

Subject: Community Gardens on City-owned Land

Policy From: Parks, Recreation & Culture Services

Issue Date: May 26, 2015

Revision Date: ----

Review Date: May 26, 2017

Policy

The City of St. Catharines supports and encourages the development of community gardens on City-owned parkland and other municipal property, where appropriate, by community groups and organizations, referred to hereafter as Community Garden Coordinators.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a protocol for entering into lease agreements with Community Garden Coordinators on City-owned parkland and other municipal property (where appropriate) and to outline the roles and responsibilities of City staff and the Community Garden Coordinators.

For the purpose of this policy the term 'community garden' is to be defined by the Community Garden Coordinators but in general shall refer to an area of land managed and maintained by a group of individuals for the purpose of cultivation of plants for personal consumption. Community gardens on City-owned land are not available to grow commercial produce or plants; however donation of produce is permitted and encouraged.

The Role of the City

General Administration

1. Assign a member of staff to act as the Community Garden Liaison.
2. Provide information on the process to develop a a community garden on City land and the roles of the City and Community Garden Coordinators.
3. Maintain a list of community gardens and their contact information on the City's website.
4. The Community Garden Liaison will be responsible for coordinating between the Community Garden Coordinators and City departments, other governmental

agencies (as required for approval of garden location), and other community gardens.

5. Develop, and update as needed, a resource for *Selecting a Community Garden Site*.
6. Provide letters of support to Community Garden Coordinators for grant applications, and similar, once the City has authorized the development of a lease agreement.

Establishing a Community Garden

1. Work with the Community Garden Coordinators to identify and evaluate potential community garden sites, not including soil tests or utility locates.
2. Circulate the information about the proposed community garden and its location to City departments and any external agencies for review and comment as required.
3. Provide written notification to neighbouring property owners and ward councilors.
4. Coordinate the installation of a water service if required and requested by the Community Garden Coordinator; the Community Garden Coordinators will be responsible for the full cost of installation.
5. Prepare the lease agreement and circulate it for execution.
6. Review and file the approved liability insurance.

Garden Construction

1. Stake out the extent of the garden area included in the lease agreement.

Community Garden Operation

1. Consistent with regular turf maintenance schedules, mow and trim the grass around the perimeter of the community garden where standard machinery can access the grass.
2. Arrange for regular waste collection from designated containers. The City will arrange one extra waste collection during the spring and fall. The date of this collection is to be coordinated with the Community Garden Coordinators.
3. Supply wood chips when requested and when resources are available to do so to a maximum of three times per year.
4. Seasonally turn on and shut off (mid-October) water supply and coordinate these dates with the Community Garden Coordinators.

The Role of the Community Garden Coordinators

Community gardens will be organized, planned, administered, financed and managed by Community Garden Coordinators. Community Garden Coordinators must be legal entities, such as not-for-profit corporations, that are capable of entering into a lease agreement with the City and obtaining the required insurances.

Establishing a Community Garden

1. Community organizations interested in starting a community garden will contact the City in writing. Applications for Community Gardens can be submitted at any time throughout the year but must be received by September 30th to begin the

site selection process for the growing season of the following year, pending all necessary approvals.

2. Work with the City to identify and evaluate potential community garden sites. *Selecting a Community Garden Site* guide provides a reference for this.
3. Community meetings are encouraged; Community Garden Coordinators would be responsible for organizing such meetings.
4. Obtain and maintain acceptable insurance coverage and provide the City with an acceptable certificate of insurance. Generally this will include comprehensive insurance for property damage, personal injury and public liability in the amount of \$5,000,000; however this requirement may change at the discretion of the City.
5. Sign and return the lease agreement to the contact on the lease agreement's covering letter.

Garden Construction

1. Be responsible for all aspects of garden construction except staking out the extent of the garden area included in the lease agreement and installation of any water services; Community Garden Coordinators will be responsible for the full cost of water service installation.
2. Construct the community garden in accordance with the lease agreement and applicable by-laws, legislation, policies and regulations.
3. Obtain utility locates before any digging for soil preparation, fencing, building or any other garden activity. Utility locates expire; therefore they will need to be renewed with each new digging activity. Current locate information must be on-site at the time of digging or tilling.

Community Garden Operation

1. Responsible for operating the community garden and developing any desired garden policies such as an allocation policy, waitlist policy, fee structure and garden rules and regulations. Community gardens must be available to the community-at-large or to the community served by the sponsoring organization. Gardeners must be selected using a fair, equitable, open and transparent process with intention for all interested gardeners to be given equal chance to have access to a plot.
2. Administer and manage the community garden, including volunteer recruitment and management (including any necessary health and safety training), plot requests and assignments, collection of any plot fees, etc.
3. Coordinate any municipal services with the City staff liaison (e.g. bi-annual waste collection, bi-annual turn-on and shut-off of water, etc.).
4. Payment of any utilities in accordance with the lease agreement (e.g. water service).
5. Complete and submit to the City annually the *Community Garden Summary* for evaluation of the community gardens program; this summary will request information such as the number of plots available and the number of gardeners on the waiting list.

Decommissioning a Garden Operation

1. Inform the Community Garden Liaison of decision to terminate the lease.
2. Return the land to its original condition, including all associated costs.

Policy Review

A review of this policy shall be initiated two years from the date of issue and every five years thereafter.