

Urban Agriculture Working Group – Agenda

Location: Material Institute

September 21st, 2025

2 – 3PM

Goals:

- Connect members from both UAWG and GNOGA
- Ground in UAWG purpose and past work
- Hear work updates from Urban Agriculture Liaison
- Generate feedback especially on land access ideas

Agenda:

- 1. [3 – 3:10pm] (10 min) Welcome & Intros**
 - a. Name, pronouns, farm/garden, neighborhood
- 2. [3:10 – 3:15pm] (5 min) UAWG History & Overview**
 - a. Two previous meetings: March, June
- 3. [3:15 – 3:30pm] (10 min) Urban Agriculture Liaison Updates**
 - a. Blight / Code Violations**
 - i. 8/8: Cover Crop and Regenerative Agriculture Training for Code Enforcement
 1. August 8th, ~60 participants, in partnership with Anna at LSU Ag
 - ii. Cover Crop Ordinance – may be voted on as soon as October 9th!
 1. Adds definition: **Cover crops. Cultivated plants temporarily planted to slow erosion, improve soil health, enhance water availability, smother weeds, help control pests and diseases, and increase biodiversity. Cover crops shall not be considered weeds.**
 2. Adds: **“Weeds shall be defined as all grasses, annual plants, and vegetation, other than trees or shrubs. Said term shall not include cultivated flowers, gardens, or intentionally planted cover crops.”**
 - iii. Yard Signs
 - b. Water Access**
 - i. Water Access Guide for Farms and Gardens:
<https://nola.gov/wateraccess>
 - ii. Technical Assistance navigating SWBNO
 - c. Land Access**

- i. **Existing Programs**
 - 1. Growing Green (NORA)
 - 2. Mow to Own (currently on pause)
 - 3. NORA's Annual Auction (housing-only development until 2025)
 - ii. **Grow to Own (program idea)**
 - 1. Pilot program idea to make adjudicated (extremely tax delinquent) lots available at a reduced rate (\$5k – 7k) for urban farms, community gardens, or green spaces, after 1 year of maintaining the lot
 - 2. Challenges / Concerns
 - a. Cabela's Test
 - b. Concerns lots will end up back in Code Enforcement
 - c. 1-year redemption period with adjudicated properties
 - d. Risk of speculators exploiting program
 - e. Capacity to administer program
 - f. Balancing reasonable application process with thoughtful requirements
- d. **Livestock & Fowl Working Group**
- e. **Urban Agriculture & Food Plan**
- f. **Guides In Progress**
 - i. How to get your Greenhouse/Farm Structure Permitted
 - ii. Farm Business Checklist (supporting Sprout)
- g. **Technical Assistance (about 50 hours)**
- 4. **[3:30 – 3:55pm] (25 min) Feedback on City's Urban Agriculture Work**
 - a. **Grow to Own Brainstorm Session**
 - i. What can be built into the program to ensure its success?
 - ii. What should program requirements include?
 - 1. Proof of prior garden / farm experience?
 - 2. Living in proximity to the lot? How close?
 - 3. Site plan?
 - iii. How should eligible properties be identified?
 - iv. How do we reduce the likelihood of lots ending up back in Code Enforcement?
- 5. **[3:55 – 4pm] (5 min) Next Steps**
 - a. Next proposed meeting time: December 18th (to be determined, depending on if GNOGA)
 - b. Livestock & Fowl Working Group meeting: Friday, October 3rd 10:30am – 12pm
 - i. Email urbanag@nola.gov for the link

NOTES:

GNOGA History and Context

- In 2015, GNOGA members came together and outlined mission and vision. Some past successes:
 - They regularly gathered in person to share ideas and get to know each other
 - Group work-share days to get lots of GNOGA members to one garden/farm to help with one task. Learning exchange.
 - Past successful event - big BBQ at Sprout with lots of new participants
 - Bulk ordering of seeds or mulch.
- Some things GNOGA could gain momentum around again:
 - Strategizing around more shared cold storage solutions
 - Potentially forming a cooperative
 - Getting the listserv cleaned up
- A Greener New Orleans campaign
 - Pushing for changes in urban agriculture policy landscape
 - AGNO campaign planks:
<https://nola.gov/nola/media/Resilience/AGreenerNewOrleansPlatform.pdf>
 - GNOGA was part of a coalition along with Sprout, NOFPC (formerly FPAC), and Louisiana Progress
 - The reason why the Urban Agriculture Liaison role and Urban Agriculture Working Group exists

