

URBAN AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, September 9, 2026 – 4PM

at Blandford Nature Center Auditorium
(1715 Hillburn NW, Grand Rapids MI 49504)

Committee Members:

Present: Connie Bohatch, Evvia Marshall, Stacy Stout, Muriel (Dolli) Lutes, Kimberly Moore, Sarah Larson

Absent: Amanda Faber

Other: Kat Hart (City Staff), Angélica DeJesus (City Staff)

Mission:

To educate and empower the community by providing policy review, recommendations, and support for urban agriculture.

Agenda:

1. Call to Order: 4:08pm
2. Determination of Quorum
3. Approval of Agenda
 - a. Motion made by Kim Moore & seconded by Stacy Stout, to approve the September 9, 2026, agenda as presented. Motion carried.
4. Approval of Minutes of August 12, 2026, meeting
 - a. Motion made by Stacy Stout & seconded by Kim Moore, to approve the August 12, 2026, minutes as presented. Motion carried.
5. Public Comments - none
6. Old Business
 - a. Discussion of updates for the backyard chickens ordinances
 - i. Scott Baker (City Staff) will potentially return October with an update
7. New Business
 - a. Review strategic plan category **Community Education** to generate potential actions for the UAC to take.

Objective: *educate & empower the community to grow and enhance our local food system.*

Strategy 1: *Provide up-to-date information about best practices, policies, programs, & ordinances about urban agriculture.*

1.1 Activity: *Develop messaging to promote urban agriculture to the community*

- i. Conduct annual review of education materials for accuracy
- ii. Identify messaging delivery strategy: *how and when resources will be shared*

- iii. Create key talking points/messaging for UAC members
 - UAC provides resources and information about agriculture opportunities to expand food sovereignty & encourage young farmers and next generation of growers
- iv. Create physical and digital materials to share with community
 - Pamphlets for composting, chickens, bees, gardening, etc.
 - Add QR code to the Urban Ag Guide (www.grandrapidsmi.gov/urbanag)

1.2 Activity: *Develop messaging to promote adopted policies, programs, & ordinances*

Strategy 2: *Facilitate intentional and meaningful public engagement for public review of policies, education, and awareness of urban agriculture.*

2.1 Activity: *Participate in community events to provide awareness & education*

- i. Increase attendance at UAC meetings and increase engagement from public
 - a. UAC members learn from community on ag. needs
- ii. Explore hosting smaller, focused, learning sessions
- iii. Attend 3-5 community events in 2026
 - a. Commission Night Out (3 times a year)
 - b. Neighborhood Summit (Spring)
- iv. Potential education opportunities:
 - USDA COB Grant Partners (BNC, New City Neighbors, Urban Beets, WMEAC, WM?)
 - West Michigan Young Farmers
 - Co-Ops? GR Food Co-Op
 - YMCA Veggie Van
 - Food Pantries
 - Grand Rapids Urban Farmers
 - Food Club (Grocery Store model)
 - Landlords to support/install gardening among tenants
 - GR Neighborhood Summit 2027
 - Indigenous Food Summit 2027
 - Welcome Week from Kent County Welcome Plan
 - City Commission Night Out - Tabling
 - GVSU Food Summit
 - UAC hosted/organized outreach events
- b. Recommendations for backyard livestock & edible trees/shrubs (*CAAP Food Systems Strategy 4, Action 1*)
 - i. UAC members will provide notes by next meeting on October 14, 2026

8. Partner Reports
 - a. *Urban Agriculture Project* update from Angélica DeJesus (City Staff)
 - i. UAC members will complete UAP feedback worksheet by September 23, 2026
9. Agenda items for future meeting on September 9, 2026
 - a. Upcoming UAC meetings to review strategic plan priorities
 - **Community Access** – October 14, 2026 (90 min)
 - **Shaping Policy** – November 18, 2026 (90 min)
10. Motion to adjourn was made by Kim Moore and seconded by Sarah Larson. Motion carried.
11. Adjournment at 5:38pm

**Next Meeting – Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 4pm (90 min)
at the Public Service Center in the Grand River Room (1st floor)
(1500 Scribner Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504)**