

## Pamela Martin

---

**From:** julia j ford [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 07, 2016 10:58 PM  
**To:** Councillors; Public Hearings  
**Subject:** Comments re: Growing in the City for Sept 8th Public Hearing  
**Attachments:** letter re Growing in the City initiative.PDF

Dear Mayor & Council,

I'm writing in regards to the Growing in the City initiative. I'd like to commend City staff, the Mayor and Council for putting time and energy into crafting these policies and moving them forward. On the whole I think they represent a positive move, and as someone who is deeply engaged in growing food as a backyard gardener, urban farmer, and rural farm worker it is heartening to see that these issues have your attention.

A local, sustainable and just food system weaves together innovative small scale urban agriculture, a strong culture of backyard, balcony and rooftop gardening, and protected rural farmlands to provide fresh, nutritious and affordable food for all. Affordable food, like affordable housing, is an essential component of creating healthy communities where everyone has what they need to grow and thrive. We can choose to build these systems, and to prioritize people and community health, or we can choose to undermine them in the pursuit of narrowly defined 'development' goals.

Many of the proposed policy changes do help small scale urban agriculture, by removing zoning restrictions, and increasing opportunities to sell excess produce that is not traded or preserved. These are necessary steps in freeing up opportunities for people to get creative in addressing the very serious issues we are facing in our current food system, and to become more resilient. I'm pleased to see these changes and support them moving forward.

Unfortunately, there is one proposed change in particular that casts a shadow over what is otherwise good news. Section 2 a) of proposed Bylaw 16-063 does not have any place in a suite of policies whose stated intent is to "support and expand" the small scale commercial urban agriculture sector. I'd like to ask that this section be decoupled and voted down; not delayed to discuss more or to have the language softened, but voted down immediately. I'm in favour of the remainder of Bylaw 16-063 being passed.

I see this proposed amendment as wholly unnecessary, as it doesn't grant Mayor & Council any powers or options that don't already exist, and in fact reduces Councils ability to make decisions on a case-by-case basis. It contradicts the intent of the Growing in the City initiative originally put forward by Councillors Isitt & Loveday in February 2016, has no grounding in the public consultation process around the initiative and it severely undermines the Broad Objectives in Section 17 of the OCP (specifically, 17 b), c) and d) on p. 116).

This policy would also undermine the political power of urban farmers and their advocates. It is not sheer coincidence that Section 17 was used last year to strengthen the position of urban farmers in the debates around the St. Andrew's site. In email correspondence, not only did a senior City staffer say this change was to reassure developers and warn farmers, he also mentioned a hypothetical situation in which a development may be challenged by a community due to the shading out of an urban farm. This, despite the fact that residents of Victoria overwhelmingly support urban agriculture, as evidenced by the City's own public consultation process on this very initiative. This policy proposal

would entrench a particular political view of what 'development' looks in a document that is supposed to be based on and reflect broad public input, and it's entirely inappropriate for it to move forward.

Comments from City staff have also attempted to deflect the urgency of developing a strong urban component to our food system by stating in emails to me that the supposed “preservation of food producing lands outside the City where yields are higher, costs are lower, and production more directly contributes to food security,” makes it unnecessary to grant urban farmers more substantial support and recognition as contributors to local food security.

These comments do not reflect the reality of agriculture in Southern Vancouver Island. Access to land is a well-documented and serious barrier to new farmers, and existing ALR land is not being adequately protected or fully farmed in the regions surrounding Victoria due primarily to development pressures and land prices. There is also no substantial evidence to support these claims of higher yields and lower costs in rural and peri-urban areas vs urban areas.

Perhaps staff are referring to perceptions of economies of scale in large conventional agriculture operations, but this is not relevant on the island as parcels of land here are much smaller than in say, Idaho or the Okanagan. Industrial agriculture also externalizes enormous social and environmental costs, in the form of extremely exploitive labour practices, and serious damage to ecosystems that support life in order to realize those “high yields” and “low costs”. These are not practices that contribute to a sustainable food system, and this is not sound reasoning on which to base policy.