Urban Agriculture Liaison Updates

- **Blight / Code Enforcement**
 - Common issue: growers getting cited/fined/brought to administrative hearings for plant overgrowth or other code violations related to cover cropping, sheet mulching, and other regenerative agriculture practices
 - Solutions / Actions
 - Regenerative Garden In Progress – Yard Signs
 - Training for Code Enforcement on Plant ID and Regenerative Agriculture Practices
 - Grace and Anna Timmerman hosted on 8/8
 - Shared Cover Crop Guide – developed by Sprout and NOFPC
 - Cover Crop Ordinance – October 9th
 - Adds language in city code to define cover crops and “intentionally planted cover crops” can be over 10 inch weed height
 - Shoutout to Recirculating Farms for hosting a cover crop workshop and inviting CM Harris who has now expressed interest in sponsoring this ordinance
 - **Questions:**
 - If it passes, how long does it take to take effect?
 - Takes effect as soon as the Mayor signs it. Usually a few days after Council meeting, up to a month.

- Is there a guide for best practices for cover cropping, so that we can be good neighbors
 - Terence: I always tell people that if they're going to be broadcasting seeds, to intentionally plant the outer rows so that it's giving it a clean edge.
- **Water Access**
 - Guide: <https://nola.gov/wateraccess>
 - On Farm: Water Access session with Sprout and ORS at Press Street Gardens
 - October 20th 5 – 7pm
- **Livestock & Fowl Working Group**
 - A new working group that has met a few times to discuss how to improve city regulations around keeping urban micro-livestock
 - Current legal limit (without a permit) is 6 chickens
 - Otherwise (if you're not in the Rural-Residential District), you must go through a [Conditional Use Permit process](#). Not a reasonable process for someone trying to keep a small amount of animals.
 - City departments agree there should be a clear legal pathway for how to keep a reasonable amount of animals
 - Garden on Mars is developing a resource on how to incubate eggs to have your own chickens
- **Land Access**
 - **Grow to Own Program Idea**
 - Initial reactions
 - With Mow to Own, you must own the lot directly next door to the lot you buy through Mow to Own. That was to prevent speculators and people buying up lots of land and developing them.
 - Adjacent can be interpreted more broadly than directly next door
 - Don't require participant to already own a home/lot
 - Is there a way to build a requirement that people build with their neighbors? Get support from direct neighbors, at least.
 - Seems unnecessarily prohibitive for an individual to organize a neighborhood meeting to identify eligible lots
 - Can the city (or a vendor) do the legwork of identifying lots that are most eligible
 - Tomas: part of series of workshops last January where 9th ward residents met to discuss land ownership and blight in their neighborhood. It developed into a small land trust. Many neighbors expressed interest in lot next door to them that is currently blighted being developed into a garden because currently a nuisance
 - What do people need to provide to apply and show interest?
 - For Growing Green: timeline of development, site plan, budget (prove finances)
 - Some of that is realistic and beneficial for people to have

- Some of that is resource gatekeeping (required to spend \$1,000 to build a fence)
- For Grow to Own – could the city provide a template of what people need to provide to be realistic about developing the project
 - Site plan, timeline, community support, some budget (and share non profit resources)
- Ways to prevent speculators
 - You can only apply for 1 lot per year
 - On the rubric, weight community support more than Growing Green (currently only 5 points out of 100).
- Site selection
 - Sun exposure (property on north side of street, on corner)
 - Thinking through the long term site identification – on vacant blocks, as houses are re-developed

Next Steps / Upcoming Events:

- Sign up for the Urban Agriculture newsletter here:
- [Bottomlands Agriculture Co-op Plant Sale](#)
 - **When?** Saturday, September 27th 10am – 3pm
 - **Where?** Delta Flora (2710 Touro St)
- [Louisiana CRAFT: Functional Greenhouse Management](#)
 - **When?** Monday, September 29th 10am – 12:30pm
 - **Where?** Press Street Gardens (800 Homer Plessy Way)
- [Fall Garden Festival in City Park](#)
 - **When?** Saturday, October 4th 9am – 6pm
 - **Where?** New Orleans Botanical Garden
- [Bug Fest!](#)
 - **When?** Saturday, October 11th 10am – 3pm
 - **Where?** New Orleans Mosquito, Termite & Rodent Control Board (2100 Leon C. Simon Dr)
- **NOLA Flower Collective's Fall Plant Sale**
 - **When?** Saturday, October 18th 10am – 1pm
 - **Where?** Press Street Gardens (800 Homer Plessy Way)
- [On Farm: Water Access](#) - Come learn about the process of getting an agricultural water meter at your garden or farm and receive a [Water Access Guide](#).
 - **When?** October 20th 5 – 7pm
 - **Where?** Press Street Gardens (800 Homer Plessy Way)
 - [Click here to register!](#)