Atlanta: A Future Farm Town

By Megan Canning

Urban Farming has recently become a trend across the United States and Atlanta is no exception. Over the past few years, multiple urban farms have popped up around the city. Typically, these farms bring local produce to residents of the area, and many strive to employ the community to support the farm. In addition, several farms set up weekly markets that allow local participants to pick up fresh produce. These farms provide fresh locally grown food to the community while also stimulating the economy by helping locals find work.

In June 2014, the city of Atlanta updated its urban agricultural zoning. This amended the definitions of urban gardens and market gardens in the original 1982 zoning ordinance, making them permitted uses of land across the city. An urban garden is defined as, “a lot, or any portion thereof, managed and maintained by a person or group of persons, for growing and harvesting, farming, community gardening, or any other use, which contributes to the production of agriculture, floriculture, or horticulture products for beautification, education, recreation, community use, consumption, off-site sale, or off-site donation.” An urban market is defined as, “a lot, or any portion thereof, managed and maintained by a person or group of persons, for growing and harvesting, farming, community gardening, or any other use, which contributes to the production of agriculture, floriculture, or horticulture products for community supported agriculture or on-site sales.”

This amendment will allow urban farmers to obtain business licenses and enter lease agreements and ultimately will allow the urban agricultural community to grow in Atlanta. Groups from around the city such as the Turner Environmental Law Clinic at Emory Law School, the Atlanta Local Food Initiative, Georgia Organics, the City of Atlanta Office of Planning, and the City of Atlanta Office of Sustainability all worked together to ensure the success of this amendment. In order to continue to expand Atlanta’s urban agricultural community, these organizations need to gain publicity and participants throughout the city.

Thanks to the individuals involved in these organizations and the hard work and determination of countless others, the Atlanta community will start to see a difference in the quality of the locally grown food as well as feel the economic stimulus. For more information on the Urban Farming initiative and some of these groups, please visit the following websites.

http://www.trulylivingwell.net/about-us/
http://atlantaharvest.com/getconnected/
http://georgiaorganics.org/

Megan Canning is a native of Smoke Rise, Georgia and is currently working toward a Juris Doctor. Megan attended Auburn University for undergrad and earned a Bachelors Degree in Psychology and a Political Science minor. She is a member of the Georgia State Law Review and also a graduate research assistant for the required first year legal writing, research, and appellate advocacy course at Georgia State University College of Law. Megan’s interest in the Urban Fellows program developed in a first year Property course taught by Professor Rowberry. As an avid runner, Megan has taken advantage of many rails-to-trails paths across the southeast. The legal implications of this initiative had not occurred to her prior to the course. However, after speaking with Professor Rowberry, she learned that participation in the Urban Fellows program will allow her the opportunity to examine, in depth, Rails-to-Trails and its impact around the Atlanta area. After law school, Megan aspires to work in the Atlanta legal community.