Finally, the comments on a healthy food system that I made above have a single issue at their heart: access to land. People need access to land to live on, and access to land to grow on; both food and shelter are basic human needs. Given that the City of Victoria operates on Lekwungen and W\_SÁNEC territory, and that the destruction of indigenous food systems is a well-documented tool of colonisation, I'd like to encourage Council to reconsider staff recommendations that Esquimalt and Songhees nations not be consulted on these policies and pursue avenues to do so.

Thanks very much for your time and consideration of my comments.

Best wishes,

Julia Ford  
Resident, North Park

## Pamela Martin

---

**From:** Jenni Schine [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 08, 2016 9:12 AM  
**To:** Public Hearings; Councillors  
**Subject:** Having my voice heard on City of Victoria Food Policy

Dear Mayor Helps and Victoria City Councilors,

I am a Victoria resident and I write with feedback on the Official Community Plan, specifically about food production.

I applaud the many progressive steps council has taken recently to encourage food production on private and city land, like Boulevard gardening and planting fruit trees. These steps can help improve food security and foster a sense of community in the city; as a gardener myself, I have seen firsthand how Boulevard gardening and sharing food has improved connections amongst my neighbours.

However, I am concerned about changes to Section 17.10 that explicitly make food production "*subservient to the density, built form, place character, and land use objectives*". I think this changes both the tone and spirit of the bylaw. While acknowledging other uses is critical, we should not a priori put food production below other uses; rather, I encourage a flexible approach that allows us to evaluate dynamics among multiple uses and perspectives.

**I ask you to decouple that section of bylaw 17.10 and vote it down.** Food production is of great importance to me, my family, and my neighbourhood in Victoria. When I am tending my Boulevard garden, numerous people stop and ask questions about plants, share gardening tips, and chat about other issues. It's created a really lovely feeling of community and I hope others can share in it.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Schine

Fernwood, Victoria, BC

## Pamela Martin

---

**From:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** FW: Growing in the City

**From:** caitlin gallupe [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 07, 2016 9:05 PM  
**To:** Lisa Helps (Mayor) <[mayor@victoria.ca](mailto:mayor@victoria.ca)>  
**Subject:** Growing in the City

To Whom It May Concern,

I support facilitating urban agriculture, as proposed in the city's Growing Food in the City bulletin, by eliminating development permits in certain situations and introducing a business licence. What I think is unnecessary is the third point: updating the OCP to spell out that built development is a higher priority than urban food production; in fact, that food production is "subservient" to density, built form, etc., as stated in proposed bylaw No. 16-063.

This newly proposed legislation is said to make small scale urban agriculture subservient to built development. This is particularly alarming and concerning as it seems as though small scale urban agriculture is a very small footprint in our urban setting and should be supported by city council for its value. In order to be a progressive city I think urban agriculture should be viewed as a fundamental aspect of urban planning and development. Growing food can complement expansion of accessible housing, including new development.

Most development in the city is individual unit ownership- mixed use condos and commercial/office space that, even if it becomes rentals, would be un-affordable for supposedly "low- to middle-income" earners as opposed to adding significantly to the most needed tier of housing stock. We need community plans and related bylaws that not only encourage urban food production, but encourage it in tandem with the need for more affordable low-income housing. This can be new builds, social/subsidized housing, truly low-income market housing, secondary suites, laneway housing, conversions etc.

Urban food production should not come second to development, but should be in parallel with accessible (affordable) housing development. Urban farming builds community in a strong and continuous way and it would be shame to limit these possibilities and threaten the existing urban farm efforts in place. As it stands urban agriculture accounts for such minuscule land use in the urban setting and it seems quite clear that this is by no means a true threat to development.

