PANEL: The Case of Urban Farming in DC

Urban Farming: An Alternative Solution to Reclaim Vacant Property
David Grosso, At-Large Councilmember, Washington, D.C.

This presentation will include an overview of the D.C. Urban Farming Food Security Act of 2014, the genesis for the legislation, the components of the bill as introduced, the bill as included in the Budget Support Act of 2016, and other initiatives undertaken by D.C. government to increase urban farming and gardening programs across the city.

Farming: An Alternative Solution to Reclaim Vacant Property
Lillie Rosen, Food Access Director, DC Greens
Pamela Hess, Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture

This case study panel will discuss how urban agriculture and food policy have quickly grown from piecemeal guerrilla and backyard efforts to fertile policy collaboration in the District of Columbia that places DC into a leadership role for local policy implementation nationally. Panelists will briefly review the history of urban agriculture in DC, describe the path to the Urban Farming and Food Security Act of 2014, explore the potential overarching goals of food policy in the District, and discuss the robust market for local food.

Lillie Rosen will touch on:
- The idea of economic viability for urban commercial farmers and development of a value-added agricultural product sector in DC.
- Existing food policy successes and challenges in DC related to urban agriculture, the food policy council, and the cottage food industry.
- The role of the government, not for profit, and for profit organizations in the policy development and implementation process in DC.
- Specific implementation challenges with the Urban Farming and Food Security Act.

Pamela Hess will discuss the ways in which the market for local food is massive, growing, and unmatched by the supply in the D.C. region. The market for healthy foods that are high quality, affordable and convenient in low-food access, low-income neighborhoods is similarly robust, as demonstrated by three years of annual 50 percent increases in revenue on the Mobile Market—but making the food accessible requires dedicated policy and resources to make the food accessible.

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PANEL BIOGRAPHIES

David Grosso, *At-Large Councilmember, Washington, D.C.*

**David Grosso** is Chairperson of the Committee on Education of the Council of the District of Columbia. David was elected to the D.C. Council as an at-large member in November 2012 to represent residents in all eight wards. During his first two years in office, David focused on many issues with one main goal always at the forefront of his mind: making D.C. a better city. Central to that goal is education. A high quality public education system and an innovative public library system help residents gain fruitful employment, attract newcomers, and make the city appealing to businesses. Under David’s leadership, the Committee on Education’s work will be collaborative and forward thinking. From early childhood education to adult learning, David is committed to the well-being of students, ensuring that they are in the best position to succeed. In addition to his focus on education, David is committed to addressing inequities within the criminal justice system, improving health outcomes throughout the city, promoting transparency and open government, strengthening the creative economy, and further engaging residents in the political process.

Lillie Rosen, *Food Access Director, DC Greens*

**Lillie Rosen** is the Food Access Director at DC Greens. Prior to joining DC Greens, Lillie managed and implemented U.S. government contracts at Weidemann Associates, Inc., a Crown Agents USA Company, focusing on international food security and monitoring and evaluation. She received her master’s degree in international peace and conflict resolution from American University. During her course of study she completed research on the relationship between localizing peace and urban agriculture with case studies in three U.S. cities.

Pamela Hess, *Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food and Agriculture*

**Pamela Hess** is the executive director of the Arcadia Center for Sustainable Food & Agriculture, which is dedicated to creating a more equitable, sustainable local food system. Arcadia grows food using sustainable methods; trains military veterans to be farmers; teaches children about the origins of healthy food; and operates two Mobile Markets that make 19 regular weekly stops in low-food access neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. and Virginia. Pam came to Arcadia from a career in journalism, during which she covered the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. She went on to run a local food magazine that covered regional sustainable farmers and the chefs and restaurants who used their food.