

**City Council Committee on Rules Hearing**  
**December 4, 2012**  
**Mayor's Food Policy Advisory Council Testimony**  
**Bills No. 120916 and No. 120917**

Good morning Chairman Greenlee and members of the Committee on Rules. My name is Nic Esposito, the Co-Manager of Emerald Street Urban Farm. I am testifying today on behalf of the Mayor's Food Policy Advisory Council on City Council Bills No. 120916 and No. 120917. I am also joined by the Food Policy Advisory Council ex-officio co-chair, Sarah Wu who is the Policy and Outreach Manager in the Mayor's Office of Sustainability.

In 2008, Mayor Michael A. Nutter issued the Philadelphia Food Charter, through which the City of Philadelphia "committed to facilitating a sustainable food and urban agriculture system." One of the mechanisms for fulfilling that goal was the creation of a "Food Policy Council comprised of diverse, regional stakeholders."

The Food Policy Advisory Council was appointed in 2011 and tasked with advising the City on how to be a productive partner in the regional food system and how to improve food access.

The mission of the Food Policy Advisory Council is to facilitate the development of responsible policies that improve access to Philadelphia residents to culturally appropriate, nutritionally sound, and affordable food that is grown in the Philadelphia region through environmentally sustainable practices.

The Food Policy Advisory Council brings together 21 appointed and 11 ex officio members, drawing members from a host of organizations and City agencies working throughout the region at all stages of the food system.

The Food Policy Advisory Council has pledged to operate with transparency as one of its core values. The Council holds six open meetings per year and invites broad participation in its work.

The Food Policy Advisory Council has identified three priority areas related to the food system for its first years: workforce development, vacant land, and hunger. Urban agriculture, which includes community gardening and market or community-supported farming, is integral to each of those areas and a priority for Philadelphia, as recognized in both the Food Charter and *Greenworks Philadelphia*.

I am here today because the Food Policy Advisory Council opposes City Council Bills No. 120916 and No. 120917. City Council Bill No. 120917 prohibits both community gardening and market or community-supported farming on CMX-2, which covers one third of all the City's commercial land.

Bill No. 120916 creates a new commercial mixed-use district – CMX-2.2. The new district treats gardening and farming in a manner consistent with the new zoning code as it was adopted in December 2011. However, the CMX-2.2 district would have to be mapped through a new Council ordinance -- a process requiring significant effort and coordination and which could take years to accomplish.

The Food Policy Advisory Council recognizes that the zoning code was the result of much deliberation and compromise. The code as written reflects both community gardening and market or community-supported farming both as existing and important uses in neighborhoods throughout the City.

The FPAC finds that the proposed zoning code amendments will create barriers to existing and new gardening and farming projects. This runs counter to the goals of both the administration's Philadelphia Food Charter and *Greenworks Philadelphia*.

There will be an opportunity to fully evaluate the zoning code after one year, and, therefore, the FPAC recommends that the Rules Committee vote against these bills and allow the zoning code to remain "as is" for the remainder of that year.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions.