



Candidate Questionnaire Reponses from: Terry Joan Baum

Questions from the San Francisco Urban Agriculture Alliance

Access to Land

One of the largest barriers to expanding urban agriculture in San Francisco is access to land. There are numerous potential locations including vacant lots, underutilized public land, and barren rooftops. How will you facilitate the linking of passionate gardeners and organizations with usable sites? And will you prioritize helping the SFUAA reach its goal of 12 new gardens by the end of 2012?

I would prioritize gardening in public spaces, including rooftop of public buildings that are sufficiently accessible. The Mayor's Office could provide a service to link gardeners with sites. I think the goal of 12 new gardens is certainly doable; I would hope we could do more.

City Support

What role do you see the city government playing in supporting urban agriculture and the growing community of city gardeners and farmers? How will you work to create a more fluid and efficient system for the creation and maintenance of urban gardens and farms in SF?

The Green Party strongly supports local food production, especially since Peak Oil means that the cost of transporting food and other goods will sharply increase in the near future. We can cut a lot of red tape that requires expensive licenses for selling locally grown produce and derived goods; the permitting process should be easy, and allow local farming provided the produce is safe (e.g., not grown in polluted soil).

Access to Resources

The will and manpower to create beautiful and effective urban agriculture projects is amply present as evidenced by the extensive community involvement in the work of SFUAA members (<http://www.sfuaa.org/membership.html>). However, a lack of resources such as tools, compost, mulch and money has continued to be a difficult obstacle to overcome. If you become mayor, what will you do to help increase the availability and distribution of resources for urban gardeners and farmers? And will you commit to ensuring that every supervisorial district is equipped with an urban agriculture resource center by 2012?

Yes, I would. I do not support the use of toxic sludge that is a byproduct of sewage treatment. However, I would support distribution of compost that is made by safe means (e.g., from the green composting bins). I also support an increase in public tool lending; we used to support one such center, but it is currently closed. I would expand the program to put tool lending centers in each district.

San Francisco as a National Leader

Since San Francisco prides itself on being a trailblazer for progressive causes, how will you make San Francisco a national leader in building a healthy and sustainable food system?

The Green Party spearheaded the ban on chain stores, and we would do the same with sustainable food. I would vastly expand the number of public gardens, and encourage local restaurants to use locally sourced produce from these gardens. I also support a limited amount of urban farming of animals, especially in former industrial areas where the disturbance to neighbors would be minimal. In both of these areas, the City could both cut red tape required for permitting such operations, as well as use City resources to promote such endeavors.

Gardening and Agricultural Experience

Do you currently grow, or have you ever grown, food in the city? We are curious to hear about anything from a small pot of herbs in a window sill to a full blown vegetable garden.

I have a very extensive and well-cultivated garden in my backyard, but it is primarily an ornamental garden. My campaign manager, however, has had the same plot in her community garden since 1995. She tells me that over the years, she has grown broccoli, Swiss chard, peas, and fava beans, though primarily she grows flowers.

Questions from the San Francisco Green Schoolyard Alliance

Outdoor Classrooms

SFGSA's experience shows that green schoolyards serving as outdoor classrooms help close the achievement gap and attract families to our public schools. How would you encourage this trend?

I would encourage this trend by actually going to schools and participating in gardening activities with the students. I would also be very interested in participating in events in which students prepare food from locally grown produce.

Schools as Green Hubs

SFGSA is launching into our next phase of work to insure that SFUSD schools are green hubs for each community. For example, we are helping schools develop gardens and natural play areas, installing cisterns for rainwater harvesting to better understand

the value of our watersheds, solar panels to understand renewable energy sources, and composting lunch room waste to help increase waste diversion above 75%. How would you support this momentum in our public schools?

I know that there are solar panels on the Argonne Child Development Center which is surrounded by the Argonne Community Garden in the Richmond District, but to my knowledge, the solar panels generate electricity for the Center only. I think places such as the Argonne Child Development Center can serve as role models for other such educational centers throughout the city and would definitely want to use the office of the mayor to encourage these kinds of things.

Increasing Community Support

All of our efforts to make our schools better only work with intensive community support. San Francisco has the highest percentage of families who have decided not to send their children to public schools. How would you change this?

