

Monday, October 06, 2014 6-8pm
TYFPC Community Meeting Minutes
Metro City Hall, Toronto

Thank you to everyone who attended the October 2014 Toronto Youth Food Policy Community Meeting! We are looking forward to our next meeting in December and invite those who attended the October meeting to come again, as well we encourage those who are interested in the council to come check out the council! If you have any questions or comments in regards to the meeting, please email us info@tyfpc.ca.

Due to the quickly approaching municipal election, 3 “youth” mayoral candidates, Morgan, Clim and Matthew, were in attendance to tell us why they got involved in municipal politics, how the campaigning experience has been for them, and the important issues that they would like to discuss. We were also pleased to have a representative from Toronto’s City Youth Council at the meeting, as we partnered with them for this meeting.

At the onset of the meeting TYFPC member, Andrew welcome everyone to the meeting, explain the agenda and read the Equity Statement, which reminds us why it is so important and how we can go about creating an inclusive, supportive and safe atmosphere.

Who are the TYFPC Members:

- Exist to mobilize youth to create change – local, sustainable and just food system – exist to provide youth perspective
- We work through education, advocacy and networking
- 8 new members on the council this year. The age range for members is 14-30 years
- Goals for the year were established at retreat:
 1. climate change and the corporate food system
 2. class and ethnicity – incorporating more diverse voices
 3. funding and opportunities for youth in food

Municipal Politics Program:

Kaylen, a TYFPC member, has been working on municipal political program that facilitates discussion regarding municipal politics. As part of this project, a survey was circulated to gain an insight as to what issues were most important to them. Kaylen posed the question about how to utilized the “window of opportunity” after the municipal election. This opened the floor to a broader discussion about the municipal election. An inquiry about a ranking system, similar to a report card was made. The candidates explained that they receive many of these types of assessments, with the process being quite time consuming and without

knowing how many people the report card will reach.

Toronto's City Youth Council

TCYC founder Tyler Johnston explained the TCYC. Tyler founded the TCYC in January 2012 and he has aspirations to expand from municipal politics to a provincial or federal level. The City Youth Council of Toronto purpose to have a youth councilor in every ward to establish Youth Council.

- 80-90 councilors
- partner with Clerks and Elections office
- Youth councilors are 14-24 years of age
- now in Mississauga and there are 11 youth councilors
- youth councilors have to live in ward they represent and voters must vote in ward where they reside
- youth are concentrated in North York and Scarborough
- spending and fundraising limit of \$100
- getting people to vote – if people vote 3 times they are likely to continue voting – therefore part of the TCYC mandate is to encourage democratic involvement
- 4000 youth voting
- cities across the country have requested CYC in their city
- it is set up as a program that works in conjunction with the elected council, as the youth members have “shadowing requirements” with the councilors

If anyone has any questions about Toronto's City Youth Council, more information can be found at <http://toronto.thecyc.ca>

Mayoral Candidates

The next portion of the meeting was focused on bringing the mayoral candidates into the discussion. During their opening remarks, the candidates discussed these issues:

Morgan has goals of increasing interaction of Toronto residents. She sees a lack of attention paid to the youth in Toronto's municipal politics and wants to bring these conversations into focus.

Similarly, Matthew would like to see more people engaged in municipal politics. A possible way to do this is through online voting, which brings politics to citizens. The concept of “open source democracy” allows residences to actively participate in policy related discussions would help to increase the accountability of politicians and facilitate involvement in a meaningful way.

Clim began his campaign because he felt that other mayoral candidates were not addressing the issues that are important to him. He hopes to shift the discourse of politics so that they

include those issues.

Discussion

Question To Candidates:

1. How do you see yourselves being involved with municipal politics after the election?

- Over the course of the campaign, many incredible organizations have been brought to attention and therefore there is a difficulty in deciding what to be involved in
- Has been approached about a project that would like to promote/integrate open source democracy
- Looking forward to taking a break after an event filled campaign

2. Do you think there are certain issues that are more salient to youth?

- Every issue is a youth issue, as every aspect of the city does affect or will affect us:
 - i. Housing is a main issue
 - ii. The state of the environment is also crucial
- Voter turnout – youth age group of proportionally disengaged with the voting process – lets bring politics towards youth – politics should follow the trends that already exist
- Youth doesn't need to be measured chronologically – need to operate with all demographics and be a democracy collaboration of voices

3. Reflect on your experiences as running as a candidate

- Issue is not having a brand - this can be tied to age, need to have large network to be successful in political system
- Appetite for positive politics, rather than negative politics, which tells voters why you should NOT vote for someone else. Focus on the positive characteristics you bring to the table
- Although dreams of a political victors may not be realistic, the hard work pays off because we might “inspire the person who changes the world”

4. What is something you have learnt during the campaigning process?

- A lot of it is learning as you go. Many of us, and the people helping us, were not necessarily highly experienced.
- Fundraising is difficult is a very difficult aspect
- Time management is incredible important

5. Has your stance on issues changed over the course of this campaign?

- Issues have been refined
- Didn't change stance or values based on public opinion, but would change it on expert opinion

6. In regards to class, income, gender etc. low income areas are disenfranchised, how can we go about addressing these issues?

- Perhaps a higher minimum wage
- Making society more equal to elevate stress
 - Non-profit co-op to supply necessities
 - When companies are involved in supplying necessities, they have a goal of making a profit from people who already might be struggling to make ends meet
- Difficult to make policy prescriptions – institutionalizing a single method, although the method may be deemed as an improvement is still not democratic. We need to support citizens as they determine the solution most appropriate for them.
- Discussing solutions can be difficult because people may only listen to you when they feel the same, therefore reaching those who have opposing views is difficult.

Over the course of the meeting, broader issues were brought up. Here are some of those issues:

- The political structure itself creates institutional barriers
- Can't expect a certain level of participation from people, each individual has their own skills, schedule, barriers, abilities etc.
- Is voting a real way of participating?
- People are overwhelmed by issues, the political system etc. and not sure how to break the barriers. This uncertainty leads to inaction, but this does not mean that people are not concerned or do not care.

Closing Statements from the Candidates:

Clim reinforced that citizens need to be recognized for the important contributors they are. Each of us has a little bit of power, and we can use the power to make a positive change.

Matthew would like to see the promotion of more a participatory form of democracy, as participation is a vital aspect of democracy.

Morgan encouraged everyone to people in their life engaged in the capacity they feel comfortable with.

Final Community Announcement

Representative from Meal Exchange:

This October they are once again hosting their “Trick or Eat” Campaign. This year’s event, in addition to the food drive, will include fostering a discussion around hunger in Canada.

Go to trickoreat.ca for more details or tweet using #trickoreat

Meeting Adjourned