

Date: June 8, 1999

SUBJECT: CAMBRIDGE PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Board give permission for the use of a portion of Cambridge Park as a community garden, with all specifications to the satisfaction of the General Manager.**

- B. THAT the Board grant to Kiwassa Neighbourhood House a 5 year licence to operate the community gardens, with all terms consistent with the Community Gardens Policy.**

POLICY

See the Community Gardens Policy. (Appendix I)

BACKGROUND

In February 1999, the Vancouver East District Office was contacted with a proposal to use a portion of Cambridge Park as a community garden. The initial proposal came from a committee called the Garden Group, that works under the auspices of the Wall Street Healthy Community Project which is housed at Kiwassa Neighborhood House. Kiwassa's director Steve Boyce has given the Garden Group permission to run the garden as a Kiwassa project. The Garden Group did a neighborhood survey that showed significant support for a community garden.

The park is located in the 2100 block of Wall Street. It is bounded by Wall Street on the east, a street right-of-way on the north, railway tracks on the west and an apartment building on the south. It is primarily used as passive green space and by dog owners. Park amenities include park benches along the city sidewalk. There are no current plans for upgrades or future development for this park.

DISCUSSION

Park Board staff met with the Garden Group to determine the feasibility of a community garden. It was determined that the best location for a garden would be at the north end of the park. By locating the garden at the north end of the property, approximately 90% of the park would be left intact. The proposed size of the garden is approximately 500 square meters, half on the street right-of way, half on park property.

Pending Park Board approval, the Engineering Department has approved issuance of a garden permit for a portion of the right-of-way to be used as a community garden and has indicated that a water hook-up and meter will be installed, provided the Garden Group pays the water charges.

An information flyer (appendix II) was prepared and distributed to 200 residences in the surrounding area. There were 35 responses: 5 opposed; 30 in support.

Comments by those who oppose the community garden:

1. "The city has little enough green space! I do not support using any of it so a handful of people can grow vegetables."
2. As a 14-year resident of the affected community, I would like to voice **STRONG OPPOSITION** to Kiwassa House' s proposal for a community garden in this location -- at least if it' s a community garden in the usual sense with private garden plots. Parkland is property we hold in common. We have precious little of it in this little, forgotten corner of the city.
3. This letter is in response to a proposal that was set forth for a community garden to be constructed at Cambridge Park. My family and I have put much thought into it and have decided that we are against it. There are several points that I would like to bring to your attention. Since we have lived at this address for the past seven years, we know what kind of a neighborhood it is. Despite efforts by the city to clean up this area, it still has a long way to go. We still wake up in the morning to find used condoms and needles in our yard and in Cambridge Park. I question how safe will it be for vegetables to be planted at a location which is frequently strewn with used condoms and needles? Also there is a major sidewalk which runs along the park. This side walk is used by many different people. I would think a community garden should be located at a more private place with less pedestrian traffic. Lastly, we think this park is a wonderful asset to the neighborhood. A lot of residents use this park in the summer months especially. It is also used in the winter by children. Numerous people bring their dogs here too. What would happen to the garden in the winter months? There are five people in my family and there are two separate families that live in the basement suite of our house and we are all against the garden. Total number of people : 8. Thank You
4. We do not support the community garden for the following reasons:
 - Homeless people are scrounging in our garbage cans, a garden like this is only inviting them to raid it during the late hours.
 - Vandals are destroying everything that they can get their hands on. This garden will only be another target for them
 - On the above two issues I do not believe that the applicants of this community garden have given much thought to the fact that food or vegetables from this garden may end up being "contaminated" to some degree by vandals.
 - What will happen to the area when Kiwassa or some of it' s members move away? Who will then be responsible for maintenance and up keep. A perfect example is the Comm. garden at McSpadden park on Victoria Drive and 5th Ave. Similar question is addressed when the garden is vandalized two or three times - will the applicants lose interest?
 - There is already limited public park space in the East End. Why reduce another

park?

- Unless the city of Vancouver is prepared to maintain, and police this project then I can not support it.
5. I live in the neighborhood where the new community garden is being proposed. I am the first to say that the idea of having such a garden is a great one, but I will also be the first to reject the proposed area as an ideal one for such a venture. The money available should first be used to clean up the area, support alcohol and drug dependency treatment and alleviate poverty. Without these basic qualities, gardens like this will not thrive. It is the "community that makes up the garden, not the garden that makes up the community." I would be pleased to provide additional information as to why this is not suitable location and can be reached at this email address.

Comments by those who support the community garden:

1. I think it is a great idea and will bring many good things to the neighborhood - community spirit, natural beauty (and good fruits, veggies and flowers) Please say YES!
2. This will be a fabulous addition to the neighborhood.
3. We need positive things to bring neighbors together in this area
4. I strongly support the proposal for a community garden on wall Street because it will enliven and enrich this often destitute and dangerous neighborhood. I believe that a "street presence" or "eyes-on-the-street" will perhaps stimulate the social repair that this area desperately needs.
5. I am writing to register my support of the Community Garden plan on Wall Street. I am a resident of 2001 Wall Street, next door to Cambridge Park, and I will very likely participate in the Garden if it is established. My only concern is that the community also embrace the idea of a Community Garden and that adequate facilities, namely water, are provided for so that the garden can be successful, as I believe there have been concerns that the gardens could be an eyesore. Other Community Gardens however have proven themselves to contribute greatly to their neighborhoods, and as an apartment dweller, I would greatly love to have some garden space in a city where I cannot afford to buy a home with a garden.
6. They should leave enough room for dogs to run in the park.
7. Help with my brown thumb
8. Water must be provided by city as well as little fence demarcating the area.
9. More community gardens in the future? Lots of green parks along Wall St.
10. Excellent idea!
11. I support the community garden
12. I think it would be a great improvement in the area
13. I think a community garden will be a positive addition to the neighborhood. I would like to participate and look forward to growing veggies!
14. Garden should be fenced.
15. I'm interested in having a plot to grow flowers and such.
16. I would like to participate and have my own area to garden.

17. A.S.A.P. I want to participate to grow veggies
18. I would love to participate.

CONCLUSION

This proposal meets the criteria of the Community Garden Policy. If approved, Cambridge Community Garden will provide valuable recreational activities and stimulate community involvement.

Prepared by:
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RC/ct