I strongly oppose this proposed change in legislation change in the Official Community Plan that clarifies that built development (described on the City website as for example housing, office and retail) will be considered as a higher priority than small-scale commercial food production. I and do not believe it is appropriate to frame this as part of the work of Growing in the City as it does not serve to advance the stated goals of enhancing our local urban food systems, but rather does the

opposite by entrenching a vision of the City as a place where built development is a priority. I urge you to reconsider these changes and listen to the wider community of Victoria and not development alone. This past year has proven to be very inspiring for a new food system which has small scale urban farming as an element.

Caitlin Gallupe

## Pamela Martin

---

**From:** Kayla Siefried [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 08, 2016 11:59 AM  
**To:** Public Hearings; Councillors  
**Subject:** Victoria Food Policy

Hi there,

Please accept this letter as a concern for the wording in Section 17 of the Official Community Plan. The tone and spirit of the following statement in the section is concerning:

*Support food production on private land where it is safe, suitable and compatible with the Urban Place Guidelines and subservient to the density, built form, place character, and land use objectives in this plan.*

The wording in bold is unnecessary, and will bind decision makers to favor development projects, exactly contrary to what the Growing Food in the City policies are making an effort towards! Please reconsider this wording!

Thank you,  
Kayla

--

environmental educator - cycling enthusiast - yoga teacher - gardener - fermenter  
[REDACTED]

## Pamela Martin

---

**From:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** FW: Growing in the City Feedback

**From:** Terri Chyzowski [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 06, 2016 8:03 AM  
**To:** Councillors <[Councillors@victoria.ca](mailto:Councillors@victoria.ca)>  
**Cc:** Brian Green <[BGreen@victoria.ca](mailto:BGreen@victoria.ca)>  
**Subject:** Growing in the City Feedback

Good morning, I appreciate the municipality providing me an opportunity to provide feedback on their website regarding the Growing in the City changes coming before Council on Thursday. In addition, I respectfully submit my feedback to you directly as I'm worried that the issue of poultry and the sheltering of poultry is not being sufficiently considered and addressed.

Thank you for your attention.

Terri Chyzowski  
[REDACTED]

## Pamela Martin

---

**From:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** FW: Query re. Small Scale Commercial Urban Food Production Bylaws

---

**From:** Natasha Caverley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 06, 2016 9:14 AM  
**To:** Lisa Helps (Mayor) <[mayor@victoria.ca](mailto:mayor@victoria.ca)>; Marianne Alto (Councillor) <[MAalto@victoria.ca](mailto:MAalto@victoria.ca)>; Chris Coleman (Councillor) <[ccoleman@victoria.ca](mailto:ccoleman@victoria.ca)>; Ben Isitt (Councillor) <[BIsitt@victoria.ca](mailto:BIsitt@victoria.ca)>; Jeremy Loveday (Councillor) <[jloveday@victoria.ca](mailto:jloveday@victoria.ca)>; Margaret Lucas (Councillor) <[mlucas@victoria.ca](mailto:mlucas@victoria.ca)>; Pam Madoff (Councillor) <[pmadoff@victoria.ca](mailto:pmadoff@victoria.ca)>; Charlayne Thornton-Joe (Councillor) <[cth Thornton-joe@victoria.ca](mailto:cth Thornton-joe@victoria.ca)>; Geoff Young (Councillor) <[gyoung@victoria.ca](mailto:gyoung@victoria.ca)>  
**Subject:** Query re. Small Scale Commercial Urban Food Production Bylaws

Dear Mayor Helps and Victoria City Council:

After reading the September 3, 2016 Times-Colonist article entitled, *Victoria's urban agricultural proposals go to public hearing next week*, I respectfully inquire as to the extent to which Victoria City Council and staff have or will consider a corresponding deer and geese management strategy as the City explores its urban agriculture proposal (small scale commercial urban food production).

As a resident on the Saanich Peninsula, I am cognizant that wildlife damage management issues often arise for small and mid-sized Peninsula farms as they endeavour to advance sustainable food production in their fields and orchards.

In closing, all the best with your deliberations on this matter later this week.

Respectfully,  
Natasha Caverley  
North Saanich, BC