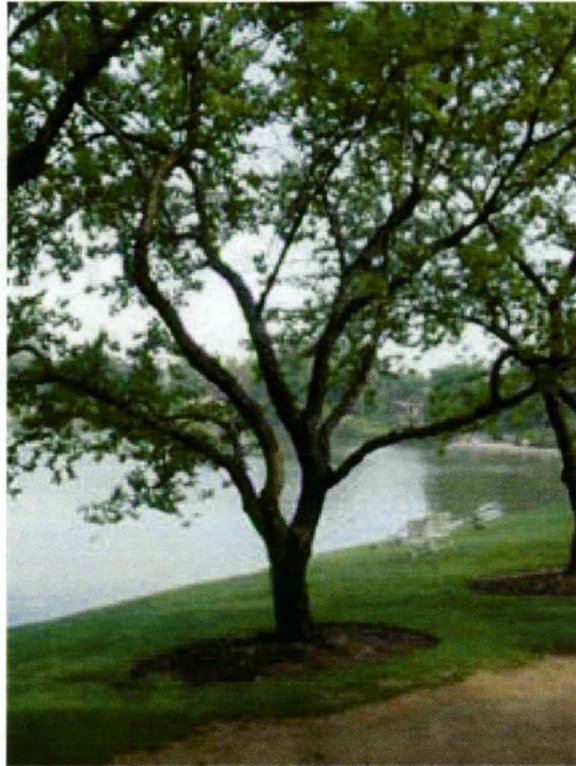


The Process of Establishing a Site of Urban Agriculture in Hobart



Akia Chabot

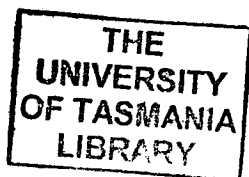
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Masters of Environmental
Management Program

School of Geography and Environmental Studies

University of Tasmania

June 2005

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Statement of authenticity

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by other persons, except when due reference is made in the text.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Akia Chabot'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Akia Chabot

University of Tasmania

24 June 2005

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There is one person who I would especially like to heartily thank for her contribution to this dissertation. My supervisor, Elaine Stratford, has been inspirational from the beginning of this research and maintained a diligent and watchful mentorship throughout. With a combination of her excellent project management skills, energetic enthusiasm and kind heart, Elaine has patiently shepherded me to the completion of what may have otherwise proven a too-terrifying challenge.

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Finally my fiancé, Dr Rebecca Habeeb, for all of her helpful technical advice with tricky computerizing, and the numerous school lunches she sent me off with!

Abstract

Conventional agriculture produces food in ways that undermine the ecological bases on which it depends. It is typically grown long distances from where it is eventually consumed, relying on the use of non-renewable resources, and alienating consumers from the processes of production. By comparison, the reintroduction of productive trees into the urban landscape has been shown to bring residents into closer contact with their food needs, increase fresh food security and availability, create opportunities for informal social mixing, and foster a sense of cooperation within community (Stocker & Barnett, 1998).

This thesis describes the process of a 32-year-old male citizen (me) attempting to establish some fruit trees on under utilised land managed by local Council. The project is set in the suburb of New Town, an established middle class residential area within the city of Hobart, Tasmania. The actors to emerge in this development are the proximate residents, residents of the nearby housing commission units, Hobart City Council (HCC), a local nursery owner, an assortment of non-government organisations, and the facilitators of other urban agriculture projects.

It was found that whilst residents were largely in favour of the proposal there was little enthusiasm towards direct participation, at least in the developmental stages. An initial site for the trees proved contentious with one neighbour opposed to attracting 'undesirables' within proximity of his property, and so an alternative location was identified alongside a bike track linking Hobart with the northern suburbs. First HCC was also reluctant to become involved due to the risks associated with productive trees, the maintenance involved, and the possibility of future conflicts over the management of the trees and the distribution of the harvest. Several of the NGOs contacted in the hope of establishing partnerships also declined the offer to participate.

The eventual success of the development can be attributed to the commitment of an enthusiastic nursery owner, the advocacy of a senior arboricultural officer within Council, and my persistent desire to contribute towards the sustainability and livability of this area. My path to the realisation of establishing a site of urban agriculture in Hobart has many parallels to the experiences of similarly motivated urban agriculture

facilitators who went before me. This research then, is a contribution to the broad discipline of environmental management as a case study of the implementation of sustainability praxis at an individual scale.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background, Aims and Significance of the Research

Conventional agriculture produces food in ways which undermine the ecological bases on which it depends (Hill, 1991). Agriculture using broadacre, monoculture production, with heavy dependence on fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, is being recognised as an unsustainable method of providing human sustenance (Hill, 2004; Power, 1999).

It is typically grown long distances from where it is eventually consumed, relying on the use of non-renewable resources for every stage in its production, processing, transportation, and storage, rendering it low in food security, and a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions (Stoneham et al. 2003). Conventional agriculture is also socially deleterious to primary producing communities. To compete in the economies of scale of the global market requires large, specialised, capital intensive production systems, undermining the viability of small holdings and contributing to the further decline of rural areas (Stoneham et al. 2003).

The reintroduction of productive plants into the urban landscape not only avoids many of the externalities of conventional agriculture but has been shown to have multiple benefits including increasing fresh food quality and availability, bringing urbanites into closer contact with the processes of production, creating opportunities for informal social mixing, developing a sense of cooperation and place within community, and fostering small scale, local enterprises (Stocker & Barnett, 1998). Urban food growing provides a powerful vehicle for helping to move towards more sustainable patterns of urban living (Howe & Wheeler, 1999).

Urban agriculture may be defined as the growing of food within the built environment (Sustain, 2002). From this broad definition urban agriculture then branches off into numerous specific names depending on the land being utilised, the accompanying social arrangement, and the crops being grown. Some specific types of urban agriculture in Australia include back and/or front yard gardens, community gardens, community orchards,

and city farms (Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network, 2004). Urban agriculture can utilise individually owned land, land held by institutions and organisations and land managed by the Crown or state services to help solidify community supported food networks. In addition to avoiding many of the negative environmental impacts associated with conventional agriculture, and dramatically reducing the food miles of our produce, urban agriculture can have local social and economic advantages (Bamford, 2003).

Some of the social benefits observed to follow urban agricultural initiatives include health improvements from greater accessibility to fresh produce; mixing varied demographic and ethnic groups; developing community capacity; fostering community identity; increasing opportunities for learning, personal development and employment; and more fully appreciating humanity's link with the processes of the natural world (Bodel, 1997; Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network, 2004). Publicly accessible sites of urban production provide a setting for informal interaction, creating congenial "Third Places"¹ conducive to discussion, the generation of ideas and the processes of community-building. From these gardens comes the development of a sense of place, of belonging and involvement, and strengthening of community ties (Australian Community Gardens Network, 2005).

As it is widely recognised that structures of consultative or participatory decision-making and strong social capital are critical elements of achieving sustainability praxis (Jacobs, 1999). The flow-on effects of urban agriculture initiatives may be experienced in other social arenas and in various attempts to implement shifts towards sustainability, described here as a normative praxis informed by consideration of integration, equity, precaution, continual improvement, participation and the protection of ecological diversity (UN, 1992; WCED, 1987). By providing opportunities for cooperation and practicing interpersonal skills such as participatory decision-making, problem solving and conflict resolution in a tolerant environment, shared gardens help develop the ability to think laterally using the creative intelligence of the group. Participation in urban agriculture initiatives leads to

¹The 'first place' is the home and the 'second place' our workplace. 'Third places' are shared places where we informally interact with others (Oldenburg, 1999).

increases in community identity and self determination (Brisbin, 2002; Howe & Wheeler, 1999).

Urban agriculture can contribute to local economies as well as having cost savings for various other service providers. Some of the external economic benefits of urban agriculture include reducing municipal authorities' costs associated with waste disposal and landfill, the reduced need for stormwater infrastructure, whilst placing less pressure on transport services (Petts, 2002). Other benefits difficult to incorporate into market equations include urban greening, creation of microclimates, landscape management, and sites for recreation (Bodel and Anda, 1997). Through greater access to fresher produce grown with fewer artificial additives, it is also believed that urban agriculture leads to improvements in the health of the population and even the productivity of labour (Petts, 2002).

Whilst it is often argued that economically more valuable land uses should replace urban agriculture (Avilla, 2002) and indeed it runs contrary to the dominant economic paradigm of the first-world (Brisbin, 2002), urban agriculture can stimulate *local* economies in various ways. Through the production of goods and services, by providing vocational and educational training and through increasing business activity of related services (Howe & Wheeler, 1999) urban agriculture can help reverse the trend towards the centralisation of essential services (Avilla, 2002). Urban agricultural initiatives create possibilities for myriad value adding enterprises and often themselves form a place for the distribution of goods and services. The most outstanding quality of urban agriculture is its ability to simultaneously tackle a range of linked issues – environmental, social, and economic.

To a greater or lesser degree, urban agriculture has always been a part of human settlements (Freestone, 1989). Prior to the development of transport systems people had to grow food close to where they lived and it was only during the industrial revolution that the gap between food production and urban consumers began to widen (Howe & Wheeler, 1999). By the late 19th Century the dense urban populations within the great industrialised cities, had become divorced from immediate contact with food production (Freestone, 1989). The spread of the allotment system in England was a response to the need for publicly accessible areas reserved for agriculture (Howe & Wheeler, 1999) with times of war proving the biggest stimulant to urban food production (Holland, 2004). The work of

Ebenezer Howard further popularised the concept of 'Garden Cities' from the early part of the twentieth century with planning for incorporation of food growing amongst the urban environment (Freestone, 1989).

Tasmania has enjoyed a strong association with urban production until recent decades. With early urban developments utilising the quarter acre block it was common for urban Tasmanians to grow a large percentage of the household's fruit and vegetables, and the keeping of small productive animals was commonplace (Gaynor, 1999). In an interview, Bill Mollison noted the essential nature of urban production in the early half of this century:

There were lots and lots of good old mulberries and good walnuts and so on, but these were the staff of life, yunno when things were a little unreliable, because in 1913 and 1918 people who lived in Hobart were starving and had to send pods of armed convicts out to shoot emu's kangaroos *and* aborigines, they had aborigines on the game lists in those days because they ate them.

From the 1950s the combined effect of the new welfare state, effectively full employment and increasing prosperity reduced the necessity of urban food production (Howe & Wheeler, 1999). The steady decline in urban agriculture has continued to the present in Tasmania, exacerbated by smaller average residential block sizes, larger average house sizes (State of the Environment Report, 1996), and a shift in normative values viewing urban areas less suitable to production (especially the productivity of subsistence) and more suited to consumption-oriented pursuits (Gaynor, 1999). Other factors contributing to the decline in urban agriculture in Tasmania are an increase in liability risks for municipal authorities, and a tendency towards Australian residents preferring individual endeavours to cooperative participation (Davidson, 2000). Coeval with the growing imperative for more environmentally benign agricultural systems, since the 1950s there has been a trend towards reducing the productive capacities of the urban environments in Tasmania as with elsewhere in the West (Brisbin, 2002).

Whilst urban food production is an option we are choosing less often in many 'developed countries' (Gaynor, 1999), in other parts of the world urban agriculture

remains a part of life. In many developing countries urban agriculture is more a matter of economic necessity rather than of recreational or aesthetic preference (Howe & Wheeler, 1999). Across Chinese cities as a whole, 85% of vegetables consumed by residents are produced within those cities and even affluent Hong Kong gives over 5-6% of its total land area to meet 45% of its vegetable needs (Howe & Wheeler, 1999). Since the critical economic crisis of 1989 Cuban agriculture has been shocked into shifting towards subsistence-oriented, diverse, organic, local production to the extent that now an estimated 25% of the labour force of Havana is engaged in some aspect of agriculture to totally meet the food needs of the city (Gonzalez, 2002). There are countless other examples of sustainable agricultural systems integrated within the urban environments of less-developed countries to demonstrate the potential not realised in the West.

In recent years concerns have deepened over the ecological side effects and health risks posed by chemical and fossil fuel dependent food systems. As alternatives are being sought for ways to more sustainably provide human sustenance the productive potential of our built environment should be on the agenda. However the whole issue of food security, and food supply with its attendant environmental, social, economic and health knock-on effects is conspicuously absent from political consideration. Similarly planning authorities make scant allowance for maintenance of the productive potential of the built environment.

Australians' love of gardening remains our most popular recreational pursuit (Roy Morgan Research, 2001). Gardening can become an even more environmentally benign, health giving, and socially rich activity when utilised for local production. Productive endeavours within the built environment seek to tap into this favourite pastime with a multiplicity of sustainability related benefits. Helping to steer this perception of the built environment back towards our productive past is at the heart of my enquiry.

This research is significant, then, as it aims to describe the 'on ground' process of a motivated citizen attempting to reintroduce fruit trees into the built environment. This process of environmental management incorporates local government, community, and

consideration for the physical qualities of our built environment in the documentation of an attempt to implement changes towards local sustainability. I aim to proceed within the contemporary governmental framework of HCC, and to realise the sentiments towards urban agriculture initiatives, obstacles that hamper progress, and factors which facilitate. I also aim to present various stages of this project to residents and other members of the community with the objective of understanding the subtleties leading to participation of various groups in local sustainability praxis. It is hoped that the physical realisation of this project will remind residents and passers-by of the productive potential of our suburbs.

My research will be of interest to a number of community groups or individuals who face the challenges associated with implementing agricultural sustainability praxis in the urban environment. It will be of use to municipal governments as a case study highlighting typical sentiments, barriers and enabling elements. It will be significant to academia as a case study contributing to the scant literature on researcher-initiated implementation of agricultural sustainability praxis. It will also serve as baseline study of an urban agriculture project for future researchers to follow, creating the potential for a thorough documentation of this project from its inception, through the inevitable challenges awaiting it.

The Site

The sites identified for this research are located along the inter-city bike and train tracks in New Town, a northern suburb of Hobart within the jurisdiction of Hobart City Council (Figures 1 and 2). The sites are situated adjacent to Cornelian Bay on the Derwent River, a large parkland with sports ovals, children's play equipment, and bushland reserve. The site is also bordered by private residences in Bell Street and Bellevue Parade.

The first site was chosen because it was a small unutilised, north east facing space, ideal for productive trees, amongst a well-visited recreational area, and because it abutted Cornelian Bay, where my partner and I were living on yacht as 'locals'. I imagined it to be a visible and accessible site for both people visiting the recreational area, and passing on the bike track. It was also eligible due to its proximity to Stainforth Court, a nearby housing commission estate with residents I believed would benefit from and support the initiative.

Site 2 was an alternative site suggested by a neighbour opposed to the proximity of the proposed planting to his home. This was also a site ideal for tree growth, forming a natural north facing swale utilising rain runoff from the adjoining bike track. It was close enough to the originally proposed site (approximately 100 metres west along the bike track) to involve the same resident groups (Figure 3) and had the added advantage of forming a visual approach to a nursery, the owner of which supported the idea.

Mapping the Terrain Ahead

Having elucidated the problem that inspires this project, my aims, the significance and audience of this research, and identified the sites, I will now trace the structure and purpose of the upcoming chapters.

Chapter two considers the research design, based on ‘participatory action research’ which was selected as the most suitable amongst the alternatives in qualitative inquiry. This chapter seeks to describe the use of in-depth interviews and questionnaires as data collecting tools, and to demonstrate the valid and reliable use of these data as evidence. I further legitimise my *particular* progression towards realising the goal of establishing a site of urban agriculture by drawing comparisons between my experiences and those of other initiators of such projects in Hobart.

Chapter three considers how residents from diverse backgrounds are willing to participate in an urban agricultural project in their area. Consideration of the literature on social capital, fostering collective action and community is given. This chapter then describes the results of my interactions with the residents of Stainforth Court, a local housing commission estate. I then found that a resident of a property adjoining the initially proposed site responded unfavourably to the possibility of others being attracted to his street. Finally, I describe the community response to a subsequent (and eventually successful) site, concentrating on the proximate residents’ hopes and fears about the project, and factors that fostered or discouraged their participation.

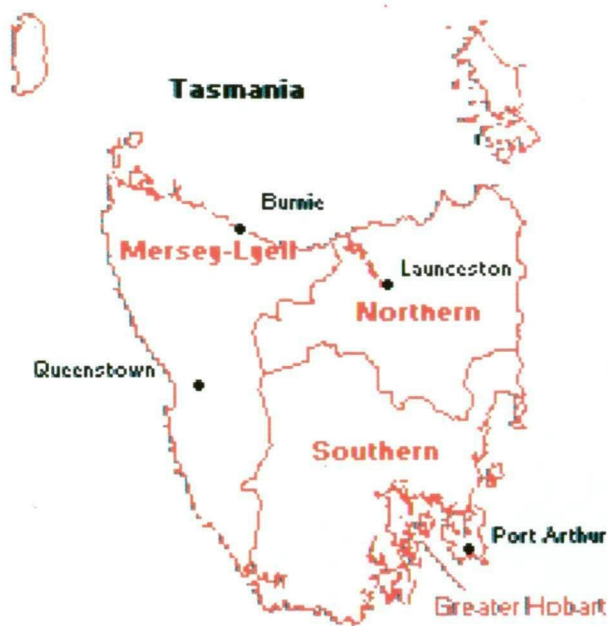


Figure 1. Location of sites
Source:



Figure 2. Site 1 (with residents from Stainforth Court)



Figure 3. Site 2 (Bellevue Parade)



New Town Station Nursery

In **Chapter four** I consider what drives and impedes HCC's involvement in the realization of this project. Incorporating the literature on risk, governance, subversion, and local government facilitation of sustainability praxis, I discuss my frequent and lengthy interactions with the HCC throughout this initiative. I found that the emergence of an advocate within Council greatly increased the possibilities of the project being successful.

Chapter five deals with the topic of partnerships among interest groups as a means to achieve small-scale sustainability gains. My fruitless attempt to initiate a partnership with various non-government organisations (NGOs) is described under the subheadings of each respective group, and I speculate about the failure of partnerships to facilitate small scale local change.

Chapter six explores insights gleaned from other models of urban agriculture in Tasmania, and from other urban agriculture facilitators. This chapter uses the experiences of other garden facilitators to draw parallels to my own, reinforcing my findings and presenting the opportunity for further discussion on the significant limiting and enabling factors.

Chapter seven summarises the thesis, its aims, findings and significance. In this final chapter I briefly discusses how a commitment to foster urban agriculture would manifest itself in policy. Finally, conclusions are elaborated upon, and a few last words are included to incite the imagination towards the future productive potential of our built environment.

CHAPTER 2

Research Design

Overview

The research design chosen for this work had to provide the means by which to study the creation of an urban agriculture project as a small scale, local sustainability praxis. It had to achieve a high level of transparency and credibility whilst incorporating the researcher into the project in a contemporary urban environment. Thus, it was determined that participatory action research was appropriate for reasons elaborated shortly.

The research participants were the residents of Stainforth Court, the proximate residents, facilitators of urban agriculture projects, employees of HCC, and coordinators of several NGOs. After acquiring clearance from the Southern Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Tasmania, I began contacting these groups of participants in various ways. Methods of contact included attending meetings, letter drops, direct contact, and by email.

There are three distinct ‘voices’ apparent in this thesis, according to the data being addressed. A formal approach is taken in the exploration of themes taken from the literature. A narrative style consistent with participatory research is then used to describe my own experiences in the attempt to implement a site of urban agriculture. Finally, the voices of interview participants are heard as they explain their viewpoints through relevant quotations. Throughout the text participants have been deidentified to maintain anonymity by the use of random letters instead of their names.

In what follows I will describe participatory action research and justify it as a valid approach for this project. The process of ethics clearance will be described, as will reasons for the choice of study site. The research participants will be shown to be legitimately chosen, according to their prior experience with urban agriculture, their willingness to participate as proximate residents, their role as coordinator of an NGO, or their relevant position of employment within Council. I will describe my techniques for collecting data

from these participants. Finally I will explain the techniques used for collating transcriptions into a workable form for analysis and synthesis with the secondary literature.

Participatory Action Research

I locate this research within the field of cultural geography, a dynamic sub-discipline of geography (Stratford, 1999). It is qualitative in nature as it seeks to explore a social or human problem (Cresswell, 1998). Rather than striving for representative outcomes, qualitative research focuses on understanding a situational context by using rich description and interactive, iterative processes of investigation (Mason, 1996). Understanding in this research comes from searching the human experiences, values, hopes, and perceptions of the various participants. As it is gained through my direct participation in the project itself, 'participatory action research' presented itself as the most eligible methodology of enquiry.

Participatory action research involves the research practitioner in a relationship with participants in which a situation is understood in order to change it (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The three attributes of participatory action research which distinguish it from other methods of qualitative study are "shared ownership of research projects, community-based analysis of social problems, and an orientation towards community action" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.569). This research approach is most often found where a researcher may attempt to integrate university responsibilities with community work. It seems particularly relevant to the implementation of local sustainability praxis since:

Participants frequently shift from one way of seeing something to another, not only to see it from their own points of view and from the points of view of relevant others, but also to see it both from the perspective of individuals and from a "big-picture" perspective on the setting, which means seeing the local setting as connected to wider social and historic conditions (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.573).

Some criticisms of participatory action research centre around researchers' motivations and scientific rigour. Proponents of this approach are sometimes accused of confusing social activism and community development with research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). The

association of participatory action research with activism occasionally leads to the accusation that it is politically motivated outsiders, not the other research participants, who take the initiative in identifying problems to be investigated (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). It may sometimes be prone to overemphasizing people's willingness and capacity to participate in programs of reform (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Prior to contacting prospective research participants I applied for 'Minimum Risk' ethics clearance from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Tasmania. A detailed description of the process involved in my project was prepared. Copies of participant information sheets, consent forms, and sample interview questions were also submitted for consideration by the Ethics Committee. As my research contained no material of a particularly political, religious, racial or otherwise ethically sensitive nature it was granted without amendment. The successful application ensured that the methods and research tools were in alignment with national research standards and the requirements of the University of Tasmania. These standards pertain to the morality of practices used in the field, the integrity and obligations of the researcher, and the rights of study participants (Hay, 2000).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, efforts have been made to promote the transparency and robustness of the findings. Triangulation of different sources of primary and secondary data, and different methods of data collection were used (Mason, 1996) and were collected from different groups. Regular consultation was sought amongst my academic reference team which comprised my supervisor and colleagues within the Sustainable Communities Research Group. Regular meetings with collegial staff allowed discussion of my approach, problems and procedures. Inviting the mentoring of fellow university staff further ensured the legitimacy of my research whilst contributing to the work of others revealed some common challenges in qualitative research.

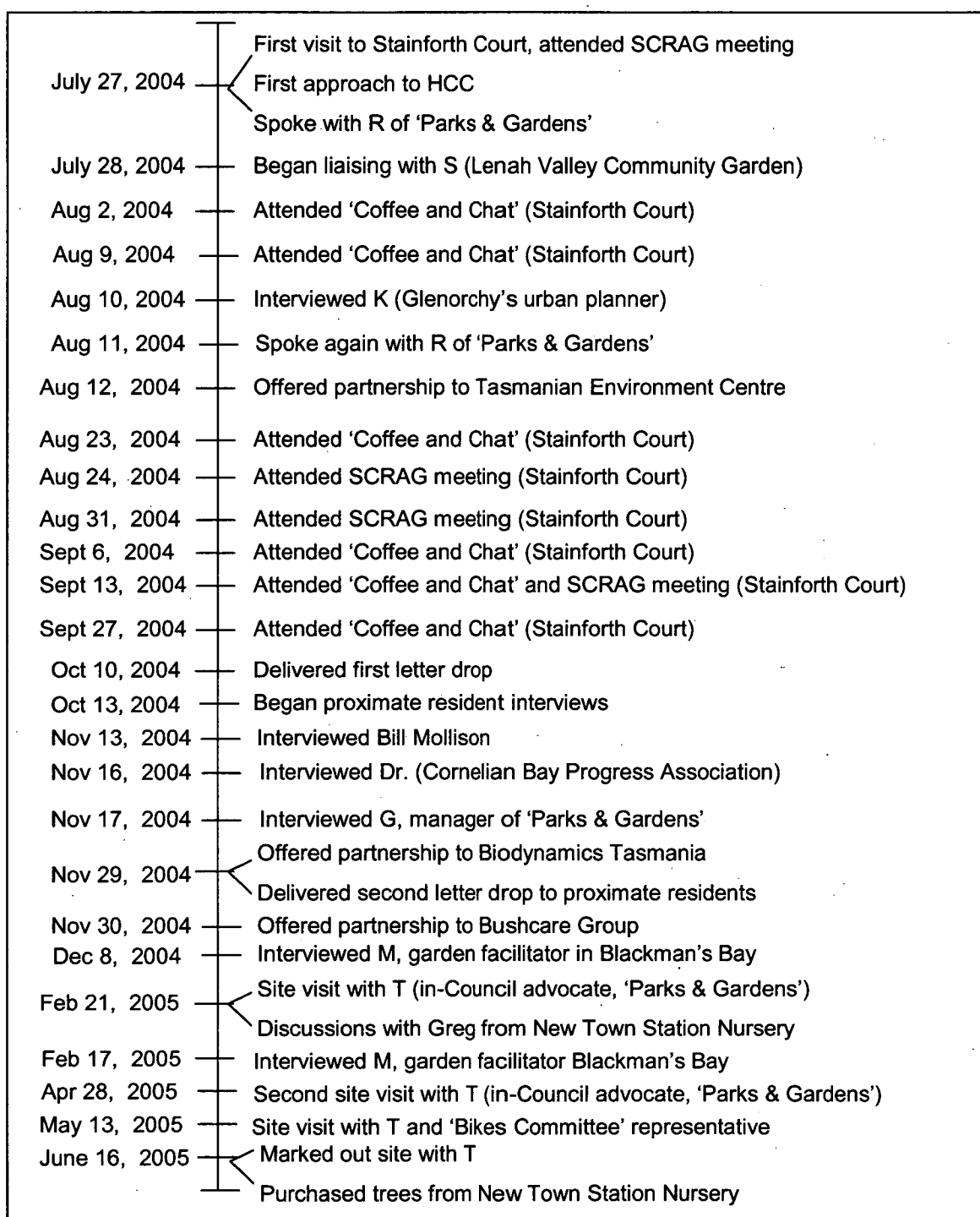


Figure 4. Timeline of significant steps in the process.

data were collected from the residents of Stainforth Court a nearby Housing Tasmania estate in New Town, the proximate residents, facilitators of urban agriculture projects, employees of HCC, and coordinators of several NGOs. Data were in the form of transcriptions, survey responses, meeting notes, and email and telephone correspondences.

Residents of Stainforth Court were included in this research as they comprised a group characteristically challenged by economic circumstances (and therefore perhaps more encouraging of increased urban production) and as they were proximate to the site; indeed the location of the estate was a factor in the choice of the site. I made several visits to the social 'Coffee and Chat', and more formal SCRAG (Stainfourth Court Residents Action Group) meetings at the nearby estate. These visits were necessary to introduce the concept of publicly accessible productive plants, and myself as initiator, and to ascertain an understanding of residents' feelings towards the proposal. Meetings were recorded in note form and through photography. Support was documented on a petition (Appendix 1) compiled for an application to Council, and residents were invited to participate in a recorded interview.

Transcripts from interviews form the bulk of the primary data collected for this research. A total of 15 interviews were conducted in participants' homes, workplaces, or cafés.

Interviews were centered around the theme of conscious local change towards sustainability. During each interview I endeavoured to facilitate discussion that would illuminate reasons why such changes are seldom realised in practice. Questions were particularly directed towards themes of local governance and the ability of community members to coordinate proposals and build the necessary partnerships. For all interviews I used an informal, semi-structured approach to provide flexibility around these specific topics. I sought to foster an atmosphere that was relaxed and comfortable for participants and one in which practical observations, and stories, could be related sincerely. After acquiring clearance from the Ethics Committee at the University of Tasmania, I began contacting these various groups of potential participants.

Another group invited to participate were the residents from privately owned homes proximate to the site (known as 'proximate residents' throughout). Eligibility was extended to the residents of the thirty homes most closely located to the site and was defined by the

locally accepted physical parameters to the 'communities of place', these being a cul-de sac in Bell St, and the Brooker Overpass which dissects Bellevue Parade (Figure 1). Residents were contacted and recruited via letter drops. The resident survey included an introductory letter (Appendix 2), questions to ascertain support for the proposal of establishing a few fruit and/or nut trees on the site, and an invitation to participate in a 30-minute interview (Appendix 3). The eligible residents, both in favour of, and opposed to the proposal, were selected by agreeing to an interview on their returned survey. All participants who agreed to an interview received an information sheet (Appendix 4) and consent form (Appendix 5) to sign prior to the interviews.

After gaining permission from the Director of Services at HCC, I contacted several Council employees. Planning professionals, and members of the outdoor workforce were invited to participate in a recorded interview which sought to highlight; understandings of urban agriculture, reasons for the absence of productive plantings on Council land, and likely issues which may contribute to the success or failure of this application (Appendix 6). I conducted four in-depth interviews with Council employees and collected additional data from notes taken during site visits and email and telephone correspondence. These participants emerged during the research process and were contacted as I was applying for the development of the site. Council employees were selected due to their involvement in any of the various stages in an urban agricultural development, from the political decision making to the on-ground maintenance.

Coordinators of NGOs were selected according to a familiarity with implementation of local sustainability praxis involving vegetation management in the Hobart area. The exception to this is the Cornelian Bay Progress Association which was selected as a generalist lobby group working with residents in the New Town area. The facilitators of each group were contacted directly by telephone or email.

The drivers of other urban agriculture projects were identified through my involvement with the recently formed 'Tasmanian Community Gardening Network' and selected due to their proximity to the New Town area and the longevity of their experience in implementing urban agricultural initiatives. Five garden facilitators were contacted directly with an invitation to participate in an interview. From these interviews I was able to draw

parallels between their efforts and experiences and those documented during this study. Discussions with leaders sought to reveal common obstacles and facilitory elements experienced in the establishment of their projects (Appendix 7). In addition to these recorded interviews I expanded my understanding of the most relevant issues concerning the implementation of urban agriculture praxis during conversations with numerous facilitators from both within Australia and abroad, met at the recently held International Permaculture Conference (IPC8) in Melbourne.

Secondary data were sourced from the international and domestic academic literature, obtained through data base searches and collegial sources. Other sources of secondary data include reports from governing authorities, internet sites, organisational newsletters, conference proceedings and various popular publications concerning urban agriculture. Literature was sought on the themes of urban agriculture, permaculture, social capital, citizen participation, governance, planning, Local Agenda 21 and case studies on implementation of sustainability praxis.

After transcribing all but the least relevant parts of each interview, utterances were grouped according to themes informed by the literature (Mason, 1996). Twenty-one themes emerged from participant responses and were further clustered around pertinent topics. After grouping participant quotations according to the emergent themes an interpretative analysis of the interview data was possible. This form of narrative analysis “represents significant ways of making the world and its words more visible” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.640).

The emergent themes were compared with my own experiences as an actor in the research, and the significant elements revealed in the literature. After grouping according to themes the three data sources of interview transcriptions, notes from my own experiences, and the literature were then analysed according to their relevance with the significant limiting or enabling factors in the establishment of a site of urban agriculture in Hobart. Participant quotations were chosen that represented a typical viewpoint of an actor or group concerning these significant factors, with (deidentified) quotations then woven into the body of the thesis.

Summary

In this chapter I have examined participatory action research and explained why it was chosen as the most appropriate methodology for this research. The process of acquiring ethics clearance was covered, followed by the criteria used to ascertain participant eligibility in this project. I discussed the methods used to ensure rigor and transparency including the triangulation of interview transcriptions with my own experiences and literature on various emergent topics. Finally, I explained the various methods of data collection and analysis used in this research and the coincident 'voices' which accompany each in the body of the thesis.

CHAPTER 3

The Residents

The support of the local community is increasingly recognised as foundational to sustainability praxis (for example Beatley, 1993). Less clear is whether, and to what extent, residents from diverse socio-economic backgrounds are willing to participate in a project in their area. In this chapter I seek to respond to this query as it relates to three groups in New Town; the residents of Stainforth Court, the residents of Bell Street, and the residents of Bellevue Parade, all located close to the proposed site of urban agriculture. The notions of citizenship and governance, and the role of social capital as facets of the social backdrop of successful local sustainable initiatives, feature prominently in this chapter.

The reinvention of collectivism is widely being heralded as a prerequisite for the achievement of sustainability (Davidson, 2000). This challenge is a hefty one, however, as neoliberal ideals have triumphed to the extent that market forces, limited government, individual choice and material growth have become the keystones of modern Australian society (Jacobs, 1995). Over the past 30 years we have become more individually oriented, to the detriment of community involvement (ABC, 2001). A major challenge faced by local authorities, then, is how to get people to become active in community level efforts towards the type of goals outlined in Local Agenda 21 (Filho, 1999).

