

Urban Agriculture Zoning and Policy (March 17, 2011, UIC Pavilion)

Session 2:

Innovations or Infractions? Making the Urban Agriculture We Want

Rules and policies inherently lag behind new practices, methods, and/or change that occurs by necessity. Infractions to existing policy may also be necessary and useful innovations that can grow more food, recycle nutrients, and transform vacant land and buildings in Chicago.

How can we, as growers in Chicago, try out innovations, learn from each other, practice better methods, support each other's projects, and work with the City to adapt and adopt new ways and policies into the future?

We'll ask:

- a) How visionary, adaptive, flexible, and explicit do we need UA policy to be, and how do we preserve the option to change it?
- b) How can we build strategic coalitions and nurturing, supportive context for exploring options and advancing edges -- protecting innovators and pilot projects?

Reference Materials for Toolkit:

Provided in UA session #1: Zoning 101

- [Eat Local, Live Healthy \(City of Chicago\)](#)
- [Preamble to the City of Chicago Proposed Zoning Ordinance](#)
- [CMAP 2040 local food system section](#)
- [APA Urban Agriculture: Growing Healthy, Sustainable Places](#)
- [CFPAC Comparative Analysis of other Urban Zoning Codes](#)

Facilitators - Hosts

RYAN ANDERSON & MARTHA BOYD

Germinator – Food Policy Topic Setter

LYNDON VALICENTI

Harvester – Note Taker/Record Keeper

AUA member

Needs: Flipchart and markers for tracking discussion

Session Outline

4-4:10 Welcome and session description

Intro: Martha

How do we work within or around the gray area of existing policies to advance progressive urban agriculture in Chicago and eventually craft the policies that support it?

How can we try out innovations, learn from each other, practice better methods, support

each other's projects, and work with the City so good innovations can be adopted?
How will we ensure that policy doesn't prevent beneficial change?

4:10-5:00 Discussion – Areas for Innovation

Lyndon, Ryan

- Brainstorm list of topics for innovation and/or policy change
- Choose top three topics identified, discuss current policy and practice issues they involve (in brief), and ideas for making changes to policy and/or other ways to make them possible.

Examples of topics:

- composting on site, recycling organic materials and nutrients
- soil remediation
- temporary uses of land
- living fences
- aquaponics and mixed systems
- garage roofs and containers
- sales in residential areas
- commercial rooftop gardens
- chickens/apiaries as accessory use to commercial farms
- other mixed uses
- community process and review (advisory to city, etc.)

5-5:15 Discussion – Strategies for working with and around current policy

Martha

Whatever policies are instituted, what strategies can practitioners and advocates employ to assist our cause? For example:

- pilot and research projects (below the radar and "official")
- mobilize for group support of otherwise not-allowed methods and efforts
- share info with each other
- provide info and/or advising to the city – what kinds of things would help the most?

5:15-5:20

Wrap up and identify person for reporting back to larger group

BIOS

Ryan Anderson directs the Delta Institute's carbon program, which develops opportunities for small landowners and businesses to benefit from innovative practices. He also identifies and develops new projects, particularly around connecting sustainable food systems to environmental markets. Ryan provides input and technical assistance on urban agriculture ventures, as well as a range of other initiatives to build the green economy. In addition to keeping hens and bees, he has served on the AUA Steering

Committee for the past two years and co-chairs the advocacy working group. He holds degrees in Finance and Ecological Economics.

Martha Boyd directs Angelic Organics Learning Center's Urban Initiative in Chicago, helping people in Chicago neighborhoods plan and install food production sites, and learn skills for growing good food in the city. Martha has worked in organic and urban gardening and farming since 1989, in Ann Arbor, Minneapolis, Boston, and Chicago. She brings to this work studies in public health, land resources management, and community development. Martha moderates the Chicago Chicken Enthusiasts and co-chairs AUA's advocacy working group.

Lyndon Valicenti is a WRD Environmental consultant to the Natural Resources and Water Quality Division of Chicago's Department of Environment. There she manages projects, participates in planning and advises policy to promote and protect Chicago's urban forest, water resources, biodiversity, urban agriculture and sustainable landscapes. Lyndon serves on the Mayor's Nature & Wildlife Advisory Committee and is an adjunct member of AUA's Steering Committee. Lyndon has an MPA in Environmental Science & Policy from Columbia University and a BS in Aquatic Biology from University of California, Santa Barbara. In 2009, she received a certificate in Social & Environmental Urban Design from Archeworks