California public schools have suffered under the decades of Proposition 13, especially those in rural and urban communities. As a result, people who can afford to send their children to private schools do so. Others choose to move out of the city. The rest send their children to the public schools. I am sure there are many excellent teachers in the San Francisco Unified School District, but they -- and the students -- need relief from the restrictions of Proposition 13 and other statewide anti-tax laws and the current anti-tax sentiment which seems to dominate the national discourse. Restoring California schools (including SF schools) to among the best in the nation will involve starting a Tax the Rich movement -- and as mayor, I intend to start that movement here in SF.

Green Schoolyard Tours

SFGSA has found that our green schoolyard tours can change the way potential SFUSD families view our public schools. Have you toured any SFUSD green schoolyards lately?

No -- but my campaign manager used to oversee a schoolyard garden at a previous job. She has also visited the Alice Fong Yu garden and the Garden for the Environment.

Next Generation of Students

Our public schools are in crisis. Our environment is in crisis. What sort of environmental knowledge would you like the next generation of SFUSD students to graduate with, and how will you help them attain it?

I am convinced that Americans can not continue to live on the planet the way we have been living for the past century. In the words of author Richard Heinberg, "The Party's Over," and we must now learn how to "Powerdown." This means that as students come to adulthood, they will be living with fewer material goods than their parents -- and fewer opportunities for travel -- due to the increasing dollar and environmental costs of dwindling natural resources. At the same time, I think it is very important that students understand that life can be just as rich and rewarding and fun. Our public schools should be at

forefront of educating young people for a new era of civic activism -- and fun -- in a time of fewer material goods.

Questions from the Bay Area Water Stewards

Potential New Water Sources

San Francisco imports virtually all of its water from outside the City primarily from the wild and scenic Tuolumne River (85% of SF's water supply). SFPUC is currently evaluating several potential new sources of local water supply, including greywater, recycled water, groundwater and a desalination plant on SF Bay. All of the options under consideration have generated controversy over cost (most are more expensive than our current water supply) and environmental impacts. As mayor, how would you decide which, if any of these alternatives to pursue, and how would you address the controversies surrounding your decision?

I will need to be briefed on all of these possibilities, but will tell you now that I am skeptical of desalinization and am concerned about further depleting local groundwater supplies.

Stormwater Runoff and Green Spaces

The city has a combined sewer/stormwater system, which means that we spend money and energy to treat all of our stormwater as sewage. An increase in urban agriculture and greening, along with an emphasis on low-impact development, can save time, water, and money. Given the City receives an average of 20 inches of rainfall each year (the equivalent of half of our annual consumption) how would your office support these strategies?

Again, I will need to be briefed on the possibilities. I do know that there are many concerns about stormwater runoff from roads and the hazardous materials that might collect in that runoff. I would want to be briefed about this issue as well.

Smart Water Usage

The City has the lowest per-capita water usage of any large City in California, because of climate, small lot size, and the fact that much of the land area is covered in impervious surfaces (buildings, streets and sidewalks). Greening the City without increasing our water usage will require smarter use of existing supplies (including stormwater, gray water and recycled water) Will you as Mayor direct the SFPUC to invest in alternative (non-system) water supplies for community garden and urban farms?

I don't know enough about alternative water supplies and would need to be briefed on these.

Long-term Stormwater Capture

SF's sewer system is designed to allow 10-12 combined sewer overflows annually. As sea levels continue to rise, this practice will become less and less feasible. Long-term

investments in stormwater capture through green infrastructure can reduce these overflows, but cannot be accomplished by the PUC alone. What will you as Mayor do to integrate needed actions (such as design requirements, enforcement of impervious bans and new maintenance needs) into all City Departments' work plans and budgets?

I will need to be briefed on the possibilities, but this issue seems like it may involve the passage of legislation to require various departments to adhere to certain infrastructure codes.

Commission Nominee Attributes

The SF PUC sets water policy for the City. As Mayor, what attributes would you look for in candidates you nominate to serve on the commission?

Seats on this commission are already regulated by charter -- Proposition E, which was passed by the voters in June 2008 ballot, empowers members of the Board of Supervisors to confirm mayoral appointments to the SFPUC and requires nominees to meet certain qualifications -- but whenever possible, I would look to appoint people who walk the environmental walk and who are well-informed about the SF PUC and its mission.