Various authors have suggested that attention must be given to fostering the social capital of communities (Cox, 1995, Grootaert, 2001). Social capital may be defined as those features of social organisation, including networks, norms of reciprocity and trust, which facilitate cooperation for mutual benefit (Cox, 1995). Social capital can be increased by working together voluntarily, in formal or informal environments, for egalitarian reasons (Putnam, 1995). It is said to be produced 'in the spaces between people' (Putnam, 1995, p.67), and affects the members of a community's ability to associate with one another, particularly outside intimate relationships (Wallis, 2002). Whilst social capital is self-reinforcing and cumulative, it can be depleted by widespread lack of trust, or an emphasis on competitive relationships (Wallis, 2002). Once diminished, the process of replenishing social capital can be a long one (Cox, 1995). To create the conditions for social capital

accumulation the very process of participation should be defined by the community itself (for example Hampton, 1999), cater to the cultural and social needs of the group, and come from motivations within the group (ABC, 2001).

A conundrum with the establishment of an urban agricultural praxis of the nature I propose is the need to have support from the community before HCC will seriously consider a proposal. Lacking strong social motivations the residents are reluctant to become involved in the tiresome, bureaucratic establishment stages of a proposal, preferring to become engaged once things are happening on the ground (if at all). The gap between these two stages is the area in which many local sustainability initiatives will shrivel, as few community members or groups seem motivated to contribute the quantity of time required to get a small proposal moving. The presence of previous successes can create proof of groups' capacity to achieve goals but, in the absence of these, there will be a nagging doubt as to the groups' potential (Prakash, 2003). There appears to be little social capital amongst the resident groups involved in this research but it is hoped that the presence of a row of publicly owned fruit trees may provide a common ground for social interaction as residents occasionally tend or harvest the trees in the future.

The residents of Stainforth Court were the first group I approached, and so will be the first resident group discussed in this chapter. It was because of the economic and health challenges facing many of Stainforth Court's residents, and their proximity to the initially chosen site, that they were identified as a group likely to benefit from the introduction of productive trees in their area (on similar experiences elsewhere see North American Urban Agriculture Committee, 2003, and Wood, 2002). The proximate residents in Bellevue Parade and Bell Street were then contacted, initially by letter, and invited to participate in an interview. Interviews were transcribed and utterances were organised into several recurrent themes, including, lack of perceived need, fear of disappointment, vandalism and theft, time constraints, and a culture unaccustomed to cooperation, all of which I discuss below.

Whilst a general feeling of support emerged from the residents, there was also opposition to the initially suggested site, necessitating the choice of an alternative site nearby. This opposition represented tensions between an adjoining resident and the 'scumbags' he did

not want attracted to his area. No residents volunteered to assist in the application process for the development, nor were they willing to become formally involved in the project, although many expressed the desire to participate once the trees were planted. A driver of the project within the community emerged only when the owner of the New Town Station Nursery agreed to be responsible for the trees.

Stainforth Court

Stainforth Court is a local Housing Tasmania estate, of medium density, approximately 300 metres across sports grounds from the proposed site at Cornelian Bay. To gauge and then document support for the idea of some publicly owned fruit trees nearby, it was necessary to understand the residents' forums for consultation and decision making, and build a certain level of trust and familiarity with residents. It was also necessary to present my proposal in a transparent and straightforward manner, clearly highlighting the benefits and obligations for residents.

My dealings with the residents of Stainforth Court were greatly facilitated by the frameworks of group consultation established during the development of their own community garden. In a multilateral partnership among Stainforth Court residents, students of TAFE's community development course, TAFE's horticultural section, and Housing Tasmania, a productive garden was well under way to being established at the time of my first visit. I therefore had professionals in the field of community development to liaise with, and to assist in my orientation to the group processes already established. A high degree of organisation amongst residents was achieved during *their* process of consultation, design, and garden establishment, and a fair level of familiarity was created with urban agricultural projects. These factors assisted greatly in my ability to contact residents and to appraise their support for my proposal.

I was fortunate to visit Stainforth Court for the first time, unannounced and uninvited, on the 27th of July 2004, coincidentally the first day of the establishment of their community gardens. The site was undergoing earthworks with TAFE machinery, and there were several residents working alongside TAFE students in an atmosphere of jovial excitement. After some discussions with horticultural students, I was directed to the designs of the garden, and their designer. He was the student called upon to incorporate the desires of residents

within the constraints of available resources and was able to direct me to several key members involved in the consultation process. They were an elderly woman, acting as the secretary of the recently restimulated SCRAG (Stainforth Court Residents Action Group), and the two community development students from TAFE who had piloted the garden from its inception.

The SCRAG secretary explained the process that the group had used to get this far in the establishment of its garden, and invited me to present my proposal to the group at a formal monthly meeting with SCRAG and Housing Tasmania later that evening. As it was also the day of their informal weekly chat group, 'Coffee and Chat,' I was encouraged to circulate amongst residents of Stainforth Court and introduce my ideas. I was also able to engage the enthusiasm of F and C, the community development students, and share perspectives and ideas. Thus, through nothing other than a fortuitous twist of fate, I entered the typically unnavigable community of Stainforth Court at a time of buoyant optimism, and social collusion, with the support of several similarly minded specialists familiar with working with this group and the challenges that it entailed. I speculate that had I arrived before the unifying work of F and C, I would have had little success in contacting a group of residents enthusiastic about innovations in their area.

The SCRAG meeting was a formal monthly gathering at which residents were able to air their grievances to representatives of Housing Tasmania, and discuss and vote on various aspects of life within Stainforth Court. After issues of drafty windows, the new colour of balustrades, and the wording of the Stainforth Court song were discussed, I was invited to present my idea for some publicly owned and managed productive trees nearby. As undefined as my proposal was at this stage, and somewhat caught off guard by the spontaneity of the day's events, I was not equipped with eye catching drawings, nor even definite details as to the location nor social orientation of the project. I was instead attempting to engage some interested members of the community in the idea, to gauge the level of support, if any, and to discover to what extent that support would manifest itself into participation. Following the SCRAG meeting one of the two Housing Tasmania representatives helping to chair the meeting asked that I check the minutes that she prepared regarding my impromptu presentation. These minutes read:

Akia presented his idea of establishing some fruit trees (and perhaps a raised garden bed or two) on the unused little triangle of Council land on the other side of the ovals (next to the public phone and train tracks).

He hopes to get some signatures from everyone who feels that publicly owned fruit trees nearby are a good idea. The more signatures he gets the more likely it will be that council will allow the development of the site as a garden.

If anyone has any queries or would like to be involved they can contact Akia on 6250 1093 or achabot@utas.edu.au.

From my first visit to Stainforth Court I felt that there was some support for the idea from both the local residents and the individuals currently coordinating them. It seemed that the seeds of social capital had been sown within Stainforth Court. I therefore decided to pursue my involvement with the residents, which I did by regularly attending resident meetings over the following three months. I visited Stainforth Court until I felt that I had exhausted my ability to create opportunities for them to become involved.

During this period I spoke again with R (from 'Parks and Gardens' at HCC) on the 11th of August, after he had visited the site and had the chance to speak with some of his colleagues about the idea of productive trees. He seemed well disposed to the concept generally but unable to offer advice about this application specifically. He again told me to prepare something in writing, with reference to public support, public liability insurance, funding and the overall proposed design of the site, addressed to the head of his department, G. This preliminary application would then be considered by the appropriate powers with the assurance that Council would then 'get back to us'.

These informal discussions with Council were necessary to build a case towards the legitimacy of the project to offer to the residents of Stainforth Court. Alongside these forays into officialdom I continued to visit the weekly 'Coffee and Chat' meetings at Stainforth Court and the monthly SCRAG meetings. I attended a total of ten Coffee and Chats over the course of three months in which I attempted to better appreciate the needs, abilities, and limitations of residents as applicable to participation in this development.

Although, in the end, no residents came to the fore with a pledge of formal involvement I was able to stimulate a group of 15 residents to come for a walk to the site one day (Figure 2) and to acquire 14 signatures supporting the idea (Appendix 1). These signatures were collated in a petition to Council, and as documentation of community support, were an important part of the upcoming development application.

Attempting to motivate residents of Stainforth Court to participate in a project of this nature proved quite challenging, not least of all due to the circumstances in which many residents lived. As F pointed out, there were difficulties to be expected in dealing with residents of Stainforth Court:

The group over there is so complex, and the typical housing demographic is a high needs person these days, you don't get housing unless you're high needs, that means that you've either got some type of disability or mental health issues or drug and alcohol issues so you have to be willing to just ride the ebbs and flows. People find it very hard to focus their attention or to stay motivated with projects for a certain amount of time. They've been disillusioned in the past, they've been let down by government departments in the past, so it's a matter of constantly keeping the faith with them and showing them that you'll bend and flex.

Encouraging interested residents to participate in the various aspects of this initiative was a difficult task. Residents were eager to offer input into the conceptual and design stages of the project, a tendency also noted by F in relation to her projects:

They like to sit around and say what they want, and for the first time ever they actually had people sitting around saying "oh yep, OK" like the designers in the horticulture team " yeah you can have that, yeah you can have that, no worries", and they thought "cool, oh wow, we just ask for something and we can get it," so they really enjoyed that.

There was reluctance, however, to commit to any ongoing obligations linked to establishing or maintaining the fruit trees being proposed. Again this was parallel to F's experiences:

Yeah, I'm a little disappointed at this stage that I haven't got the residents' participation in the garden that I was hoping for, but there are burst water mains and all sorts of things there, so I'm hoping that once I get the basic structure of the garden in, and we get to planting phase then that's when we'll get some true involvement in the garden.

After approximately 25 hours of consultations with the residents and professional staff at Stainforth Court I had gained little towards realising my aim of establishing some publicly owned productive trees. I had familiarised those who were interested with the site and project, acquired a list of supporters on my petition for Council, and gained some useful contacts in the community development industry. I had failed, however, to persuade anyone to formally participate in the fledgling project, instead acquiring informal sentiments that people would appreciate the trees, and gladly utilise the produce as it became available.

The proximate residents

Next among the steps I chose in the process of establishing a site of urban agriculture was to contact the residents adjacent to the proposed site. This may have been the first step in most citizen-initiated urban renewal initiatives, but it seemed necessary to have informal encouragement of the idea from Council to be able to offer to residents before the first contact with them. Thus, it was only after I visited and spoke with Council, and gleaned a hope of the potential success of my proposal that I felt able to offer it to the surrounding community as a viable possibility.

At that stage I was still 'testing the water' with the hope of stimulating some wider community support for the fruit trees. I was attempting to learn how residents felt about their local streetscapes and what hopes and dreams they may have had for their improvement. I was attempting to discover how they may be inspired to participate in this

improvement and also to identify any possible conflicts that may arise with the proposed development. In the following section of this chapter I will describe the community consultation process that I undertook to develop this understanding. The process included an initial letter drop, in-depth interviews with seven respondents, and a second letter drop.

First letter drop

In the first letter drop I contacted 30 of the most proximate residents' homes in Bell Street and Bellevue Parade (Figure 2). The letter consisted of an introduction to the project (Appendix 2) with an attached one page questionnaire (Appendix 3). This questionnaire was designed to ascertain whether residents liked the idea of urban fruit/nut production generally, and whether they wanted such a development in their locality specifically. It also sought to identify any objections that existed. There was room for people to voice their concerns and to contribute creatively by suggesting species that might be used and limiting factors that might be considered. A small amount of demographic and tenure information was also sought. Lastly, there was an invitation to participate in the project, by being involved in a recorded interview with me. Letters included a stamped, self-addressed envelope for easy return.

As I delivered the letters by hand in the late afternoon of the 10th October 2004, I was able to casually discuss the idea with several residents who were pottering around their front yards. From these informal conversations it seemed clear that the prospect of productive trees within their neighbourhood would be regarded as a positive improvement by the majority of residents, though most harboured concerns about several issues likely to affect the success of the trees.

Out of 30 letters distributed to the residents most immediately surrounding the proposed site, 16 were returned. As Table 1 shows, every respondent owns the home they occupy, and the vast majority thinks that publicly owned fruit and nut trees are "a good idea". Only 13 of the 16 respondents, however, wanted productive trees planted on the small triangle of vacant Council land adjoining 2.Bell Street. One of the respondents in favour of the idea generally, but in vigorous opposition to the locality of the development, owns the adjoining property.

Table 1. Results of residents' surveys

| | Yes | No | Unanswered |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Question 1 | 14 | 1 | 1 |
| Question 2 | 13 | 3 | 0 |
| Question 5 | 10 | 3 | 3 |
| Question 6 | 10 | 4 | 2 |
| Question 7 | Mean of youngest 26 | Mean of oldest 51 | |
| Question 8 | 13 | 1 | 2 |
| Question 9 | Own home 16 | Rents 0 | Other 0 |
| Question 10 | 8 | 8 | 0 |

Residents Survey

Question 1. Do you think that the concept of publicly owned and managed fruit and/or nut trees is a good idea?

Question 2. Would you like to see a few fruit and/or nut trees planted on the small triangle of vacant Council land adjoining 2 Bell St?

Question 5. Do you think a small interpretation panel is a good idea also?

Question 6. How many people are there in your household? Males..... Females.....

Question 7. How old is the youngest ?..... How old is the oldest?.....

Question 8. Do your answers reflect the opinions of other members of this household? Yes No

Question 9. Do you: Own this home Rent this home Other arrangement

Question 10. Would you like to participate in a short interview (approximately 20 minutes) discussing your views about the possibilities of urban agriculture in your area?

The opposition of the adjoining neighbour was immediately identified as a factor which could squash the proposal. He attached a two-page letter to his returned questionnaire describing the reasons for his opposition, which centred largely on a mistrust of many of the 'scumbags' who moved through the area (and occasionally through his backyard). As he was in favour of the concept generally, he also included several suggestions of alternative sites. In his letter he wrote:

I have a number of fruit trees against the fence that separates my land from the triangle. Every year we have problems with people who see fruit on our trees and steal it, frequently breaking from the branches in doing so. I think

that your trees would be stripped very quickly, and that they would then move to my trees. I also would prefer not to have greater numbers of people attracted to the immediate vicinity of my house; a small percentage of them visit my backyard and steal things.

It seemed that unless I was able to persuade D, the opposing neighbour, of the benefits of this proposal and the suitability of the chosen site, either the proposal would have to be abandoned or other sites would have to be considered. So an interview was arranged at his house, and all aspects of the proposal were teased out. Some of the sentiments to emerge from our discussion include the following:

They're not so much vandals, they're just a bunch of low life thieves, and there's plenty of them around here to. We've been broken into lots of times, but people just have a casual attitude around here, they see it as an area where they can do pretty much what they want and they've been brought up with that attitude.

When I asked D about the prospect of growing just a single productive tree next door he replied:

D: Well a fig tree might be interesting because not too many people are interested in figs, so something like that

Akia: But a walnut tree would still attract too many people?"

D: Yeah it would, you'd get people stripping it, they'd just rip everything off it. It's just too close to cars here. They'd just park there and they'd fill them up, they wouldn't stop with one bucket load they'd make sure they got the lot.

D remained adamant in his opposition to the planting of productive trees next-door representing a classic case of Not-In-My-Back-Yard. An unspoken aim of my proposal was to help facilitate the informal mixing of various socio-economic, as well as demographic and ethnic groups, through the shared necessity of healthy, local food production. Such social mixing has been well documented in urban

agricultural initiatives (for example, Bodel, 1997; Hines, 2002; Holland, 2004) but is not necessarily welcomed in the vicinity of the homes of the privileged classes. D's firm opposition exemplifies the ability of ratepayers to maintain a divide between such groups and control contested areas to the benefit of their own set of ideals and values. Such responsibility vested in one respondent reflects the disproportionate influence land ownership gives residents, as they are empowered to squash developments in the public realm which promise a lasting multiplicity of benefits to a wide range of users.

Amongst the 15 other respondents, there also seemed to be a familiarity with the basic characteristics of fruit/nut trees and some of the challenges such plants were likely to encounter in the urban environment. Many respondents recommended planting whatever was hardiest and so varieties of nut trees were consistently chosen amongst the alternatives.

Concerns surrounding vandalism were voiced on many of the questionnaires and were communicated in the following ways:

Have reservations about susceptibility to vandalism and/or abuse by greedy members of the public.

Vandalism is a problem – often at weekends I ring the police because kids are smashing the phone box or setting off the crossing bells. Consider also kids throwing fruit at passing cyclists.

Another common concern to appear on questionnaires was one of responsibility for the ongoing maintenance of the trees. Some of the comments concerning this possibility include:

I have reservations about funding and ongoing maintenance, orchards are a long term project!

and:

Problem of who is responsible for pruning, spraying, picking up fallen/rotting fruit and leaves, watering etc, lack of trust in local Council for the long term.

