

Community Kitchen Report

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The Kaslo Food Security Assessment has determined the most active way to encourage a more food secure North Kootenay Lake Region is to create a community kitchen. The idea of a community kitchen best suits our current foodshed by helping build community, capacity for job incubators, education, as well as a space for making food accessible, affordable and for everyone.

A community kitchen is a space where a group of people who meet regularly can share the costs and labor of producing healthy and affordable food. Everyone is expected to participate in menu selection, preparation, cleaning, and cooking. We would be able to make a variety of meals for freezing, fresh, small or large. Community kitchens are creative, healthy, alternatives to feed the soul as well as the body.

Co-coordinator

It is suggested that a kitchen co-coordinator position be created to facilitate the process. The position would co-ordinate times, food availability, ordering of needed supplies, organize volunteers, collect food donations, organize workshops and a bulk buying club. The co-coordinator would require Foodsafe.

Commercial Incubators

The community has also spoken strongly for the addition of commercial “incubators”. The term incubator refers to a business that introduces cash flow to a small community through job creation while supporting a non-profit sector. The Toronto FoodShare network has been very successful with commercial operations helping to fund their community endeavors such as “Power Soups” for the homeless. Through this program, the preparation and cooking are subsidized by the commercial operations. They also make use of excess food from the commercial operations. The idea is that the incubators can financially aid a non-profit aspect, create a stronger local economy by creating space for production, and build community.

Adding commercial enterprises does change regulations and the details of that are dependent upon where the kitchen is and the finer details of what is occurring within the kitchen. There are basic regulations, which you will find further down this report, however for exactly what would be needed, the area inspector –

Paul Geysler 250-505-7200 would need to have a final draft of all the details before knowing what may or may not work.

Some of the incubator suggestions are:

- fruit leather
- teas
- canned goods
- frozen prepared meals

Community Initiatives

The community forum and workshops at the final food forum were well attended with enthusiastic people who would like to make the community kitchen an actual gathering place for many events around food. Some of the ideas that came forward are:

- a retail outlet for commercial incubators
- educational workshops on cooking, food awareness, seasonal eating, herbs and our native plants, canning ect...
- connected to the community garden
- a storage place for freezing, root cellaring, and drying
- a meeting place for our environmental groups such as Earthworkers who conduct the composting project

The ideas and excitement at both the forums was phenomenal, a beautiful demonstration of community spirit.

Isolated Demographics

In the North Kootenay Lake, we have several isolated demographics that would greatly benefit from a community kitchen. Seniors, youth and those suffering from illnesses such as diabetes and heart problems would be able to come together and have support as well as shared knowledge.

The seniors have a hall to gather at, however the interaction with other demographics is where some seniors have reported feeling isolated. In a community kitchen space, they would be able to share their wealth of knowledge as well as create new friendships.

The youth also have been identified as needing some support. It would be our hope with a community kitchen and initiatives such as growing food workshops, that we would be able to inspire and invigorate the youth to feel good about themselves and their community.

In such an isolated community, access to health is becoming more vulnerable as our governments streamline funding. A key to ensuring a more sustainable health care system must begin with good nutrition and access to healthy food. With illnesses such as diabetes, heart problems, obesity, and digestive issues, a community kitchen can provide the education to healthier eating, the recipes, the nutritious food as well as support to cooking the food.

Where

Places that have been identified within Kaslo are

- the Scout Hall
- Seniors Hall
- United Church
- School
- And possibly Mariner's Hotel

The Seniors Hall and the school have been identified as not likely because of scheduling conflicts as well as regulations inhibiting the public to interact within the school. Most possible are the Scout Hall, the United Church or the Hotel. Community members are in

favor of a space that can house all aspects they have mentioned they would like involved and having the freedom without religious barriers or scheduling conflicts.

Regulations

See attached appendix with basic regulations for a community kitchen. As mentioned above, the details of what may need to be added or renovated depends on space, activities and who is conducting them. It was recommended to gather as much information about what the space would look like, then contact the area inspector to determine what needs to occur next.

Appendix 1

BASIC HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL FOOD PROCESSING OPERATIONS

The following is a brief overview of the British Columbia health requirements for small food processing operations. For the full requirements, please refer to the BC *Food Premises Regulation* and talk to the Public Health Inspector at your local health authority's office.

The Building

Places where food is prepared for sale to the public may not be part of, or communicate directly with personal living quarters. A commercial food kitchen (food premises) may however be based at a home but must be separate from the home kitchen and living quarters. For example, the commercial kitchen could be a separate room in the basement with its own entrance to the outdoors.

- ◆ Floor, walls and ceiling must be of smooth, washable material, much as you would find in a home kitchen.
- ◆ There must be an ample supply of hot and cold running water. The number of sinks required depends on the level and complexity of food preparation involved, but there should always be one sink just for handwashing.
- ◆ There must be good lighting, with bulbs covered to protect food from glass fragments in case of bulb breakage.
- ◆ **Ventilation:** for a very simple operation, a good quality domestic range hood may be sufficient. For operations involving more oil cooking and steam, a commercial quality exhaust hood may be required. It is also a good idea to have openable windows for fresh air, but they must be screened to keep out insects.
- ◆ **Counters, shelves and cupboards:** these must also be smooth, washable, non-absorbent material so that they are easy to clean. Materials are typical what you would find in a good domestic kitchen, arborite counters, smooth wooden shelves with good quality washable paint, etc. Keep in mind that you will need plenty of storage space. Remember to allow space for storing mop and bucket, cleaning supplies, coats and boots, shipping containers, paperwork, etc. You cannot have too much storage space. Make sure everything has a place, you will avoid clutter and the kitchen will be easier to keep clean.
- ◆ **Equipment:** The type of equipment will of course depend on the type of food being prepared. There are no health requirements for food preparation equipment as long as anything that comes into contact with food is food grade. Normal domestic cooking equipment is permissible. Wood (except for wood spoons), wicker and cloth are not suitable for food contact. Try to use equipment that is easy to clean.

- ♦ **Refrigeration and Hot Holding:** Perishable foods (those which support bacterial growth) must be stored below 4°C or above 60°C to prevent the multiplication of food poisoning bacteria. Make sure your refrigeration units are large enough to store the amount of perishable foods you will be handling. A good quality thermometer must be installed in each unit so that you can monitor the temperature daily. Temperature control is the key to preventing food poisoning.
- ♦ Plans must be approved by the local Public Health Inspector before construction.

Food Handlers

Food poisoning outbreaks have often originated from well-built, clean kitchens. The only way to ensure that this does not happen from your business is by making sure that all food handlers are educated in food safety. The BC Foodsafe one-day course (Level 1) is designed specifically to train food handlers how to prevent foodborne illness. It is strongly recommended that all food handlers take this course before working in the commercial food preparation business.

Water Supply

The kitchen of course must have a safe water supply. If you are in a municipality, you probably have a safe water supply. If you live in a rural area and are connected to either a private water system or a small rural water system, contact your Public Health Inspector to inquire as to the status of your water quality.

Sewage Disposal

All wastewater and sewage must be discharged into either a public sewer or an approved private sewage disposal system. If you are not connected to a public sewer, contact the Public Health Inspector for information on sewage disposal requirements.

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