



Asheville-Buncombe Food Policy Council

10/20/16

Dear City Council members,

Thank you for your willingness to address critical issues of accountability, communication and transparency as it relates to our city's unparalleled current and planned edible resources. The recent incident at G.W. Carver Park sheds light on some important deficiencies that we now have the opportunity to address.

We acknowledge that the city staff and residents care deeply about the critical issues of food accessibility and security and that the city is doing important work on food policy development through the adoption of the food action plan and efforts to revise this plan in collaboration with the community. The Food Policy Council deeply appreciates the work and intention of the Office of Sustainability and hold up that partnership as an example of authentic engagement with stakeholders. As we strengthen relationships and communications we will have more opportunities to meet our shared goals of improving quality of life and access to fresh food for Asheville's residents.

In anticipation of next Tuesday's City Council meeting, we have consulted with community stakeholders and have prepared the following list of recommendations. We hope that the Council will take these ideas into consideration as you address internal and community communications, the G. W. Carver park tree cutting and its significance within the context of our urban trees and edible planning, and the City's role in supporting and expanding edible plantings as community food and educational resources.

Thank you for your time, work, and consideration,
Asheville Buncombe Food Policy Council

Recommendations to City Council

Clarification and revision of city's communications policies and procedures

We look forward to hearing from City Staff on the critical need to improve communications and transparencies and appreciate that this issue will be addressed directly at the upcoming City Council meeting. Below are recommendations specifically related to the management and communications around edible plantings and relationships with key stakeholders on edible projects, food policy, and the City's food action plan.

- Improve communication between city departments with overlapping work responsibilities in edible planting
- Development/enforcement of protocols that ensure all work on protected trees are approved by Tree Commission and made public for stakeholder input/approval
- Clarity and transparency regarding process for community/stakeholder input and communication of committee and task force positions; specific focus on equity and reaching low wealth communities.



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Understanding and protecting our edible tree resources

We understand that Planning and Economic Development is currently working with the Tree Commission and that a report has been commissioned on the city's tree canopy. We look forward to reading the report and applaud this collaborative effort to understand and protect our critical tree resources. We request that the both the Planning and Economic Department and City Council understand the need to address edible trees as a multi-faceted resource deserving special attention in cataloging and protection. Suggestions include:

- Raise the profile of the existing Asheville Tree Map resource <http://ashevilletreemap.org/> through incorporation into city website, provision of funds for updating map, and the intentional inclusion of edibles
- Develop and maintain registry of significant trees
- Adopt a protection ordinance for identified significant trees (including all edible trees in parks)
- Incorporation of edible trees into tree canopy research and resulting indicators
- Ensure that Asheville's Urban Forestry Management Plan includes registry of edible trees and plan for maintenance and development of edible trees

Funding for edible park and planting maintenance and community engagement

The ongoing success of Asheville's public edible plant projects relies on our understanding of public edibles as not only a source for accessible, fresh food, but also as an educational resource with exponential impact potential for positive health, environmental, and community revitalization outcomes. This understanding underscores the need for the city to invest in public education on edibles and in the materials and supplies to protect and expand edible plantings in our city.

- Designate funds to work with a community partner organization to educate community members about edible plantings and growing food in the city. Examples of educational initiatives include:
 - coordinate educational workshops
 - design, build, and install signage
 - develop educational materials to share through online city and partner platforms
 - dedicated city platform to share educational initiatives through parks and rec and /or sustainability webpages and social media
 - creation of an annual calendar featuring maintenance and harvest dates for currently planted and planned edibles that gives guidance on how to cultivate, harvest, and use edible plants
 - creation of ID guide for local edible plants & trees
 - regular features of edible and food policy topics of interest on the City of Asheville blog
- Invest in supplies and materials to maintain and expand existing public edible spaces
 - purchasing signage, mulch and supplies for edible park and planting maintenance and expansion
- A commitment to planting at least four trees to replace mature fruit trees cut down in Carver Park