Similarly, the only respondent to answer the question, *Do you think that publicly owned fruit and nut trees are a good idea?* (question 1) in the *negative* wrote:

I am afraid that they would not be properly cared for and I think birds and possums would get the fruit.

Thus, from this initial contact with the immediate residents, made through brief chats over the front fence, and the returned questionnaires, it seemed that there was support for the idea generally, but reservations about the choice (or proximity) of the suggested site. There was a high level of familiarity with fruit/nut production and concerns primarily about vandalism, and maintenance. After my fruitless attempt to persuade the adjoining neighbour to support the site it seemed that I required a deeper understanding of these resident issues. To develop this understanding I sought to engage residents in a more directed discussion through recorded interviews.

The last question on the questionnaire gave residents the opportunity to participate in a short interview *discussing the possibilities of urban agriculture in (their) area*. Exactly half of the respondents (8) agreed to this greater level of participation. During the recorded interviews, conducted with both those in favour and those opposed to the development, several recurring themes emerged. These themes are discussed below.

The results from the initial contact with the residents, combined with the sentiments expressed by the residents of nearby Stainforth Court, allowed me to claim a certain amount of public support for the idea of introducing some productive trees into a streetscape in their area. With assurance of this public support I was then able to approach Council again and consider alternative sites. I was also able to begin to pull together the various other threads that constitute a formal proposal of this kind. These included seeking an auspicious alliance with an

established incorporated body through offering a partnership opportunity to various organisations and businesses, and acquiring funding. These threads were being woven together whilst conducting resident interviews and attempting to maintain interest in the project among the residents of Bell St, Bellevue Parade and Stainforth Court.

Discussions with proximate residents – emerging and recurrent themes

As an integral part of the process of establishing a site of urban agriculture I sought to include as many of the proximate residents as possible. It seemed possible that actors may emerge and facilitate a community partnership with Council. In the absence of an active community group, or common meeting place, in which such proposals may be aired, I informed the immediate residents of my proposal by mail. After the initial questionnaire (discussed in the previous section *First letter drop*) I conducted in- depth interviews with eight of the willing respondents living in the adjoining streets. The interviews were held in the residents' homes and audio taped.

From these discussions I hoped to develop a deeper appreciation of their feelings towards 'positive' developments in their street and the likelihood of securing their ongoing participation. I wanted to give any potential actors every opportunity to emerge, and I wanted also to understand how residents might be better inspired to participate. I sought to discover how they had improved the areas outside their private ownership in the past, and what obstacles prevented them from doing so in the present.

From the seven resident interviews I conducted it became evident that, whilst everyone liked the idea, there were several common concerns and constraints to participation. These included a perceived lack of pressing need for the expansion of urban production; fear of disappointment; time constraints; and a culture unaccustomed to cooperation. It also became evident that many residents had established plants on Council managed land without prior permission in the past. The following section will examine these responses of the immediate residents.

Living in a middle class urban environment, the residents of Bell Street and Bellevue Parade are well removed from the ecological and social externalities of conventional agriculture. Everyone I interviewed owned his or her own home on spacious blocks, and many people enjoyed access to their own private fruit and nut trees. Thus it is expected that they would feel little pressing need for the expansion of urban production into areas of common land. Statements such as:

We all have our own backyard or most of us have access to it.

Everyone here has garden space, maybe everyone has enough space here.

and:

I wonder if in these bourgeois areas, where we all have our own yard, it would be a hard thing.

Such statements highlight the sentiment of individual abundance. There was also little perceived need for increased urban productivity due to the reliability of markets and absence of short-term threats to food availability. Some anticipated that, should a situation threaten our supply of produce, people would *then* address the issue:

If there was a war or something, if there was a really desperate situation, we'd see a bonding effect then of people coming out of the woodwork to pull together and produce and share.

and,

I'm sure you'd find that if we were in a crisis situation, such as London during the Second World War, all of a sudden local production became incredibly important and council land that was sitting around was divided into allotments which are still, in fact, used today by some people.

Thus, whilst respondents saw the proposal as one of benefit to the area, they also felt little compulsion to increase their food production into public areas.

Combined with the perceived absence of an urgent need to increase urban production was the fear of disappointment should the trees be abused by others. Vandalism, theft, and the breakdown of relationships necessary to maintain the trees, were the main factors contributing to people's fears of disappointment:

I think that that demoralising feeling of putting in and then seeing other people destroy it or take undue advantage of it is a disincentive for all.

and:

I wouldn't mind some [fruit trees] but I just think that if these hoons come and break all the branches and stuff it's just going to be heartache.

It [vandalism] usually happens pretty late at night, all sorts go through there, I'm just a little concerned because my front fence has been damaged a couple of times, so how will the trees survive? I don't know.

In addition to anticipating disappointment from the destructive or selfish actions of those not involved in the maintenance of the trees, local residents were hesitant to commit to the project due to time constraints:

It's hard enough for me to get to one nectarine tree out the back, you look and see the buds coming and think "I've gotta spray for curly leaf" and then next week it's too late...

and:

Everyone has kids, they have no time, they rush around...

and:

I think time is probably a thing for people, we know that people garden because they enjoy it, and a lot of people, and I know for myself that I'd love to spend more time in the garden but I don't have enough time to do that, so probably time's a big thing for people.

The allocation of time for community-based initiatives requires individuals to recognise a perceived need for the action, as well as have faith that their contribution will not be wasted (Wood, 2002). It is most easily facilitated amongst a culture of cooperation and established social capital. In the case of those residents I interviewed, there appears to be a lack of perceived need for increased urban production, little hope that the trees will survive the stresses of recalcitrant passers-by, and a scarcity of time for people to devote to concerns outside their current responsibilities. There is also little history of community members coming together for positive actions, and very little evidence of social capital:

[Maintenance]... it's always going to be an issue; I think the culture isn't here, in Australia generally, to contribute to the routine maintenance of communal areas.

The deficit of social capital was also mentioned by several respondents. Many admitted that despite being superficially familiar with their next-door neighbours, they felt isolated within their urban environment, lacking any meaningful mode of coming together with other community members. This social isolation was demonstrated in comments such as:

I think, typical of urban areas of this kind, we are on good speaking terms with our immediate neighbours here, we nod and there's no bad blood, but there doesn't seem to be that bonding that might have been there,

and:

I find that I'm a bit isolated here, I think we all are strangely enough, not that we want to be in each others pockets, but it would be good to have a common goal.

This weak presence of social capital is both a limiting factor in the establishment of a site of urban agriculture and part of my motivation for initiating this development. I believe that the process of planting communally owned productive trees, nurturing them, and then sharing in the harvest, would contribute towards the building of social capital of participants. It is hoped that increased community capacity will empower this community to tackle similar sustainability based initiatives in the future.

Whilst there have not been coordinated efforts amongst the community for beneficial developments, many residents have modified the shared areas around their homes in efforts of individual, subversive plantings:

Everyone's planted trees along the back fence.

and:

I've planted all the trees on the other side of this block here and I've planted a few trees down there and yunno, it's hard work and I've planted trees along the railway line and yunno, you've got to plant an awful lot of trees before you get any going.

and:

If you walk up around this house here and you go up around the fences there you'll find that there're quite a few gardens and there are quite a few extra trees planted around the outside of them, but they're not very obvious, no one really knows about them, no one ever walks around there.

These modifications are significant as they are an example of individual residents initiating positive modifications on public land. The informal nature of these plantings demonstrates a sentiment of local decision-making quite removed from conventional channels of governance. Residents have avoided seeking formal permission for their plantings, preferring instead to negotiate directly with the on-ground workers responsible for the areas' maintenance:

I just did it, if you ask permission you won't get anywhere, no one's interested in helping you, you've got to just go and do it.

I planted those trees over there for selfish reasons because I didn't want to look at the highway and stuff like that; I was probably supposed to check with council but they've been really good about it, cutting around them and stuff like that.

Whilst these grass roots actions are generally seen to bring direct results sometimes they result in frustration:

I've talked a number of times to the guy who mows the lawn and he says "as long as you cut around your trees that you planted then no problem".

and:

So I go out there and mow, one time two days before the guy comes down the line and really all around the tree and behind, and I saw the guy! He friggen run over the trees man! He's just a @#\$%! And so I'm thinking of putting steel spikes in there about that high!

Several of the residents I interviewed recommended that I follow a similarly informal approach in my attempt to establish some productive trees in their area. It was common for respondents to balk at committing to a formal partnership to help maintain the trees, but it seemed more reasonable to them to imagine participating in something less bureaucratic, more spontaneous and flexible:

If you want to do it, probably the best way to do it is to just go and do that and just leave a note in a few peoples letter boxes saying you've planted some fruit trees there and if they're interested will they keep an eye on them and put a bit of water on them every now and then.

and:

I think that [the informal approach] would probably be more appealing to the general community, I can understand people's reservations in getting involved in setting up these things, and as I said, I'm a bit the same.

and:

What you want is not so much a really *partnership* as much as good relations that help one another.

The interviews I conducted with the proximate residents revealed several expected, and a few interesting, factors. It became evident that few residents would be willing or able to enter into the type of formal partnership that Council deems necessary. Whilst several residents expressed a desire to be engaged in a cooperative venture with their neighbours, and liked the idea of a more productive urban landscape, there was the absence of an urgent perceived need amongst their relatively affluent area. There was also a stultifying fear of developments amongst the public realm falling prey to the destructive, or selfish urges of those outside their community. Many suggested a less formal approach to my proposal, which was more in keeping with the way that small, local developments had been achieved in the recent past. Due to time constraints, several residents imagined participating in an initiative located more on the practical, local level than one requiring coordination with Council administration and other partners.

Second letter drop

After conducting interviews with residents I sought to formalise an invitation to participate in the establishment and maintenance of the productive trees. Again I distributed 30 letters to let the most proximate neighbours know where the proposal was up to and which, I hoped, would be a stirring call for support of the project. After my discussions with several residents, during both interviews and chats over the fence, it seemed unlikely that many would volunteer to participate formally, most preferring to contribute informally, if at all. I believed it was necessary, however, to determine whether conventional channels of local governance and social organisation would deliver the desired results. No one responded to the letter, which I assume either meant that no one wanted to participate in this project or, more probably, that no one wanted to participate through these formal channels, perhaps preferring to interact in their own way and time.

As I had already discussed my proposal with Council I had eliminated the possibility of subversively² planting some productive trees. For the purposes of this thesis it also seemed important to attempt to identify the blockages within our established democratic processes towards advancing sustainability praxis. Therefore, I persisted in my attempt to *legitimately* establish a site of urban agriculture, which, according to Council, necessitated finding a partner in the project. As the local residents were only willing to offer informal support, it was with this intention that I contacted Greg, the owner-manager of the New Town Station Nursery.

² Several authors have noticed the phenomenon of urban production becoming an increasingly subversive activity as suburban Australia became a site of conformity in consumption (Gaynor, 1999). During the period of decline in urban production since the Second World War, legislation has curtailed the ability of small-scale local producers to grow and certainly sell much of the surplus produce once found amongst the urban environment. Research has shown that much of this production still takes place but is forced to do so outside the laws shaping our suburbs (Gaynor, 1999). Similarly, many participants in this research have confessed to planting productive plants on public land without permission. This approach may range from extending one's front yard to include the median strip, to engaging in 'gorilla gardening' practices in which ornamental plants in parks, or other easily accessible areas, are replaced with productive plants.

Discussions with the owner of the New Town Station Nursery

I approached Greg with an invitation to participate in the project due to his business's proximity to the site, his eligibility as a local ratepayer, and his horticultural background. Greg loved the idea from the outset because he had previously felt that the approach to his nursery looked dowdy, and also since he believes in the concept of urban agriculture. After a 15 minute chat in his nursery he had agreed to provide the trees at cost price, help plant them, tend them, and just generally keep an eye on them. Yet he, too, was completely disinterested in engaging in the bureaucratic process in any way. Greg was happy to deal directly with me, or another individual who may in future coordinate the project, but expressed a clear refusal to participate in anything beyond tending the trees. He was keen to cooperate with members of the community in the project but was reluctant to contribute time towards arranging this cooperation, preferring to allow cooperation to develop informally.

As he was seen by Council to be relatively permanent to the area, and aware of the requirements of tending fruit trees from his horticultural background, his pledge of involvement was enough to allow the project to proceed. Council had a person to approach within the community, should matters concerning the trees arise, and someone they trusted with whom to share the maintenance and responsibility.

Summary

My research brought me into close contact with several potential participating groups in the New Town area. From thorough consultation with many of the residents of Stainforth Court, Bell Street and Bellevue Parade, it seemed that there was a high level of overall support for the proposal of including an area of productive trees within the neighbourhood but only a very minimal hope of members from any of these groups formally participating in the project. It remains unknown as to whether this reluctance to participate is entirely as a result of low levels of social capital, a perceived lack of need for the initiative, individual commitments taking preference over developments in the public realm, or whether residents are just uninspired by the development stages of the project but hoping to support the initiative once it has become a reality.

Whilst several residents expressed a sadness that there were not opportunities for social mixing within the community, it seemed that cooperation through formal committees and meetings was not the answer. Many residents advocated a less formal forum for building social ties within their community which supports much of the literature on encouraging local participation in sustainability praxis. The literature argues that residents are most likely to adopt an initiative if it includes consideration of the *ways* in which they would be willing to be engaged (for example, Martin and Richie, 1999; Putnam, 1995; Ray, 2000). The residents contacted in this research demonstrated that the formal channels of participation preferred by local municipalities offered little appeal, but that more fluid, personable, and spontaneous arrangements of social engagement held more chances of inspiring their participation.

CHAPTER 4

Discussions with Hobart City Council

In Australia the involvement of municipal government is a significant element of any sustainability praxis affecting the public domain (for example, Prakash, 2003; Selman & Parker, 1999). Their enthusiasm and willingness to engage in public participatory approaches beyond mere rhetoric can greatly affect the degree of success of sustainability initiatives (Stratford & Jaskolski, 2003). The following chapter will analyse the factors that drive or impede HCC's involvement in the realization of the establishment of a site of urban agriculture in Hobart. I will describe the entirety of my interactions with Council, from the process of locating the appropriate contact personnel for my preliminary queries, to the conduct of several interviews with various employees, and finally to the emergence of an advocate of urban agriculture in a position of managerial responsibility. It becomes evident that several issues hamper urban agriculture initiatives, not the least of which is the amount of time and effort required by project initiators to navigate Council's development proposal process.

Social capital, deliberative democracy and sustainability are closely entwined, indeed mutually constitutive (Armstrong & Stratford, 2004; Davidson, 2000). The sustainable development agenda, as defined by Local Agenda 21, has emphatically incorporated an emphasis on citizen participation (WCED, 1987). Due to the composite nature of sustainability objectives, involvement of different parties in the decision-making process offers the potential for best achieving the inevitable compromises and trade-offs (Rydin, 1999). A greater degree of public participation also increases the likelihood of initiatives being locally appropriate, and therein adopted by communities (Jacobs, 1995). However little social capital, loss of faith in governing processes, and an increasingly individualistic perspective limits the likelihood of high levels of formal civic engagement in Tasmania (Mansbridge, 1995; Wallis, 2002).

Needs for enhanced community participation and local democratisation feature prominently in critiques of local government (Crowley, 1998). Due to the diminished resources local authorities now operate within, the organisational structures of local governments, and

limited views of citizenship itself, public consultation, let alone participation, become seldom-realised ideals (Davidson, 2000; Selman 1999). Some have described local government in Australia as elitist and exclusivist, dominated by small groups of the male middle class (Crowley, 1998), and many agree that hierarchical structures (as opposed to 'horizontal') are still prevalent (for example Wood, 2002). The situation now exists where a shift towards a more participatory governance is being hampered by an unfamiliarity of this approach by both resistant local governments and a dissociated populace (Mansbridge, 1995).

As it seems there is only a very weak level of social capital, and civic duty amongst the residents involved in this research, it becomes difficult to engage them in greater democratic participation. The *formal* media of democratic participation are unattractive to residents primarily concerned with dividing their scarce time amongst the maintenance of individual affairs. The governmental processes enabling changes towards sustainability need to be extremely facilitative to foster the initiatives communities are willing to embrace (Mollison, 1998). As the following sections of this chapter demonstrate, the commitment to become engaged in initiating change amongst the current workings of local government is an extremely unappealing prospect, therein ensuring that residents remain reluctant to pursue beneficial changes in their local area. This reluctance to participate in governance ensures a population disciplined to the predictable conduct that government and industry are comfortable with (Coombes & Fodor, 1997).

