

2011

5/6 from Jutta to Riverdale Farm/rec staff and freinds.

Hi there,

An incident yesterday has prodded me into making a deputation about the Food Strategy presentation to the Board of Health on Monday. The incident was at Riverdale Farm.

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Background: when Jeff Connell told me the day before yesterday that the chimney at Riverdale oven needs to be rebuilt before the oven can be used, I was surprised, since the chimney is very short and actually not necessary for the functioning of the oven (for example, the oven at Lawrence Heights doesn't have a chimney at all, and it works fine <http://publicbakeovens.ca/wiki/wiki.php?n=GuestBakerProject.LawrenceHeightsApr28>)

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Riverdale Farm, May 5, 6.30 pm: On my way to a Greenwood meeting I stopped off at Riverdale Farm to take a look at the chimney again. I was happy to see that the gate right beside the oven was still open, and two Riverdale staff were sitting on a bench nearby, chatting. I approached them (I had been at a meeting with one of them in November) and this was the conversation that ensued:

Me: Hi!

Riverdale supervisory staff person: We're closed, you can't come in.

Me: The gate was open, and I want to take a picture of the chimney, I hear it's broken.

Staff: the gate was only open because we're waiting for somebody, no one is allowed in.

Me: Okay, I just need to take a quick photo of the chimney.

Staff: I am asking you to leave the property.

Me: [Name of staff], I'm a human being just like you, all I want to do is take the picture to see what's wrong with the chimney.

Staff: I know you're a human being, and I am asking you to leave the property, we're closed.

Me: Well, I guess I'll just take the picture from outside the fence. Not good, [name of staff], not good.

As I observed, the chimney flue has a crack in it, nothing that appears to interfere with baking <http://publicbakeovens.ca/wiki/wiki.php?n=GuestBakerProject.RiverdaleDec4> nor makes anything unsafe. If desired, the chimney can be dismantled and rebuilt in between uses (there are at least five days between the occasional bakings). There is no need to postpone the special bread-baking for the farmers' market opening day. This baking was intended to be in honour of the contribution of Elizabeth Harris, in getting the oven built.



Last November, Elizabeth called me to ask for my help, saying that Riverdale staff had taken the oven key away from her and that the park staff seemed to be making it as hard as possible for baking to succeed at the Riverdale oven. She said she felt frustrated and humiliated by the many barriers erected by staff.

As the first market day without Elizabeth's presence approaches, yesterday's encounter confirms that at Riverdale, citizens are at risk of being treated like pesky interlopers instead of full, valued partners in enlivening public space. It is evident that decisions by Riverdale staff are based on insufficient understanding of ovens, and in this way one of

Elizabeth's gifts to the farm continues to be blocked.

So this morning I put my name down to depute on Monday, about this and other blocks to neighbourhood food initiatives, citywide. I have put quite a few names on the cc list here: please send me an e-mail if you have comments or instances to add. I want to make a little list of examples of the culture of "no" in relation to good food (I have a lot already), so that senior Parks and Recreation staff can help turn that "no" around to "how can we make it work?" at the ground level.

Jutta Mason

5/6 from Sandy Straw to Jutta

Hi Jutta

Seems Jeff has given you very incomplete information on our Farm Bake oven

For the record:

Jeff attended a meeting with Councillor McConnell and others earlier this week

Bread oven status was discussed

I did not have final detail so advised all present I would check with those working on it as we all want it ready to go for Market and program start up.

So here are the facts on the status of the bread oven:

All work was completed late last fall early winter with exception of tuck pointing (my descriptor) chimney. Staff advise the oven will be ready to go as we had planned

Thanks

Fron Jutta to Sandy Straw

Hello Sandy,

that's good news, that the oven can be used after all. If Yo Utano is to bake for the market, her schedule will need to be like this (she wrote to me):

Historic Baking on Sunday May 15th, 1-3 pm (kitchen access and oven needed 10-4)

-roasting vegetables (potatoes, yams, and we can do kale chips too!), biscuits, and rolls.

Possibly firing the oven to preheat again on Monday the 16th, 1-5 pm.

Bread baking for the market on Tuesday the 17th, kitchen access and oven needed from 7 am to 6 pm.

The Sunday "historic baking" is optional, it's only because the oven needs to have a fire, preferably for two days before baking day. It hasn't been used since November and it needs to be warmed thoroughly. So Yo thought she might do a bit of old-time food for show-and-tell, to not waste that lovely fire. If it rains and there aren't many people around, Yo might skip that part.

Please let us know if this schedule works from the city's point of view.

Jutta

P.s. my deputation

today: <http://celos.ca/wiki/wiki.php?n=TheFoodStrategyDeputation.FrontPage>

From Mary Battaglia for Sandy Straw to Jutta

Jutta,

The oven repair has been completed and we have been advised to let it cure until Monday.

Riverdale Farm staff and volunteers in partnership with Friends of Riverdale Farm are working together to establish a series of program opportunities for the oven. The bake oven has been committed to others for Monday and Tuesday and is therefore not available.

Thanks for keeping in touch - its good to know we can come to you for advice.

Mary Battaglia for Sandy Straw

Mary Battaglia

General Supervisor, Parks

Toronto East York

Fron Jutta to Mary Battaglia for Sandy Straw

Thanks Mary, glad to hear the oven will return to being used, hopefully on a sustainable basis with fewer blocks. As to the oven being unavailable for the May 17 market when Yo had offered to help -- that will be a boon for us since we are so swamped with work right now (note the time of writing of this e-mail -- sheesh).

We'll just come and admire whoever is baking at Riverdale, and Yo will move on to the next guest baker gigs on her schedule, <http://publicbakeovens.ca/wiki/wiki.php?n=GuestBakerProject.FrontPage>, one at Thorncliffe Park, one at Jane and Finch, one in Scarborough. A cross-city baking odyssey, hurray for Trillium grants...

And certainly, any advice you or your colleagues might like about how to support public bake ovens, feel free to get in touch.

Jutta