

Candidate Questionnaire: City of Austin City Council Race 2014

Response from Ricardo Turullols-Bonilla, District 3

1. Yes, but we need to understand that regulations are set in place for the protection of consumers. The problem is that it gets tricky insofar as most of these requirements come from the federal and state levels, and these need be complied. Your solution of the ombudsman sounds a good in the face that positive law is rigid and a need does exist to look at the problem from the producer side of the equation as well.

2. Yes, I do support lowering the overhead costs of doing business for small scale food entrepreneurs.

3. This question seems to be entangled, so I'll try to separate it as I understand it best.

The first part is asking "Do you support measures to improve access to land for growing food, such as allowing public property to be used for nonprofit community gardens?" From this I gather that by garden you mean a food production facility. To answer this I would need to do the research on the matter of using public property for private uses, for profit and for nonprofit.

Regarding the second part it would go like this "Do you support measures for working with County officials to reduce property tax burdens on small urban farmers?" To this my blanket statement is that as it stands it is too general. Recall that taxation is a redistribution of wealth for a more equitable society. Again, to answer this query I would need to check the big picture view of things of underserved urban dwellers and disadvantaged urban farmers.

4. Yes, something like market on wheels. It is already standard practice in many countries to bring food directly to the consumer, though not necessarily locally produced, but much more so if it is locally produced. I think the trade-off would be a balance between better prices for the consumer and access to market for the small scale food vender, whether producer or not. It would then be up to the buyer whether to consume local or not, and at what price.

Also we want to keep things simple for overregulation at the marketplace invariably leads to precisely what is trying to be avoided of a bigger government to oversee its implementation.

5. I find the question difficult to understand, and mostly on account of my ignoring the concept of urban farmer which underlies your query. Normally I associate the farm situated beyond the suburban, and the urban in practice it has come to mean what is not agriculture. People and food production are normally kept separate for health requirements, at the federal and state and county and city levels. I fear not understanding what you are asking, for surely you don't mean harm to people.

On the other hand, I am for all the as character building community activities you mention as preface to your quest. It would be a question up to dialogue and consensus to address and solve by meeting and becoming acquainted with the wishes and concerned of all involved. Wish I knew more so as to give a clearer reply.