstration garden/farm
 - Identified land to lease
 - Who would be executing the lease? City, nonprofit, etc?
 - Tenisio - how will the draft plan differ from the preliminary recommendations?
 - Need to add specific next steps, specific organizations that would be the best partners for implementation
 - More information on the community engagement phase, Steering Committee process, appendices with demographics/maps/Community Asset Map, etc.
 - Need the Steering Committee to help fill in East Point specific detail
 - Tenisio - anxiety around the ability to take the plan document and work from it directly
 - Need more step-by-step planning to take this and move forward
 - Erin - value in keeping things high level to retain flexibility post Council approval
 - Permeil - is the mission supposed to be reflected in the preliminary recommendations/ plan? How do those two pieces relate?
 - Missing pieces in addressing inequity
 - Unique opportunity to shift paradigms
 - Tenisio - reflect on "homework" assignment with ask to submit example ordinances
 - City of Atlanta Urban Ag. Ordinance was originally being developed by ALFI/Turner Law Clinic, growers demanded inclusion and developed ordinance
 - Anna - instead of creating a new process, focus on leveraging future processes that we know are occurring such as the zoning overhaul
 - Reference model innovative ordinances in appendices as examples/ recommendations
 - Incorporate focus on home gardening
 - Bucket garden example - incorporate Steering Committee leadership on projects like that
 - Erin - need covered facility for market to ensure continuity of local products/food availability

- Partnering with Market 166 to pilot mobile market in July
 - Chelsea – include edible landscaping on city land
 - Erin – especially along walking trails, Path
 - Erin – logo/brand for “East Point locally grown” items
- **Forming the Urban Agriculture Commission - Erin Rodgers**
 - More fluidity to act if there is an outside entity distinct from city government
 - City Board
 - Members appointed by city council members and flow in and out with council elections
 - Form/function/regulation about how things need to work such as contracts out for bid, issues selecting vendors, etc.
 - Need to advertise meetings to the public
 - 501c3/Nonprofit
 - Operate more independently
 - Don’t need council approval for grants, but can apply as partners
 - More opportunities for fundraising events
 - Use implementation funds to immediately put Board together
 - “East Point Urban Agriculture Collective”
 - Relationship with city through annual MOU
 - Representative of other organizations on Steering Committee
 - East Point Main Street Association
 - Given a budget by Council
 - Pursue in kind sponsorships
 - Recommendation is to transition Steering Committee into the Urban Ag. Commission
 - Already handpicked by council and community
 - Can grow afterwards as an autonomous organization
 - What are everyone’s thoughts on transitioning?
 - Chelsea – on board and invested
 - Denise – is the answer to create another 501c3? Or can we transition this body to an existing nonprofit?
 - Volunteer led nonprofit
 - Tenisio – start as a more informal group and then can later formalize into a nonprofit?
 - Permeil - There are other organizations that could serve as a fiscal sponsor
 - Wouldn’t need to conduct board meetings, etc. other essential functions of nonprofits
 - Food Well Alliance?
 - All present in support of continuing the work
 - Tenisio – look to Atlanta NPUs
 - System is chartered within city’s structure
 - Replicate with 4 Wards in City Ag. Planning unit
 - Add to charter of East Point?
 - Erin – Make sure that all wards are represented on Urban Ag. Commission
 - Quicker than dealing with charter
 - Each councilmember would have constituents on the Commission
- **Steps for the City of East Point to Adopt the Plan - Maceo Rogers and Tony Alston**

- Tony – East Point City Council process
 - Would first get feedback from planning commission work session
 - 3rd Thursday of each month
 - Then Steering Committee would present to Council
 - Vote to adopt or first make edits
 - When plan is approved for adoption, would flow back through Planning and Economic Development departments
 - Doesn't expect significant back and forth/revisions
 - Zoning ordinance re-writes would be a "text amendment"
- Kim – Process design
 - The plan should represent the priorities of the Steering Committee
 - Policy change – work to steward with the city
 - Programmatic – Committee should prioritize after plan is developed to fund and implement
 - Denise – what is the time frame?
 - Sense of urgency around projects needed
 - Will private/public partnership slow the implementation?
 - Maceo – right now, really need to understand if the Committee is in agreement about recommendations
 - Erin – once the Council approves the big picture plan, the Urban Ag. Commission could speed process along
 - Kim – FWA is ready to immediately implement funding and hire of PM
 - Potential to condense the planning process (meetings once a month)
- **Moving Forward - Anna Baggett**
 - See ARC's timeline for July dates
- **Conclusion - Kim Karris**