

SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

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*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR  
AND COUNCILLORS*

**SUBJECT: BURNABY FOOD FIRST COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT  
OF A BURNABY FOOD POLICY**

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. THAT Council receive this report for information.

**REPORT**

The Social Issues Committee, at its Open meeting held on November 09, received and adopted the attached report regarding the Burnaby Food First Committee's request for City support for development of a Food Policy for Burnaby. The Social Issues Committee advised that if the Food First Committee receives funding for this project from the provincial government then City staff will play a supportive role in development of the Food Policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Sav Dhaliwal  
Chair

Councillor Dan Johnston  
Vice Chair

Councillor Garth Evans  
Member

COPY – CITY MANAGER DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING DIR. PARKS, REC. & CULTURAL SERV.
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**TO:** CHAIR AND MEMBERS  
SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 2006 November 01

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

**FILE:** PL 17000 – 30  
*Ref: Food First*

**SUBJECT:** **FOOD FIRST COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A  
BURNABY FOOD POLICY**

**PURPOSE:** To provide further information on the Food First Committee's request for City support for development of a Food Policy for Burnaby.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to Council for information.

**REPORT**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

At its meeting of 2006 September 14, the Social Issues Committee heard a presentation from two representatives of the Burnaby Food First Committee, Susan LeGresley and Liz Dill. In their presentation, Ms. LeGresley and Ms. Dill provided background on the Food First Committee and the issue of food security. They indicated that their Committee was pursuing funding through the ActNow BC program to develop a Food Policy for Burnaby.

Arising from discussion, the Social Issues Committee passed the following motion:

That staff work with the Burnaby Food First Committee regarding submission of a proposal to ActNow BC.

This report provides additional information pertaining to the Committee's request.

**2.0 FOOD FIRST COMMITTEE**

The Food First Committee was established in 1997 to support families, particularly those with low incomes, in dealing with food insecurity. As indicated in the Food First Committee's presentation materials, food security exists when "all people at all times have both physical and economic access to enough food for an active healthy life"

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(United Nations, Food and Agricultural Association, 1996). Food insecurity exists when "the availability of food or the ability to acquire food is limited" (Kalina, *Building Food Security in Canada*, 1994).

Current membership on the Food First Committee consists of representatives of the Burnaby School District, Fraser Health, South Burnaby Neighbourhood House Society, Burnaby Family Life Institute, Ministry for Children and Family Development, Salvation Army, Burnaby Mental Wealth Society, Burnaby Information & Community Services Society / Meals on Wheels, and concerned citizens. The City is represented by staff from the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department.

Since its inception, the Food First Committee has initiated and supported numerous programs that build skills and improve nutrition for Burnaby residents. Selected examples include:

- Empty Bowls biennial fundraising events (raising funds for such community initiatives as homework clubs, breakfast clubs, and learn to cook programs)
- Community kitchens
- Winter warmth dinners (dinners held in January and February, with the aim of bringing low income people together in a community setting to share a meal and socialize with their neighbours)
- Food bank social times (through the effort of volunteers, serving muffins and coffee to people waiting in food bank line ups, thereby showing hospitality and reducing the stigma of the experience)
- Kids in the Park (a program to feed hungry children in local parks).

### 3.0 PROPOSED FOOD POLICY

ActNow BC is a Provincial Government health promotion program geared towards supporting communities to improve the health of their citizens by 2010. ActNow funds are being made available to each Health Authority in BC to address food security concerns in a comprehensive and integrated manner. In 2005, the Food First Committee received \$15,000 in ActNow funds through Fraser Health (FH). The Committee, in turn, allocated the funds to various community programs aimed at feeding hungry people in Burnaby. The Food First Committee is optimistic that it will receive a further \$15,000 installment of ActNow funding through FH for 2006. As yet, however, no firm commitments have been made regarding the funding allocation.

If awarded the ActNow funding, the Food First Committee would retain a facilitator to bring together all parties interested in participating in development of a Food Policy for Burnaby. The thrust of the policy would be to establish a framework to guide decision makers in making choices to reduce food insecurity in the city. Citing the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, the Food First Committee conceives of an urban food policy as a "set of goals, objectives, strategies or programs designed to

improve access of households to stable supplies of good quality food through efficient, hygienic, healthy and environmentally sound food supply and distribution systems.”

Key areas of concern for an urban food policy would likely include issues related to health, the environment (e.g., preservation of agricultural lands), and the supply and distribution of food (e.g., promoting the purchase of locally-produced foods).

The Food First Committee cites the following benefits of a Burnaby Food Policy:

- The opportunity to strengthen connections and networks within the city to address various facets of food security (e.g., access to food)
- Establishment of a process for assessing food-related projects and initiatives of community agencies, businesses, the City, and educational institutions
- Enhanced opportunities for responding to the unique needs, traditions, and cultures of Burnaby residents
- Enhanced opportunities for future funding opportunities from granting agencies that give preference to programs that use community-based decision making models. (e.g., United Way and Act Now BC: Healthy Communities Initiative).

For the Social Issues Committee's information, a number of Canadian municipalities, including Vancouver and Toronto, have adopted food policies. In 2004, the City of Vancouver also established a Food Policy Council. The Food Council's primary goal is to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas and policy recommendations on how the system can be improved.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

This report has provided additional information on the Food First Committee and its proposed development of a draft Food Policy for Burnaby. While the City has not taken a specific position with respect to food security in the past, it has adopted policies and pursued initiatives which directly contribute to enhanced food security in Burnaby. For example, the City leases land at nominal value for community allotment gardens. As well, our Official Community Plan contains a goal which stipulates the City's commitment to protecting and enhancing agricultural uses within designated agricultural areas of the Big Bend. In addition, the City has demonstrated a long standing concern for and commitment to the needs of Burnaby's low income residents. Examples include providing staff participation on the Food First Committee, contributing to such initiatives as the Empty Bowls fundraising events, and taking a progressive stance on various social policy matters (e.g., providing funding for community schools and the Parks and Recreation Service Credit Program, advocating to senior governments on income assistance policies).

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Staff will continue to participate as members of the Food First Committee and, if ActNow funds are provided, play an appropriate supportive role in development of a draft Food Policy. We will keep the Social Issues Committee apprised of pertinent developments. If a Food Policy is prepared, copies will be circulated to Council, the Social Issues Committee, the School Board, and other appropriate bodies. The City will be able to assess the proposals and determine what, if any, role it may wish to play in their implementation at that time.

It is recommended that a copy of this report be sent to Council for information.



B. Luksun, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JF/jc/sa

Copy: City Manager  
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services

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