Preliminary Council Enquires

Like most young Australians, I had never concerned myself with the workings of local council. I had participated in governance in only the most passive ways, limiting my involvement to voting as required, and paying the fees I was obliged to as a citizen. As inexperienced an actor in democracy as I was, the prospect of entering the imposing bureaucratic labyrinth of HCC and finding the necessary information, and responsible managers, was somewhat daunting. As I had set out to engage in an officially sanctioned action however, it was necessary to navigate my way through several offices, regardless of what frustration and time may be involved. My mission was to be informed about the tenure and zoning of the proposed site, and then find the appropriate managing personnel.

With these section managers I needed to discuss, first, the likelihood of realising my proposal and the expected obstacles to its success, and then, the appropriate channels of a formal application.

Shortly after the identification of the Site 1, but before my first planned sortie into Hobart City Council, I came alongside a pair of council workers who seemed engaged in measuring the width of the bike track. They were men in their mid 50s and were working near my intended site, and so I decided to gauge their reaction to my idea. Stopping my bike I asked the elder of the two, "Is that little triangle of land managed by Council?"

He replied, "Yes, I think it is, why? What's the problem?"

I said, "Oh there's no problem, I was just wondering if there was any chance of getting the Council to plant some fruit trees there?"

To this he replied, "There is not the *remotest* chance of that happening."

A bit taken aback by the finality of his response I enquired, "Because of the maintenance involved?"

"No" he answered, shrugging dramatically, "because, who'd own the fruit?"

With the incomprehensible logic of his argument began my interactions with local council.

After a couple of futile attempts to acquire some information about the site and application process over the telephone, I resigned myself to having to approach Council personally. On the 27th July, 2004, I arrived at the front desk and was assisted by a general receptionist. Despite the lengthening cue behind me, she was able to locate the prospective site on the in-house computer maps and provide me with a printout 1:500 map. She believed that the site was indeed managed by Council, and suggested that I go and speak with the Survey Department to find out more about the site and perhaps Parks and Recreation to inquire about its management.

With my map in hand, I then found the unattended front desk of the Survey Department. After I was able to coax someone into noticing me, we looked at the site on the 1:2000 'Hobart City Council land tenure plans'. On this map it was evident that the site was indeed

crown land, owned by Council, and was coloured red which indicated that it was “Acquired for purposes other than reserve (including purchases by agreement, gifts, bequests, vestings and dedications)”. This means that the site could be sold, incorporated into the road intersection, or utilised in the type of urban agricultural development I proposed, but that it would not become part of the recreation area of Cornelian Bay.

Next stop in my Council visit was the department of Parks and Recreation, in a building across the road. Upon locating the appropriate office, I once again gave a summary of my intended proposal to the receptionist and was advised to speak to R. Whilst not the department head, he was a relatively senior employee of the section, and was interested in the idea. He seemed familiar with the concept of urban agriculture and some of its benefits. He promised to inspect the site in question and suggested some additional suitable sites. He suggested that I should apply in writing, explaining my proposal, for departmental consideration. Standing in the foyer, and strangers as we were, he was reluctant to enter into any details as to what factors that proposal should address. He was also guarded against offering support to the idea, coming back to the need for a written proposal for proper consideration. So ended my initial contact with Council.

Discussions with Council

Several weeks later, after I had documented the support of the majority of proximate residents, and that of many residents of Stainforth Court, I felt prepared once again to offer the proposal to Council. Thus I was able to arrange the first, and only formal meeting throughout this project, with the manager of Parks and Gardens, G, on November 17th, 2004. We were able to clarify many of the issues that the previous informal meetings with Council employees had alluded to, discuss my progress along the process thus far, and the direction I needed to take from that point. Whilst G assured me of his personal support for the *concept* of urban agriculture, he had several reservations about Council’s ability to allow the proposal.

Our discussions began with G delineating his geographic realm of responsibility within his department that included the proposed site of the development. From this

perspective he then outlined what he saw as being the greatest obstacles to the proposal. These seemed to distil down to concerns about the additional maintenance of productive trees, Council's public liability risks, and the preservation of community harmony.

Maintenance

One of G's primary concerns was that the community, or the partners involved, would not continue to care for the trees into the future, and that the entire maintenance responsibility of the planting would then fall back onto Council's already stretched resources. He was wary of this possibility, and aware of the interactive necessity of productive trees, which he outlined:

We then need to consider a maintenance regime because, depending on the type of tree we choose, it's certainly going to need formative pruning in its early years. It's most definitely going to need weed suppressant of some sort, even if it's mowing around the base; and it may need ongoing pruning and it may well need spraying, and so there are some issues there around who takes responsibility for that.

Ensuring public commitment to the maintenance of the trees into the future seemed unlikely to G, as he said:

Getting people to commit to that, Akia, is really difficult, because people could commit with the best of intentions now and not be able to sustain their end of the bargain, so it automatically defaults back onto the Council and I don't want to have to take resources off the maintenance of other areas to put there to sustain something that isn't giving the community any direct benefit, I'd rather be putting those resources into the areas on the foreshore that exist at the moment.

Should the maintenance of the trees become entirely Council's responsibility, in the event of lack of participation from other sectors, G believed that the trees would have to be removed:

One of the things that we need to be careful of is that at the end of the day the maintenance of the whole lot doesn't revert to Council, because we're not geared-up to maintain fruit trees, and it would be sad but I can see them being removed.

The management of pests and diseases was of particular concern to G, given both the difficulty of nurturing trees organically, and the problem of using chemical sprays in an urban environment. As he said:

The other thing that you'd need to think through carefully is how you're going to manage your pests and diseases because some of the more natural sprays have varying degrees of success, the non-natural sprays are often strongly resisted by folk in public spaces; it's a very difficult balance.

There was also the possibility that the trees may harbour pests which could then affect the productive trees on nearby private residences. With reference to the immediate neighbour G said:

There's also the issue of pests and things, I can well imagine him blaming a pest infestation on his trees simply because there're some others beside it.

G hoped that we could include the maintenance of this project amongst the responsibilities of the Cornelian Bay Bushcare group but saw the *harvest* as problematic:

And then they look after it, and there's no lease or anything like that they simply agree that they'll keep an eye on it, get the trees and plants; and they do. The difference is there's no harvest, and that introduces a little bit of a degree of complexity that might not otherwise exist.

It seemed that G had limited faith in the ability or desire of the immediate residents to maintain the trees into the future. He was concerned that the excessive demands of caring

for productive trees would then come back to Council, and that they would then have to make the decision to remove the trees.

Liability

G saw the trees as a public liability risk for Council. Risk came primarily from people working on the trees, and from dropped fruit causing 'slips and trips'. The incurrance of greater risk by Council was something G wanted to guard against:

So it's not a major undertaking we're talking about, and I mean, at the end of the day, the thing that I need to guard against most, is any exposure to hazards by Council.

G believed it too hazardous to allow individuals, unaffiliated with an insuring organisation, to work on the trees, lest they incur an injury for which they then attempt to hold Council accountable. This position is described in his comments:

The next thing that we'd have to be mindful of is that those who are *tending* the trees; planting them, looking after them, are not going to hold council liable if they sustain some sort of injury through doing it.

and:

If they're up a ladder pruning or picking and fall off, hurt themselves, break a leg, we need to be careful that they don't turn around and decide that they're going to sue Council.

G was mindful of the possibility of falling, or fallen, fruit becoming a hazard to the general public. The proximity of productive trees to any public thoroughfare, G stated, required careful consideration:

We'd need to ensure that our plantings are far enough back that so as any fruit or nuts couldn't reach the footpath and cause slipping problems, and so that's the biggest hesitation...we do avoid any tree that has a fruit or nut in public spaces, particularly if there's a hard surface underneath, because of slips and trips ... again

we'd have to be really careful, depending on how close to the bike track we're talking, about fruit and nuts and so forth finding their way onto the bike track.

Thus, G sought to ameliorate the potential risks faced by Council with these trees. His suggestions for ensuring that Council was protected from any legal consequences from accidents centred around affiliating this proposal with an incorporated group already covered by public liability insurance. The group he felt would be most likely to adopt this project was the Cornelian Bay Bushcare group, of which he said:

It would be good to talk to this group because if they would extend their umbrella over this concept it might make it easier to achieve ... I'm inclined to think that if the bushcare group are interested, that them embracing this project might give it the legs you need.

He also offered the creative idea of encouraging local residents to plant a fruit tree on their *own* property thereby eliminating any risk to Council:

I guess the other way of approaching it is by encouraging people to plant a fruit tree and take ownership of that fruit tree and look after it in their yard and hopefully retain the yard, that might be a more sustainable way.

G was rationally considering ameliorating the risk of the proposed trees by placing the decision squarely on the shoulders of individual landowners. In doing little other than encouraging *others* to embrace a more productive landscape, G was attempting to facilitate greater personal responsibility for change amongst landowners whilst remaining relatively inactive and disassociated as a governing body (Rose, 1996). In light of the risks he is charged with avoiding, his suggestion is an example of rational administration. Finally, G hoped to substitute my proposal of *productive* trees for *ornamentals* with his question:

Are you wedded to some sort of productive trees in terms of fruit and nuts or could it be more ornamental?

Again this suggestion highlights G's priorities when choosing between increasing the sustainability of this area and maintaining low levels of risk and responsibility. By suggesting ornamentals G was hoping to remain within the accepted parameters of his experience, avoiding risk through avoiding developments of practice or change.

Risk, responsibility, and liability presented paramount obstacles to this proposal, according to the manager of HCC's Parks and Recreation. As well as being concerned with the safety of the areas within his jurisdiction, and the well-being of its users, G was unwilling to expose Council to any additional risk from a new development. Risk increased as a result of members of the public working (or interacting) with the trees, or due to the potential of fallen fruit on hard surfaces. His suggestions, geared to accommodate this reluctance to incur risk, included joining my proposal to a group with insurance, encouraging residents to plant productive trees on their own property instead of Crown land, and substituting productive trees for (more) ornamentals.

Maintaining Harmony

Another of G's concerns was the maintenance of public harmony with those who live and work within, or move through, his precinct, and also the maintenance of harmony in his own department. Included amongst his considerations for reducing opportunities for public discontent are strategies to ensure the retention of existing vegetation; concerns about the fair distribution of the harvest; recommendations for a more discrete site for productive plants; a desire to act in a 'consistent' manner; and concerns about resistance to the removal of the fruit trees, should Council ever deem this necessary in the future.

Urban agriculture initiatives have demonstrated their ability to act as capacity-building tools, bringing people together from diverse ethnic, demographic and socio-economic backgrounds (Holland, 2004). G seemed to prefer the approach of avoiding possible opportunities for contention rather than creating a situation in which actors can become involved in resolving approaches towards mutually beneficial ends. During the social process of creating a shared place participants can hone skills necessary for resolution of conflicts (Cox, 1995). Urban agriculture encourages community participation and the development of local solutions to local

problems with opportunities to become acquainted with the social skills necessary for civil cooperation (Filho, 1999).

G did not recognise the ability of projects of this nature to act as capacity-building tools, nor the need for such tools, being primarily concerned with reducing opportunities for conflict. He was mindful of the latest emerging master plan for the Cornelian Bay area being developed within his own department. He felt responsible for facilitating collusion between our proposal and the direction that his colleagues were steering the New Town/ Cornelian Bay area. He was therefore unable to commit his support for the idea without first ensuring that it was favourably received by those charged with creating the master plan for the area. In addition to ensuring support within his department, G believed that the application for the productive plants might also require aldermanic consideration.

From this interview with G , and during a later site visit with HCC's arboricultural officer, it seemed that Council would be very reluctant to agree to the removal of any existing vegetation. As G said:

One of the issues we'd need to think through would be the retention of those existing plantings and how that might coexist with what you're thinking of planting there.

Both believed that the immediate residents would resist the removal of existing trees and shrubs. This opinion was not based on recent consultations with the residents, but was extrapolated from past experiences.

G was also concerned with possible public dissatisfaction arising from vandalism, and perhaps even theft of the trees.

The other issue we need to consider is one of vandalism and theft of the trees themselves, because we have incidents of plant theft from all our gardens, particularly newly planted specimens.

He felt that damage to the trees might create public dissatisfaction, complaints, and then the need for Council to allocate further resources to replace or protect the trees.

Similarly, G saw the allocation of the harvest as an area liable to create future conflicts. He anticipated a few 'outsiders' taking an unfair proportion of the harvest leaving those more involved in the maintenance of the trees dissatisfied. As he said:

Then of course there's the issue of the removal of the fruit by people other than those who have participated in the maintenance of them, even if it's animals and birds; so there's some issues there in terms of harvesting.

G saw the whole issue of harvest allocation as problematic, whether the produce in question is food or even flowers:

The only hesitation I have is one of productivity; the productivity in public places can be problematic and we even find it in our parks with flowering plants which people will pick when they're out and about.

To decrease the potential for conflict amongst residents and people moving through the area, G recommended locating the productive trees in a less visible location. He therefore thought that the site most recently considered, alongside the bike track, would be problematic, as a wide range of people would come into contact with the trees:

You would also open the trees up to exposure by an awful lot of passing people, some of whose intentions might not be honourable.

To minimise the conflict, G believed, meant minimising the number of people interacting with the trees,

I would think that you would be better to have a more discrete plot, but it depends on the availability of the site and the suitability and so forth too.

I was envisaging the trees as a public asset, one which would give the immediate residents an excuse to cooperate in improving their area, and also provide the many people who pass through the area with a diversified landscape; one which was both aesthetically pleasing and productively sustaining. Thus, I pressed G on this point with my statement,

I guess I was hoping that trees accessible to a greater range of people would be favourable, for passers-by to be able to grab a ripe apricot in the appropriate season.

To which he replied:

Yeah, it doesn't happen that way though. They're either used as projectiles before they're ripe or somebody'll come along and pick the lot.

G was anticipating the eventual failure of the project, and again saw a point of potential future conflict arising as Council was required to remove the unsuccessful trees.

My concern is that we go through the pain period, the first five years, they start becoming really healthy, productive trees and every year somebody comes in and nicks the crop; people will get sick of looking after them, and it will then come back to Council to look after them, and I'd recommend to Council that we remove them; then I'd have all these residents up in arms saying "you can't remove them because we put them there and we've been looking after them," and I'm caught.

G felt compelled to anticipate conflicts which may arise well into the future. As part of his office it was his responsibility, he believed, to circumvent these conflicts before they arose.

Our proposal also intersected with the plans of other Council employees who were working on another master plan for the area. G was mindful of potential parallels or conflicts between our application and the work of this steering group. He described their position as follows:

There is at the moment some work progressing to develop a master plan for the Cornelian Bay area, it's been identified, and maybe your project is the origin of that. We've got an officer working group and it was raised the other day 'is there going to be a community garden in the area?' it's the first I'd heard of it and the locality is about the same, I suspect that what's happened is that somebody from your consultation has said "oh yeah, there's going to be a community garden" and that's found it's way to our officer working group, which is not a bad thing because if we're going to have a master plan it should be enshrined in that although, I guess when I heard of community garden I thinking of more extensive plot than half a dozen fruit trees.

He was seeking harmony within his department, as exemplified by the statement:

So if it was to proceed we'd need to get sanction within the master plan down there, which would be useful.

Hobart City Council is an essential partner in the project. To secure Council's support for our proposal several issues of concern needed to be addressed . These issues were primarily concerned with the allocation of responsibility for the maintenance of the trees, and public liability insurance to cover those interacting with the trees. Thus, from an interview with the manager of 'Parks and Recreation' at HCC, it seemed that the next step in the process of establishing a site of urban agriculture in Hobart was either to find an incorporated group to adopt our proposal, or establish a new group.

The Emergent Advocate

A turning point in this project occurred on the day that I was contacted by the Council's 'Arboricultural Officer', T. T quickly became an advocate for the establishment of the productive trees and greatly enabled the project's realisation. The presence of an advocate within local government is invaluable for an initiator of sustainability praxis with limited resources, to facilitate smooth passage through the bureaucratic labyrinth.

After a period of three months in which G and I corresponded about the land tenure of the site, and other matters of consideration, a site visit was organised. T attended the site visit in G's place, and has since been my primary liaison within Council. Confessing to coming from a background of "gorilla gardening" in Sydney in the 1970s (Mollison, 1988), T has strong philosophies about the benefits of plants amongst the built environment and a real appreciation of the myriad benefits of *productive* plants.

