

Date: April 19, 2012



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Guelph Park Community Garden Proposal

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Board approve the use of an area within Guelph Park for the purposes of a community garden, with all specifications to the satisfaction of the General Manager.*
- B. THAT the Board grant a five-year license to the Urban Diggers Society to operate the community garden, with all terms consistent with the Community Garden Policy*

POLICY

The Board approved the revised Community Garden Policy (Appendix B) on September 19, 2005. The Community Garden Policy outlines the terms and conditions under which the Board will consider community gardens to be operated on park lands.

BACKGROUND

The Board has received a proposal from the Urban Diggers Society to build a community garden in Guelph Park, which is located three blocks east of the new Mount Pleasant Community Centre.

The goals of the Urban Diggers Society are to:

- a) Provide opportunities for local residents to grow affordable organic produce, flowers and herbs;
- b) Provide an informal, safe environment and occasion for horticultural, social, recreational, educational and community interaction between gardeners and between gardeners and the community and to build community;
- c) Add to the aesthetics of the surrounding community.

Alignment to Park Board Strategic Plan

The Park Board's renewed strategic plan is focused on four key directions; Parks and Recreational for All, Leader in Greening, Engaging People and Excellence in Resource Management. Community gardens, such as the one proposed for this park, meet many objectives related to these goals. By engaging the community in building healthy ecosystems and diversifying park experiences for visitors, community gardens can be a valuable asset to the neighbourhood.

DISCUSSION

The proposed site for the community garden is in the centre of the park just west of the tennis courts (see Appendix A). The size of the proposed garden is 116 feet by 86 feet. The location selected was identified as an area that is not typically used for any specific recreational use, and therefore is not expected to negatively impact any other park users.

The Urban Diggers Society will be responsible for the cost of the garden pathways, fencing and a small tool storage shed. The cost for the water service for the community garden will be covered by the Park Board's existing capital budget.

Public Consultation

In March 2012, staff consulted local residents on this proposal through the distribution of flyers to the neighbourhood around the park, as required by the policy. The Park Board received a total of 75 responses from local residents. 100% of the responses were in favour of the proposed garden.

SUMMARY

The proposed plan meets the criteria of the Community Garden Policy. The garden will be a welcomed addition to the neighbourhood and enhance the value of the park for local residents. Staff recommend the Board approve this proposal for a Community Garden at Guelph Park.

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Guelph Park – Community Garden Proposal



Appendix B

COMMUNITY GARDENS POLICY

REVISED SEPTEMBER 19, 2005

Definition

The Board recognizes [community gardening](#) as a valuable recreation activity that can contribute to community development, environmental awareness, positive social interaction and community education. The Board will collaborate with interested groups in assisting the development of community gardens.

For the purposes of this policy, a community garden is defined as a community development program operated by a non-profit society. The program has one or more of the following features:

- A piece of land is utilized by the society to produce food and flowers for the personal use of society members.
- A community development program is in place which encourages the involvement of schools, youth groups and citizens who do not have an assigned plot in gardening activities.
- An organic community garden is maintained, that will increase the ecological biodiversity of Vancouver and provide increased understanding of local food production

Clause One

The Board will support the development of community gardens in Vancouver through the following means:

- Providing access to information on the development and operation of community gardens.
- Assisting interested groups in searching for suitable land for the development of community gardens. This inventory must include City-owned land, land controlled by other government agencies, and privately owned land.
- Assisting in the development of user agreements with the owners of sites chosen.
- Assisting with the development of a community led environmental education program.

Clause Two

If it is determined that park land is the most suitable site for community gardens, the following conditions will apply: • The garden is developed at no cost to the Board, except that prior to the first season, the Board will, at its cost, prepare the site for planting by removing grass, ploughing the soil and adding compost.

- A community consultation process indicates neighbourhood support for the garden.
- A garden site plan must be drawn up and approved by the General Manager. The plan must include the layout of the plots and indicate any proposed structures or fences.
- A non-profit society agrees to develop and operate the gardens according to a users agreement which will specify the term of use, management responsibilities, user fees and access procedures including the following specific terms:
 - a. "The standard term of the user agreement will be five years. The Board may consider the granting of multiple terms in exceptional circumstances. The issuance of such longer terms is warranted in circumstances where the Society can demonstrate that the standard five year term would significantly restrict the Society's ability to:
 1. comply with Park Board policies and direction

2. conduct community outreach programming beyond the Societies members
 3. implement a long term plan
 4. execute significant approved site improvements
 5. such other circumstances that the Board deems relevant
 6. For terms longer than five years, a review and formal reporting to the Board will be required at each 5 year period and the agreement will incorporate a strengthened termination clause to allow both the Society and the Park Board the option to terminate the agreement with adequate notice."
- b. Allotments of space must be made from a waiting list on a first come first served basis.
 - c. While community gardens are a neighbourhood initiative, membership in the Society, and the opportunity to be allotted a plot, must be open to any resident of Vancouver.
 - d. Organic gardening methods and integrated pest management principles are to be followed.
 - e. Allotment fees charged by the society must be reported to the General Manager.
 - f. The Society must adhere to maintenance standards set by the Board.
 - g. No barriers to general public access to the site can be erected.
 - h. Garden practices shall comply with all Park Board and City Policies and Bylaws.

Although located on Parks with the prior approval of the Park Board, Community Gardens are operated by volunteers from the community.