

June 28, 2016 Parks & Recreation Committee, City of Richmond

My name is Deirdre Whalen and my address is 13631 Blundell Road Richmond.

I am here to speak on behalf of the **Richmond Poverty Response Committee**. The Richmond PRC is *“a coalition of Richmond residents and agencies working together to reduce poverty and the impacts of poverty with research, projects and public education.”*

The Richmond PRC is extremely pleased with the **Richmond Food Charter** document being presented to you today. We were active members in the Food Security Action Team (led by Arzeena Hamir and later by Colin Dring) that envisioned a local food charter for Richmond. We participated in the kitchen table talks, from which the values and commitment statements were developed.

From the early days of the Richmond PRC (which was established in 2001), we had a Food Security Task Force that included the Richmond Food Bank and the Fruit Tree Sharing Project (now the Sharing Farm). Members of the PRC, especially Mary Gazetas, advocated successfully to establish a community fruit-gleaning project and to develop the Gilbert Road fruit tree project. They also worked with the City to build community gardens in neighbourhoods all over Richmond.

In 2007-2008 the Food Security Task Force took the initiative to study and report on the state of food security, culminating in Richmond's first Food For All conference entitled **“Making Richmond Food Secure.”** Key themes that emerged were: public education, connecting people with food and farmers, and supporting local food production. Around this time as well, the Task Force formed the Garden City Lands Coalition in order to save the Garden City Lands from development. We proposed a vision for urban agriculture on the site, which is now happily coming to fruition.

When the PRC's Food Security Task Force became the Richmond Food Security Society, they went on to administer the City's community gardens and to develop the Terra Nova farm among other projects.

The Richmond PRC has a long history of advocating for local food security, which is why we are so proud that the day has come to move forward with a Richmond Food Charter. The Food Charter will allow Richmond to advance in many areas that are vital to the health and wellbeing of Richmond residents, especially those experiencing poverty.

As a city founded as an agricultural breadbasket of Metro Vancouver, it is time to embrace our legacy. We could have: Grow local - buy local campaigns; pocket markets; farm tours; local procurement by institutions; projects dealing with food waste, distribution and disposal. How exciting to see all the possible initiatives that the Food Charter can cultivate, ripen and harvest!

The Richmond PRC fully endorses the Richmond Food Charter and hopes the Committee and City Council will do the same.