The facilitative necessity of having an advocate within Council, employed in the appropriate capacity, has greatly increased the chances of the success of this project. It has also greatly increased my momentum as initiator as I am freed-up from having to push *against* Council, to be more able to organise the various other facets of such a project. The benefits of establishing a trusting relationship with a well placed in-Council advocate was also experienced by S in the establishment of his site of urban agriculture in Lenah Valley:

Once the council contact person from 'Parks and Gardens', once you get to know them and realize just how much on side they are, then the rest is just smooth sailing, they just can't do enough within their constraints, for example if I wanted a truckload of woodchips to put down on pathways or around the composting area, I'd telephone them and then "OK, we can get you a load sometime over the next week or two", and sure enough it would turn up.

Summary

There seems to be a significant gap between what Hobart City Council requires from members of the community for this development, and how people are willing to contribute. HCC has concerns about the extra maintenance requirements of productive plants over ornamentals, concerns about public liability should someone slip on dropped fruit or injure themselves maintaining a tree, and concerns over conflict regarding access to the fruit or the future of the trees. To ameliorate these concerns HCC required a formal commitment of shared responsibility from an incorporated community group.

My proposal to establish some productive trees at Cornelian Bay was a small one. The proposal itself was simple enough to be initiated and implemented by an

individual, but the application process took up a disproportionate amount of the overall establishment process. Indeed the time and effort required for the application process would have stifled the initiative had an in-Council advocate not emerged in the form of HCCs arboricultural officer.

Similar to the experiences of other drivers of urban agricultural projects in Hobart, I was prepared to play a leading role in the development process but found that HCC had little faith in the ability of the individual citizen. The process then, of attempting to align myself with another group can be seen to be a time consuming hindrance caused by Council's lack of trust of the individual. The time needed to form the partnerships Council required for such a small initiative would render the proposal unattractive to most initiators. To stimulate innovation in urban agriculture, or any form of small-scale local sustainability praxis, municipal authorities need to become more prepared to work with individuals rather than reserving consideration of initiatives only to those proposed by groups.

Councils should also recognise more fluid alternatives to formal groups as avenues for civic organisation and participation. Less formal social arrangements more closely reflect the ways in which potential actors from the community seek to become engaged in local change.

CHAPTER 5

Potential Partners

Introduction

A keystone principle in the sustainability literature is that of the desirability of several coordinated participant groups, coming together to forge new ground in the practice of local governance. Such partnerships among interest groups, industry and local government are being heralded as a panacea for achieving the appropriate compromises in the composite nature of sustainability goals (Rydin, 1999). In this chapter I will challenge this accepted notion and argue that small-scale sustainability praxis can be hampered by the need to form partnerships. This research has shown that the resources required to establish and maintain formal partnerships can occupy a disproportionately large part of the effort required to achieve real gains in the reintroduction of productive plants into the urban landscape. Few individual instigators of local agricultural projects are able to spare these resources. It seems that a more fluid form of harvesting individuals and groups' resources may help to overcome a common reluctance of the unaffiliated public to participate in decision-making processes.

Partnerships have become a well-respected tool in the shift from government to governance. They are seen as an effective way to unify, control, mobilise and regulate the conduct of actors in local government and communities (Armstrong & Stratford, 2004). Widely believed to form the appropriate medium for achieving the participation of interested factions, partnerships are capable of increasing the civic and ecological literacy, and social capital of a locality (Ashton, 1999; Armstrong & Stratford, 2004). They are also seen to have "the potential to increase resource efficiency, making better use of existing resources by reducing duplication and sharing overheads. They can add value by bringing together complementary services and fostering innovation and synergy" (Wallis, 2002, p.78). Multi-organisational partnerships can enable local bodies to gain access to grant regimes that require financial and in-kind contributions from the private and voluntary sectors (Holland, 2004). Partnerships can work as a significant expression of participation

in the practice of green political theory, and efficiently achieve widely accepted sustainability strategies amongst the myriad possibilities.

The attractive potential of partnerships is largely determined however, by local authorities' capacity to function as suppliers and promoters of community development (Crowley, 1998), and willingness among community members to become engaged (Martin & Richie, 1999). Successful partnerships are conditional on several factors, most importantly the will and ability of local authorities to integrate open, transparent, equitable and inclusive, flexible and innovative, and a noticeably 'horizontal' approach of governance (Armstrong & Stratford, 2004). Successful partnerships depend on vibrant community engagement and Putnam (1995, p.67) suggests that in 'social capital poor' areas of 'low trust, weak civil society and poor performance' local authorities can do little to enhance this. Whilst other case study research has shown examples of how local government can create opportunities to facilitate access to the 'political opportunity structure' (Wallis, 2002), the degree of social capital required to instigate bottom-up reforms, and normative interest in local governance, is acquired over time. Thus, amongst the limited resources and divided approaches of local councils in Tasmania, it becomes difficult to realise many of the advances possible with partnerships as a more participatory style of governance.

Partnerships represent a formal and bureaucratically involved attempt to involve communities in local decision-making processes. Political involvement, and therein partnerships, are often found to be reactive to specific 'threats' rather than oriented to the long-term positive improvement of an area (Armstrong & Stratford, 2004; Crowley, 1998). Partnerships can also face problems with a clash in administrative culture and the use of different time horizons (Holland, 2004). My research considered the potential of partnerships as an enabling arrangement in the realisation of an individually instigated, local, urban agricultural praxis. It did not fit neatly into the conventional model of a partnership arrangement, because it concerned a 'beneficial' development, and because my proposal was motivated by an individual, not a group. The diminutive nature of my proposal rendered it unsuitable for an involved partnership as the time and effort required to establish and maintain a formal partnership would occupy a disproportionately large amount of the overall project.

From my interview with G, the manager of Parks and Recreation at HCC, it seemed that the formation of partnerships was a prerequisite for the project, to share the responsibility and risks associated with productive trees within the urban landscape. Council was not prepared to enter into a partnership with *me* as I had neither public liability insurance nor an established domain of responsibility which would ensure the longevity of my commitment should future issues arise concerning the trees. The necessity to form alliances with NGOs, the private sector, and community groups (assuming relevant groups exist) very nearly proved to be the demise of my proposal. The following section of this chapter describes the process of attempting to establish a partnership with several NGOs all working in related fields towards sustainability. Each of the groups declined my offer to participate, ironically for reasons very similar to those given by HCC; my status as an individual, and the absence of other incorporated groups in the project.

Discussions with the Tasmanian Environment Centre

The Tasmanian Environment Centre (TEC) has experience with auspicing community-led urban agricultural initiatives. Since the inception of the Creek Road Community Garden in Lenah Valley, it has acted as an organisation largely responsible for managing, financially administering, and insuring this garden. There are some key ways in which that garden differs from my proposal however, and these differences were critical in forming the basis of the TEC's reluctance to become formally supportive.

I contacted F, the longstanding front person of the TEC, with an invitation to participate in our project on the . After describing loosely what I imagined the development would involve, we discussed the main points of contention that she anticipated would concern their lawyers and directors. These points were primarily concerned with the lack of strict delineation of our site amongst the surrounding area (I didn't want to erect a lockable fence); the lack of an incorporated community group to take responsibility for the trees (I was spearheading the proposal as an individual); and our inability to regulate who interacts with the trees and how.

F therefore offered me helpful advice, and was supportive of what she saw as a very beneficial improvement to the area, but was unable to commit the TEC to participation in any way, due to the risks such a development could entail for the organisation.

Discussions with Biodynamics Tasmania

From a personal affiliation with Biodynamics Tasmania I knew its members to be part of a group keen to create opportunities for a wide range of people to experience their gardening techniques. Hoping that they may take the opportunity to create a biodynamic demonstration site in Hobart on I approached them with the invitation to participate in our productive planting. Unfortunately they too were reluctant to offer formal support for the project, for reasons similar to those raised by the TEC, and because of a lack of spare time.

The representative of Biodynamics Tasmania (Bryan Grayling) expressed concern about the vague geographic borders of the proposal, and the fact that it was being instigated by an individual, and not a group. Their insurance would not cover a project like this one, and so he saw the need for a separate group to take legal responsibility. Bryan was also mindful of the reputation of Biodynamics Tasmania specifically, and biodynamics generally, and wary of committing to a project to which, it seemed, there were several environmental and logistical barriers to success.

Discussions with the Cornelian Bay Progress Association

Another group I approached with an invitation to participate in the project was the Cornelian Bay Progress Association. Whilst I was unaware about what the association actually did I felt it was reasonable that they may be interested in a proposal designed to affect their local area in a positive manner. I imagined that the group would have resources and experience in petitioning Council for various group demands.

Upon approaching the Chairman of the group, an 81-year-old doctor, I was told that the association was, unfortunately, all but disbanded. Dr R was willing to enter into an interview, however, and appraise my idea and hone my approach to Council. At an interview on the 16th November 2004 noted that he was familiar with the workings of HCC,

and with many of its more senior employees and Aldermen from a working life in the public service. Whilst much of this shared knowledge was received *after* my initial dealings with Council, it served as an affirmation that I had gone about my application in the accustomed manner and with the appropriate attitude. Dr R described his function within the Progress Association as primarily assisting individuals with Council processes:

What I do is I bring people's needs or worries to the government, be it local or more otherwise, and from my experience to try and help them become a little more effective in dealing with the problems which face them.

On the topic of approaching Council Dr R said:

In dealing with councils, the most important thing is to find out which of the Council staff deal with that problem, talk to them, and first of all, tell them what it is you'd like to do before you actually do anything on paper, and having done it then you can begin to form the idea of a plan. Well the way that I would do it, would be just take it to them and say "here's an idea to do something, roughly this is it, now what have I got to do to present this?"

Approaching Council with a respectful attitude seemed the most effective way to Dr R:

Being deferent is far better than letting your ire get the better of you and going in there like a bull in a china shop.

Unfortunately, from my perspective, the Progress Association is a group focussing on defending the area from undesirable proposals, rather than one actively seeking to improve the existing situation. It lays largely dormant within the community until some outside force threatens its values and, therefore, has a sporadic attendance at best. When asked about the amount of public participation in the Association Dr said:

Not much; that's probably because it's a very quiet area, but let something dreadful happen and they'll come out of the woodwork, they'll be singing out "what are you going to do about it."

To which I asked:

If there was a contentious issue to come up, but not so much to do positive changes to the area?

and Dr R responded;

No, you become really the guardians of what the public are afraid of, we find here that things have been pretty smooth really, which is quite a good thing, I think so anyway.

As representative of the Cornelian Bay Progress Association, Dr R was able to reassure me that my approach to Council, thus far, had followed conventional lines. The Association was primarily charged with protecting the area and the rights of its residents and, in the absence of threats to the area, lethargic in its coordination. Whilst Dr R was helpful with his advice, and liked the idea of some productive trees nearby, the Association was not particularly motivated to becoming a formal, or even active, partner in my proposal.

Discussions with the Bushcare group coordinator

G suggested the Cornelian Bay Bushcare Group as a likely source of affiliation for my proposal. The group, similar to most neighbourhood environmental 'care' groups, had an established working relationship with Council and was covered by its own public liability insurance. It also had an organising body, charter, and set guidelines outlining its duties and responsibilities. G therefore hoped that my project could be incorporated into the Bushcare group's responsibilities, thereby negating the Council from any risk, and giving the project an official face as a point of reference.

It proved quite frustrating, and time consuming, to contact the appropriate person within the group. After several attempts to contact the State Landcare Coordinator (for Southern regions), H, I was able to locate the contact details of the current leader of the Cornelian

Bay Bushcare Group, Q. H was unable to meet to discuss the details of my proposal, instead referring me to Q.

Q and I spoke by phone on, (eventually, after a lengthy period of phone tag), and she told me “to send them something in writing”. In this initial correspondence I was attempting to present the project as one which would not require too much input from the Bushcare group. At the same time I aimed to provide any Bushcare members who *may* wish to participate the opportunity to do so. It seemed likely that people motivated to restore an area’s native biodiversity, and happy to cooperate within a group, would see the planting and maintenance of productive trees as worthy of their participation.

Q replied to my initial written correspondence with a one-line email asking the following question;

“Are the current trees to be removed? Q”

To this question I replied, again by phone, that no trees or bushes would have to be. Despite the fact that no existing native trees were to be disturbed, indeed that approximately 50 indigenous shrubs were to be planted, I was told, by G (as Q had failed to respond to our last correspondence), that Q had decided that the Bushcare group did not want to be involved in any project involving productive trees.

I doubt whether Q had discussed this opportunity with her fellow group members, or even if she had visited the site in question, before making the decision not to participate on their behalf and closing the correspondence between us. It is difficult to say exactly what caused such strong opposition from the coordinator of the Bushcare group, but the fact remained that it did not fit within their definition of a worthy contribution to urban sustainability.

CHAPTER 6

Other Garden Facilitators

Introduction

To ensure that my approach in establishing a site of urban agriculture was following conventional channels I sought to correlate my experiences with those of other garden facilitators. I interviewed three facilitators of urban agriculture initiatives from the Hobart area to identify the most significant limiting and enabling factors to emerge in the establishment of *their* gardens. I sought to understand their approaches in establishing sites of urban agriculture, the degree of participation they generated within their community, their dealings with Council, and to what extent they formed partnerships with associated groups. Whilst there were as many individual approaches to establishing gardens as there were garden facilitators, several commonalities link each approach.

Facilitators of urban agriculture create their gardens for a number of reasons. The gardens may be tools of community development, alleviate the environmentally deleterious effects of conventional agriculture, or regenerate a local area. Regardless of their motivations, facilitators in the Hobart area all face similar challenges with engaging the community, dealing with the bureaucratic processes of government, providing for public liability insurance and establishing and maintaining formal partnerships. In the following chapter I use the experiences of these drivers of publicly accessible urban agriculture initiatives to highlight the most significant limiting and enabling factors typically encountered in the implementation process.

Engaging various groups within a community in meaningful ways that provide multiple benefits is essential to the longevity of any urban agriculture initiative (Novo, 2002; Stocker & Barnett, 1998). Understanding the subtleties of when and how members of the public are willing to become involved however, was a challenge faced by each facilitator I interviewed. There appeared to be a spectrum of engaging community: at one end of the spectrum the community is involved from the outset, perhaps even at the inspiration stage of the garden. This approach is favoured by resident groups or by facilitators using the

gardens as community development tools, and with a high degree of coordination necessary between various participants, agencies and funding bodies. An approach midway along the spectrum involves seeking official permission, collecting evidence that members of the community supports the idea, creating a certain amount of garden infrastructure, and then inviting the community to join in on the development once it becomes a physical reality. Finally, towards the other end of the spectrum, are those facilitators who create a site of urban agriculture with little or no input from the community, shouldering the responsibility of decisions and work in the hope that residents will appreciate their garden, and utilise it, once it is established (Holland, 2004; Figure 5).

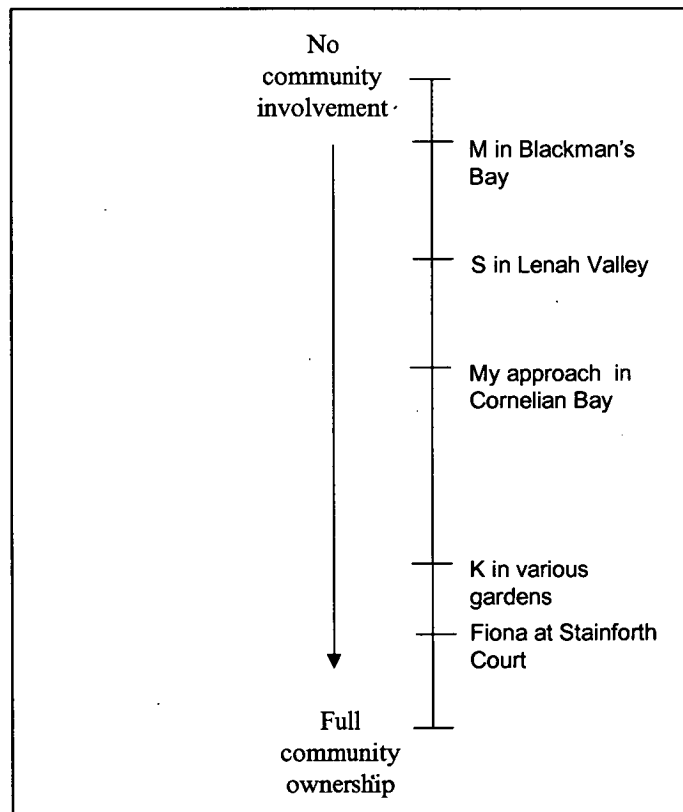


Figure 5. *Spectrum of Community Engagement*

Engaging (with) the facilitators

F was a facilitator working with the residents of Stainforth Court in a project to establish a community garden amongst their grounds. She was working at the far end of the community approach spectrum, engaging in a lengthy, consultation-based, in-depth liaison with residents to first identify a garden as needed, and then to design the site with the community. F and the residents, together, identified a garden as an appropriate tool for the community development goals they were seeking. For her the *process* of involvement in establishing the garden was a significant aspect:

Probably the main aim of the garden is more about the process, rather than the actual outcome, the garden is all about all those little things, like consultation meetings, and social barbeques, or just getting them to come down and meet, it's all those little things that hopefully will give the residents something other than just the garden at the end

Her approach was very much oriented towards identifying the goals of her group and attempting to facilitate these. The implications of this management style are important in the context of community development, since such style will impact on inclusion and the appropriateness of the principles that underlie the project (Holland, 2004). To correlate the various agendas of participants a large amount of time was spent in consultations and meetings:

Once we had secured the funding we had a round of community consultations where residents were invited to three meetings over a six week period and they were welcome just to come down and say what they want and say what they don't want, we did that and we probably had about 12 residents participate actively in that, no one complained about anything, it was all very, very positive, so we haven't had any issues yet, we might a little bit down the track I think, when it's finished off there might be a bit of argy-bargy.

Whilst F has endeavoured to include the residents in each stage of the creation of their garden, from its inception to its development, she recognises the need to allow for different levels of participation depending on the task. F found that residents were keen to become engaged in the planning stage. Yet despite the effort expended during resident consultation F identified less enthusiasm towards the implementation phase, due, she believes, to logistical hiccups, inclement weather, and perhaps an aversion to the type or circumstances of work involved:

I'm a little disappointed at this stage that I haven't got the residents participation in the garden that I was hoping for, but there are burst water mains and all sorts of things there, so I'm hoping that once I get the basic structure of the garden in, and we get to planting phase then that's when we'll get some true involvement in the garden ... He's the only resident at the moment that's getting out there and working in the garden, and also the weather's had a lot to do with it, every day they've worked it's rained or near snowed, and stuff like that ... We've had a few logistical problems with the garden in terms of involving residents.

Participation is often described as an important aspect in making programs sustainable (Wood, 2002) and there are many case studies in urban renewal in which community inspired and directed programs flourish (for example, Oliver, 2001; Stocker and Barnett, 1998). F was fortunately able to utilise a TAFE workforce to fill-in a deficit of participation in the implementation stage of the garden. One of the measures of success of community development initiatives, such as the garden at Stainforth Court, is the degree of custodianship and stewardship residents have for the project after the support of the facilitators is eventually withdrawn, as F recognised:

I think that residents expect you to hang around and stay around forever, so we might have a few teething problems around handing over the garden to them fully, but that's another hurdle that we'll cross when we get to it ... You'll have phases where there is a lot of involvement and participation, and all the research that I've done suggests this, and then it will just sort of knock off, and then there will be ebbs and flows of it, so I'm going into it

aware that that will happen and then just trying to think of some strategies that will involve or invoke some more participation when we get to that stage.

F's approach to engaging the residents of Stainforth Court took the form of an actor-inspired and directed development brought to life through open-ended consultation aimed at addressing the needs of the residents. Whilst this approach may create a high level of participant ownership of a project it does not necessarily follow that the garden will be maintained into the future once the coordinating professionals move to other projects. The actual creation of this garden was made much easier by a TAFE workforce, who contributed significantly during the resident participation deficit experienced in the development stages. Some believe that an ongoing role for the coordinator is necessary to steer an urban agriculture project through the ebbs and flows of community participation (Howe & Wheeler, 1999).

A less interventionist approach was taken by S in the establishment of a one acre community garden in Lenah Valley. S believed strongly in the myriad benefits possible with urban agricultural initiatives and was personally motivated to establish a site which he then offered the public to utilise. He sought only token support from the community, preferring to follow his own vision. Whilst S was confident that a garden would be a positive addition to Hobart, his project was not inspired by the recognised need of any particular group:

Akia: Did you feel like there was a need for that [garden] in Hobart at the time?

S: Oh I didn't know! But in fact, HCC said to me "we've got land but you really have to determine if there's a need for it otherwise we'll go to all this trouble, put up this big security fence and find that no one's interested". So I thought "Oh, fair enough, OK", and so I did some publicity, got a list of 10 or 12 people and was then able to talk to Council.

From a weariness borne of attending hundreds of community level meetings in various other environmental forums, S was keen to avoid the process of community participation:

Because there'd be arguments, "oh no, no, this is the way to go", and I had my blinkers on, just didn't want to hear other people's ideas, I knew exactly where I was going and how to do it, so eventually I got the message 'keep out of committees'.

Preferring instead to shoulder the majority of the work and expense in establishing and then maintaining the garden himself:

I bought timber to make the raised beds with my own money, and I developed it myself because I hate working with others, I'm not a committee person, and so I developed the whole thing myself, dug every bed, more than once over the years, and so I've done a lot of hard yakka.

S's approach goes against the current thinking in that he is attempting to provide a sustainability based initiative *for* the public without significantly including the community in the development stages of his project. Members of the community who wish to participate can do so by paying a peppercorn lease (\$12 a year) for the use of a garden bed, and rest assured that S will not seek any additional assistance in the running or maintenance of the site. His efforts may be seen as a tribute to the ability of the motivated individual to implement the framework for urban agricultural praxis. Whilst S has succeeded in his intention of providing a space for urban agriculture in Hobart, he may be missing many of the empowering ancillary benefits that creating places collectively, with a greater degree of community cooperation, can provide. Perhaps because of the limited sense of community ownership, S's garden now faces the possibility of languishing as its sole driver attempts to step away:

The gardens have worked well up until now because they've had the public face, the private person who's there, just one telephone call away, I'm there every Saturday and they can rely on me to do everything, to care take, and there won't be that person in the future because there's no one, and so we have to look for that person but in the meantime it will be a group of the regulars that will keep it mown and keep the rubbish taken out, maybe

making the compost is asking too much, because that's a skilled job and takes a lot of work.

In keeping with his individualistic approach thus far, S is seeking another energetic individual to take over his position as garden coordinator:

Someone trustworthy could look after the finance and be like a CEO, that's virtually what I've been, without having to be accountable for every little thing, and without having to go to community meetings with cap in hand, and so that's the type of person we're looking for.

I would speculate that now that D's garden is a functioning space, the management will fall to a committee who can attend to the myriad tasks required for the running of the site without getting bogged down in the many decisions necessary for its establishment. The garden offers an attractive prospect for government agencies and NGOs to engage in a partnership with a committee formed of members of the community. Until this stage, D's approach to the community may be seen as effective and efficient by some or paternalistic and exclusivist by others. Certainly, he has achieved a considerable development with a minimum of fuss, but opportunities to advance much of the social learning that the creation of garden places can accommodate may have been missed. It remains to be seen whether the garden will now form the backdrop for cooperation or will languish in a scarcity of public and institutional interest.

An example of an urban agriculture facilitator working even further along the spectrum of diminishing community involvement is located in the Hobart suburb of Blackman's Bay. M is in the development stages of a quarter acre site amongst the residential housing of his neighbourhood, and so far has adopted an almost anonymous approach, neglecting initially even to discuss his proposal with adjoining residents. He was able to secure the permission of the works coordinator of Kingborough Council without documentation of community support, and so began implementing his garden, informing residents about it as it developed. When asked:

Did you ask the neighbors directly on either side of the block?

M replied:

Umm, no, but I have since. My neighbour that overlooks the land, I knew that she wouldn't mind, I probably did mention it to her actually, and I've since met the other neighbours, one house is a housing department house and they're a bit of a rough, rowdy lot so really...they didn't really come into the equation, I just thought they'd be fine, I put up with their burnouts in the street and they can put up with a few trees in the park (laughs all round) and I've since spoken to a few other neighbours, when I was putting a perimeter barrier garden bed, I guess, so I've started doing that, when I was doing that the only feedback I got was "they're not going to block the view are they?" and I just assured them that they wouldn't.

Assuming that M's garden was intended for public use, I asked him if he had attempted to involve the community in *any* way:

Well when it comes to that I haven't really gone out and expressed the need for help, I've thought 'look, this winter let's just get started with a perimeter garden bed fence' cause I actually grew these plants, the she oaks and the banksias, and there's a few hakeas there too, and I thought 'well look let's get the boundary fence up so that it's a little bit more private'.

M intends to invite the community to utilise the place he is creating, and relinquish some of his autonomy, once the garden has taken shape:

Once the edge garden is up and going I want to put a letter out around the community asking for people who are interested in a community garden, and I'd like to see it like that, I don't see it as *my* garden it's not my garden by any means.

When asked if, at that stage of increased community involvement, he imagined formalising the social structure of the garden a bit more, engaging in meetings and allocating responsibilities he replied:

(Big sighs) Well yeah, I reckon at that stage it would, once you start getting group members we start getting a lot of different sorts of characters and I guess you do have to start forming some sort of committee so that everyone gets a say and it's done, so that it's a bit more structured and channelled.

As this process of social negotiation seemed unattractive to this motivated driver I asked if he would have pursued his vision if it had necessitated going through conventional channels from the beginning:

Nope I wouldn't. I'm not that sort of person. But in that respect, I probably would have got together with some people who would have done that. If R [from Council] had said "look we're going to have to draft letters and you know." It's a tricky question. I guess I would have as long as it didn't involve too much work, and I probably would have tried to get a few more members of the community involved before that process so that it wasn't all up to me and it was a bit of a committee effort.

M believed that a direct approach was the most time and energy efficient method for implementing his vision, especially at the early developmental stages. He saw the conventional channels of public consultation and formal application as a powerful disincentive which, if he had not been able to avoid them, would have stifled his urge to create the garden. Even once the public is invited to participate in the garden, M hopes that less formal methods of decision-making can be fostered:

When it becomes a community garden and we're all there sort of doing stuff, I reckon instead of having formal meetings we'll probably just have meetings as we're doing stuff. I wouldn't want to see it get to the stage where we meet at someone's house and we talk and talk and talk, not just talking about doing stuff. You may as well be doing stuff, making decisions on the spot.

Obviously if we wanted to approach Kingborough Council for more money, if they wanted to give us something, if we wanted to apply for something for them to buy for us, *then* you would probably need to meet at another date but it would all be very much on the ground.

M's approach is another example of the significant potential of the individual to positively influence sustainability at the local level. It has been recognised that "empowering and assisting these individuals is the critical strategy for creating more local food networks (Australian Community Foods, 2005, p.2). Working alone and *on behalf* of his community however, M risks creating a site that inappropriately addresses the needs of his community and which may therefore not be utilised to its fullest potential. Yet M appears to have brought a subtle appreciation of the behaviour of urban Tasmanians to his project, and has allowed various informal, interesting and fun ways in which future participants can become engaged.

Whilst not currently a driver of a particular community garden K, the Urban Designer with Glenorchy City Council, is experienced in various means of engaging local communities in programs that improve the liveability and sustainability of Hobart. I interviewed K to get some inside tips from a professional within a neighbouring municipal authority on how best to approach my project and application. She was able to share her wealth of experience in working with residents and within the confines of local government and was keen to provide encouragement and advice. K had many insights to share on the topic of attempting to engage the community including the need for education, our limited understanding of the public realm, a typically low level of social capital, fear and trust issues, and the priority given to aesthetic over productive quality of the urban environment. She has found that members of the public are most likely to become involved in projects that are interesting and fun and inclusive of a wide spectrum of society. Overall her remarks succinctly highlight the challenges to be faced in the reintroduction of productive plants into the built environment. Despite the elements limiting public engagement K believes there is a longing for ways for residents to mix:

People are out there searching for some way of joining in with each other so there has to be some way of creating that community link.

She felt, however, that there was a lack of perceived need amongst the public of Hobart that would hamper achieving a high level of public participation:

I don't know that this is an issue out there with the community just yet, it's an ideal, it's a theory, but I don't think it's hitting people at the moment whilst they can still afford to buy, it's not a need. Even though you can see the need is really there I don't think that the majority of people can see it, although people may have not thought of it it seems likely that they would support it.

Several authors have also noted the imperative of environmental education to alert people to the changes we need to embrace to move towards sustainability (Clark, 2000; Crook & Pakulski, 1995; Darlow & Newby, 1997). Without acknowledging the unsustainability of our current food production systems, people have little reason to alter behaviour.

K anticipated problems engaging the community due also to a limited understanding of the public realm:

I don't think Australians have a very developed understanding of the public realm, and it's not just with agriculture, I'd say it's in the way we use public space, the way we connect, we're not very good at it ... We've turned in on ourselves, we're hotwired into the world and we've forgotten that the world exists outside your front door.

K believed that a scarcity of social capital characterises the norm,

The sense of community is a long way off being developed, we're not communal people, but we like to be around, we're voyeurs, we love to sit and watch ... We like our anonymity, I'm not sure we share all that well.

A society characterised by low levels of social capital is difficult to work with in projects involving public places and relying on high levels of community participation and

stewardship (ABC, 2001). It is becoming increasingly acknowledged that the move towards sustainability is also a move (back) from neo-liberal ideals of individualism towards collectivism (Davidson, 2000). Urban agricultural initiatives such as this project should be encouraged then, as both ends in themselves and as community-building tools to provide opportunities for social learning (Australian Community Foods, 2005; Filho, 1999). K felt that fear, mistrust, and contestation over the harvest were further limiting factors:

Fear ... I just think people have shut down ... There's a trust that has gone from our society ... The question is of course; who owns the fruit? And that will be ongoing.

K also anticipated residents' concerns relating to the aesthetic appearance of productive trees:

It's believed trees are messy [and] I think we've got to get out of the culture of neat and tidy. It's nearly anal retentive.

The increasing preference given towards the aesthetic over the productive in Australia's planning instruments and urban environment has attracted the attention of several authors (Gaynor, 1999; Mollison, 1988; Solomon, 2003). Such priorities stifle attempts to bring urban lifestyles back within ecological realities (Gaynor, 1999).

K recommended attempting to engage residents through education, and a light, informal and fun approach.

Be creative about the way that you make your space ... using art, using sculpture, using children, using the community being involved in it, and having a presence ... and encouraging access to it, not fencing it off, and perhaps it's part of a pathway that people use through the trees with a seat and therefore it's got a sense of place. And a sign and interpretation and you're starting to get this community pride coming in and that can help ...

There's got to be a reason for people to change, there's got to be positive benefit, and it's got to be fun.

Consideration given to ensuring opportunities for creativity and random silliness are accepted in the practical literature on creating spaces as integral to the popularity of shared agricultural projects (Australian City Farms & Community Gardens Network, 2004; American Community Gardening Association, 2004). Encouraging sculpture, murals, mosaics, flowers, non-linear design, secret children's places and the like, ensure a greater diversity of involvement. K identified the need to also think creatively about alternatives to conventional meeting-oriented decision-making processes. She advocated alternatives that may streamline the bureaucratic process to make a project such as this more inviting to members of the public,

You don't want everyone going off and having to form committees because that takes a lot of energy and a lot of people don't want to ... We need to have these questions going out into the community so people can answer back.

K's comments revealed a depth of understanding of the workings of the public realm of Hobart. In relation to the establishment of some productive trees at Cornelian Bay she anticipated a degree of lethargy amongst residents who she expected would have meagre reserves of social capital. K commented on the fear, mistrust and aesthetic priority of many residents, all of which could limit the potential of community level projects. She identified the need to empower drivers in the community and to allow public initiatives to be more light-hearted, creative and fun, and to simplify the bureaucratic process of application and decision-making.

In addition to recognising the challenges with engaging the community, K saw a need to streamline the Council processes encountered in the establishment of sustainability praxis. K, and other commentators, believed that HCC had sound intentions in its management responsibilities but was operating with a paternalistic approach with little experience as facilitators, enablers, leaders and partners (Armstrong & Stratford, 2004) and, due to funding constraints, was seldom able to achieve more than the maintenance of its core

duties (Crowley, 1998). K felt that HCC tended to lack trust in community, and especially the individual, an in partnerships preferred to act *on behalf of*, rather than *with*, the community. She had several insightful tips on delivering such proposals to Council including identifying an advocate of the idea within Council, demonstrating high outcomes in relation to low expenditures, and showing the sustainability and community support of the development.

K believed that Councils should be attempting to work along the lines of promoting sustainability praxis but are constrained by lack of funding and time:

Council should be taking on a whole lot of projects but local governments are flat out trying to just keep up with just their core business.

She stated a need for facilitators within Council that could stimulate and assist in the emergence of community-level initiatives:

Facilitators from council should go out and energize, or run little programs for communities, or just try to streamline the process. Council should have commitment!

K saw thorough planning of the proposal, and appealing to political gains, as increasing the attractiveness of the proposal:

If it's well planned, and well thought out, and costed, and shown to, in the long run, be sustainable, and there's a political side that someone can get points from, then yeah, it'll go ahead ... Community services dept in Hobart might be interested in it if you packaged it right. If you can show that it's low maintenance, or minimal maintenance, and high outcomes, that's going to be positive ... It could be traffic calming it could be community building, it could be neighbourhood identity... there are all sorts of catch words at the moment; it could be developing social capital, community visioning, safer communities

K also recognised the need to identify and empower drivers of a project of this nature within Council. She saw HCC as lacking trust in informal community partnerships however:

Councils get wary of those sorts of pledges, because what happens is things change, people move, circumstances change, and we have a litany of broken promises here ... I know if I went to my supervisor of the outdoor workforce and said, "I've got this community or this person who wants to do this and they promise...." He'd say "ho ho no, we've been down there before".

Preferring to work *on behalf of*, rather than *with* communities:

I get the feeling with Hobart that they are quite happy if the community doesn't get involved with anything ... They're quite happy doing it all for and on behalf of and so there's a different attitude.

Finally, similarly to both S and M, K recommended identifying an advocate within Council:

I think you need to find a champion in the council who is supportive, with any project you need champions.

K's perspectives from within Council give several useful insights into both the normative response of communities to be expected with an urban agriculture initiative, and the challenges in dealing with Council. Her recommendations of seeking an in-Council advocate, and demonstrating maximum gains whilst minimising Council risk and expenditure, have been found to be effective strategies of realising urban agricultural projects led by other facilitators also.

Both S and M had the opinion that minimising contact with local Council to identified advocates was advantageous to the goal of developing and managing their gardens. Comments highlighting the benefits of dealing directly with personnel employed in close proximity to their projects include:

Once the council contact person from 'Parks and Gardens' was on side, once you get to know them and realize just how much on side they are, then the rest is just smooth sailing, they just can't do enough within their constraints, for example if I wanted a truckload of woodchips to put down on pathways or around the composting area, I'd telephone them and then "OK, we can get you a load sometime over the next week or two", and sure enough it would turn up.

and:

I think that if you speak to the right person within the authority and then they speak to their supervisor, and their supervisor's happy, well yunno you're there, but if you go beyond that supervisor and start dealing with this paperwork all the time and say "what do you think about this?" well then they would say "no, these are the channels, this is what you should do, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang" whereas you speak to the guy on the ground, mention it to him and, 'oh yeah' as long as he can see that it isn't going to be *more* workload, you get him onside and he speaks to his supervisor, yunno you bribe him with some beers or something, no! I think I was lucky that I just spoke to the right person, and that I knew him.

Both garden facilitators were able to draw upon a trusting relationship with certain Council employees which made the streamlining of much of the application process possible:

When I'd decided to try again, a bit more seriously this time, I wrote a letter to council, and knowing a few councilors personally was helpful I think, including the current lord mayor ... R [Kingborough works coordinator], who I knew from my previous employment, so I was sort of on terms with him, I'd sort of touched bases with him because when I moved to Blackman's bay I liked to know what's happening and so got to know him, so I've just said "this is what I'm thinking of doing" and he said "yeah that shouldn't be a problem" No letters, no drafting, no nothing, I just asked him and he said "yeah that shouldn't be a problem".

Initially, however, S encountered resistance to his proposal due to his status as an individual. He was told by HCC to align himself with an umbrella organisation, with the necessary public liability insurance, before Council could consider his application:

I was told “we can’t really talk to you S because you’re not aligned and to be a legal entity you’ve got to form an incorporated body ” and I said. “no way!” and then it occurred to me, because I’m a board member of the environment centre I could ask them to be my umbrella, and they said “yes of course!” ... I was only able to get an audience by attaching myself to the environment centre because little old me had no entity, but as soon as I became an incorporated body then “oh right we’ll talk to you then”.

M was able to avoid the need for organisational affiliation and insurance due to a degree of trust already formed between himself and the Kingborough Council works coordinator:

Well I think that he knows that I’ve got a gardening background and that I’ve got sound knowledge, and that I’m not going to go screaming to them with a claim or anything like that ...

However, he recognised the overshadowing threat of Council’s fear of litigation as a potential future obstacle for his project:

I can see their point, I can see that that would be their biggest hurdle in trying to establish a garden and it’d be public liability, yeah, “who’s responsible?”, and that would be a hurdle that you probably just couldn’t cross at some point, I could see that happening ... We think the only thing that’ll stop this [garden] is some freak from council going “it’s just *too risky!*”

There was a definite aversion with these drivers of urban agriculture towards having to pass through the conventional channels of application, which is clear in statements such as:

Look, I think if you were to go through the right channels, I’d probably still be going through those channels now ... When I hear what it would take if you

were going through the right channels, and so I'm all in for bending the rules a little bit, yunno just go and do it and if the council don't like it, well yunno, not 'too bad', but, 'let's talk about it then'.

When I asked M if he would have pursued his project had it been necessary to follow the conventional channels of application he replied:

Nope I wouldn't, I'm not that sort of person.

Summary

From discussions with these initiators of urban agriculture projects in the Hobart area some clear messages emerge concerning their dealings with councils. There is a consistent attempt to shortcut the application process, as much as possible, by utilising an in-Council advocate of the project. I found the emergence of an in-Council advocate essential in the establishment of the site in New Town also. The degree of advocacy and trust formed between the driver and Council will affect the timing of affiliation with other groups, the need for insurance, and potentially remove the need to follow the formal channels of application altogether. This streamlined process of negotiation seems to suit the proactive personalities likely to become the individual leaders of small-scale urban agricultural initiatives but necessitates a much more fluid and trusting approach from Council.

It remains unclear as to the most effective means of educating, motivating, and engaging members of the community in urban agricultural initiatives. Whilst each of the approaches along the spectrum of community involvement has its merit in the actual establishment of the gardens, maintaining public interest in areas of low social capital and in times of plenty will remain a major challenge.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

I return now to the aims and objectives of my research, describing again the methods used to collect and analyse the data within participatory action research. I will summarise the significant findings and explain the relevance of these as a contribution to the literature on urban agricultural initiatives.

This project was inspired by the ecologically destructive, unsecure, and unsustainable practices of conventional agriculture. Urban agriculture has been shown to be an alternative that not only ameliorates many of these environmental impacts but which can have numerous social and economic benefits for local communities. This research aimed to document then, the process of an individual attempting to establish a site of urban agriculture on public land in Hobart, Tasmania. It sought to highlight the most significant limiting and enabling factors amongst the community, local council, and the notion of partnerships.

Participatory action research was the most appropriate methodology. Other participants in the project included the proximate residents in a middle class suburban neighbourhood, the residents of a nearby housing commission estate, a local nursery owner, Hobart City Council, other community garden facilitators and, briefly, several non-government organisations. Participant data were collected in various ways including surveys, in-depth interviews, and through contact made during the project. These data were triangulated with the literature and my own experiences as an actor in the research.

I found that in my petition to establish some productive trees, Council was lethargic about participating due to several concerns. These concerns included the added maintenance requirements of productive trees, the risk inherent with dropped fruit and with the public maintaining trees, and the possibility of future conflicts arising. Instead of embracing the opportunity to assist in enhancing the sustainability and liveability of a small, unutilised part of New Town, Council at first sought to defer much of the risk and responsibility for the development onto other non-government organisations. Indeed I was told that without

the formal support of an incorporated group Council would not be willing to support or allow the proposal.

The need for a formal partnership with an incorporated group proved problematic for such a small initiative, spearheaded by an individual. Paradoxically, the four groups contacted with an invitation to participate were wary of the proposal for similar reasons to those of Council, namely the risk involved in such a publicly accessible development, and lack of trust in the community or individual's commitment. Thus, in this instance, the partnerships so often heralded as the backbone of sustainability praxis proved disproportionately costly in terms of human energy and time and ultimately fruitless as no organisation chose to participate in the development. My inability to entice a partner agency into the project nearly marked the point at which the proposal failed.

I found that the proximate residents, as well as those in Stainforth Court, were largely in favour of incorporating productive trees into their urban landscape (especially if the development was not adjacent to *their* homes) but were reluctant to become involved in the development stage of the project. Whilst there was a recognised need for opportunities to cooperate with fellow members of their community, there was not an urgent enough need for productive trees to cause residents to band together. There were also personal time constraints as well as fears of vandalism, theft, and a general mistrust of society that rendered most residents reluctant to contribute energy towards the early stages of the project. A less formal, even subversive, approach to making small changes to their local area seemed to be more in keeping with the approach of most residents, who expressed little interest in forming a group or attending meetings. Resident participation is much more likely to take the forms of efficiently answered consultation or spontaneous, informal interaction once the development becomes a physical reality.

From interviews with the facilitators of other community gardens there were numerous parallels to emerge between their experiences and my own. There was distaste for the bureaucratic process of application with a preference for identifying an advocate in Council to work through. Indeed, had an in-Council advocate not emerged in support of my proposal it would certainly have faltered.

In a couple of days I am meeting with Greg from the nursery, T, our Council advocate, and the grounds worker responsible for mowing the site to mark out the 150 metre stretch of swale along the bike track that will be the new home for thirty apricot trees. Council has agreed to plant the trees (which I will purchase from the nursery at cost price), Greg has agreed to keep an eye on them, and a few members of Bellevue Parade have agreed to help with the occasional light work. I feel that this project has shown that informal arrangements can create positive changes in small scale sustainability praxis. Hopefully the trees will become a landmark for those living in the area and not only provide fresh, nutritious, succulent apricots for many decades into the future but also provide opportunities for residents of Hobart to pause and have a little chat occasionally.

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APPENDIX 1

Petition for the development of the 15x25m triangle of land alongside the bike tracks, and public telephone box at Cornelian Bay.

We, the residents of Cornelian Bay, believe that publicly accessible fruit trees nearby will be a positive addition to our local area. As the site named is located a short walk from our homes we hope to be able to harvest the fruit as well as enjoy the improvement of this unused area into a creative and productive space.

We ask that council consider the application for development of this site as an area of community supported urban agriculture.

| <i>NAME</i> | <i>ADDRESS</i> | <i>TELEPHONE</i> |
|-------------|----------------|------------------|
|-------------|----------------|------------------|

APPENDIX 2

Dear residents,

As part of my Masters thesis at the University of Tasmania, I am documenting the process of establishing a site of urban agriculture in Hobart. The small, north-facing triangle of land alongside the train and bike tracks, onavenue, next to the public telephone box at Cornelian Bay has been identified as a suitable site (see attached map). The site is currently zoned as and is unused. Assuming there is some public support for the idea, I will apply to council for the use of the site to plant a few fruit and/or nut trees there, the produce from which will belong to whoever cares to pick it.

Maintenance of the trees and site will be negotiated between myself and local council. I hope to be able to maintain the trees using organic methods. Council may agree to place an interpretation panel there, if this is deemed appropriate by residents and those involved. No existing trees would need to be removed, to plant the fruit/nut trees and visible alterations to the site will be in keeping with the feeling of surrounding areas.

I hope this idea strikes you as a positive addition to your local area, and that you will take a couple of minutes to return the brief questionnaire. I am compiling the results of this questionnaire to ascertain public support and to make an application to council to plant these fruit trees. Knowing your views on this topic is integral to the success of this thesis. So please take a minute to participate!

Thanks!

Akia Chabot

APPENDIX 3

1. Do you think that planting a few fruit and/or nut trees, on the site described, is a good idea?
2. If “yes” which trees would you like to see planted? (tick any or all)
- *
 - *
 - *
 - *
 - *
 - *
 - *
 - *Other.....
3. Do you think a small interpretation panel is a good idea also?
4. How many people are there in your household?
- Males..... Females.....
5. How old is the youngest ?..... How old is the oldest?.....
6. Do your answers reflect the opinions of other members of this household?
7. Do you; Own this home
Rent this home
Other arrangement
8. Would you like to participate in a short interview (approximately 20 minutes) discussing your views about the possibilities of urban agriculture in your area?

APPENDIX 4

Dear,

You have been recognised as a person with experience in the field of urban agriculture and the implementation of local community-oriented projects. We are inviting your participation in a research project that will explore the process of attempting to establish a few publicly owned fruit trees at Cornelian Bay.

Our inquiry will highlight some of the limiting and enabling factors likely to affect local change towards sustainability. It is set within current methods of governance and partnership agreements between community groups and facilitating agencies. We will compile data on the experiences of various participants in urban agricultural projects including Councillors, planning and policy professionals, members of Hobart City Council's outdoor workforce, community gardeners, and local residents. These qualitative experiences will be shared through recorded interviews and analysed using methodology consistent with the social sciences.

We would greatly value the opportunity to involve you in a loosely structured interview of approximately 30 minutes duration. The interview would take place at your office or other quiet venue nominated by you, at a time convenient to you. The recording and transcripts from our conversation will be sent to you to check and edit as warranted.

The audio tape recording will be stored in a locked cabinet in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, and any publicly circulated information deriving from the transcript will be de-identified, if you request. Should you wish, you will be given the opportunity to view publishable material prior to its release.

As the project draws to a close in mid 2005 we can provide all interested participants with a summary of findings in the expectation that, given your position and/or interest in the field, these may be helpful to your work.

This project has received ethical clearance from the Research Ethics Committee (Tasmania) Network (HREC). Inquires of a general nature can be directed to Elaine Stratford at 6226 2462 or Elaine.Stratford@utas.edu.au. If you have any concerns or complaints about any aspect of the project or its conduct, you can contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Amanda McAully, on 6226 2763 or Amanda.McAully@utas.edu.au). She will direct you to the relevant committee Chairperson who initially reviewed the project proposal.

To determine your willingness to participate in this research, I will contact you within a week of this letter being mailed. Many thanks in anticipation of your valued participation.

Yours sincerely,

Akia Chabot
(Research Investigator)

Elaine Stratford
(Chief Investigator)

APPENDIX 5

27th October 2004

Consent form for participants

Describing the process of establishing a site of urban agriculture on Council land in Hobart

1. I understand the study involves the following procedures:

*a 30-45 minute taped interview with Akia Chabot to discuss the various aspects in the process of establishing a site of urban agriculture;

*an opportunity to review the transcript from that interview and correct, elaborate on, or erase sections of it; and

*an opportunity to review text arising from this study that might enter the public domain to ensure protection of participant confidences, or anonymity if desired.

2. All research material will be securely stored at the University of Tasmania in locked cabinets under the custody of the chief investigator for a minimum of 5 years, after which it will be destroyed

3. I acknowledge that research data gathered for the study may be published (provided that I cannot be identified without prior written permission)

4. I understand that my identity will be kept confidential and that any information I supply will be used only for the purposes of the research

5. I agree to participate in the study and understand that I may withdraw, and request the withdrawal of any information given, at any time

Participant:

Participant's signature:

Date:

I have explained the study and the implications of participation to the respondent and have attained their understanding and consent

Investigator: Investigator's signature:

Date:

APPENDIX 6

Council participant questions

1. What is your understanding of the term urban agriculture?
2. Have you ever been involved in an application concerning urban agriculture? What were the issues involved in this case? What was the end result?
3. What do you expect would be some issues or problems with this application, and what would contribute to its success?
4. Who do you think would benefit by the presence of public fruit trees?
5. Who would be adversely affected?
6. How do you feel about the idea of fruit trees in public places, such as suburban roadsides, small parks and public open spaces?
7. Have you heard of instances where fruit or nut trees have benefited local residents? For how long were these benefits felt? Were the trees significant in that place?
8. Why does Council prefer ornamental trees to productive trees in public places?
 - If maintenance: Could volunteers assist in maintaining them?
 - Could private sector contractors manage them?
9. Has consideration been given to utilization or reservation of suitable sites for urban agriculture within the Hobart City Council planning scheme?

APPENDIX 7

Interview Questions for Garden Facilitators

Describing the process of establishing a site of urban agriculture on council land in Hobart;

1. What has been your involvement in the community garden?
2. Was the garden a personally inspired idea, an agency initiative, or was it driven by community need? How did you determine this need?
3. Why was a garden chosen as a means of fulfilling this need?
4. How, and why did you choose this site?
5. Who owns this land, and what land tenure arrangements have you reached?
5. How was the garden design formalised?
6. Do you have a source of ongoing funding?
7. Do you need insurance?
8. Has the establishment of the garden required cooperation between the community and local government or various agencies?
9. What have been some of the obstacles or enabling factors these partnerships have contributed to the garden?
10. Has the process of cooperating with agencies and local government been facilitative in the establishment of the garden or problematic?
11. How would you like this process to be streamlined?