



Legislation Text

File #: 19-117, **Version:** 1

TITLE:

Town of Carrboro Community Gardens Discussion

PURPOSE: The purpose of the item is to review the Carrboro Community Garden structure and development through the years. Community Gardeners from Dr. MLK Jr. garden and Baldwin Park will also provide a brief update of their accomplishments and goals.

DEPARTMENT: Recreation and Parks

CONTACT INFORMATION: Anita Jones-McNair, Recreation and Parks Director - 919-918-7381 or Wendell Rodgers, Facilities Administrator - 919-918-7371.

INFORMATION: In recent month's Board of Aldermen members have asked about how park construction at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is affecting garden operations, the overall community garden structure, make up of garden participants, town obligations and current/future direction.

Currently, the Town of Carrboro is home to two community gardens in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park and one at Baldwin Park. Three organizations, The Carrboro Community Garden Coalition (CCGC), The Family Garden (formally managed by Orange County Partnership for Your Children) and Baldwin Park Community Garden supervise and recruit volunteers and manage garden operations.

The Family Garden is comprised of individual plots and a formal organization. CCGC has a loose communal organization where work and harvest are shared among the participants. Both organizations collaborate to maintain the joint site.

Both garden sites are active and self-sufficient with limited town involvement. For the purpose of completing this update, staff requested current information from each garden group.

Dr. MLK Jr Park Community Garden has been sustained through various grants such as The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Both garden groups at Dr. MLK Jr. Park and Baldwin Community Garden received funds from the Nourishing NC Garden Grant (funds provided by Nourishing North Carolina Program, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of NC and the NC Recreation and Parks Association) on April 12, 2012 to complete the garden watering systems.

See Attachment A for garden layout at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park.

See Attachment B for garden layout at Baldwin Park.

Staff interaction with the gardeners recently increased at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. site because of the recent park construction starting. The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park garden site is not as active due to the park construction and The Family Garden has recently stopped scheduling gardening days. Staff and the construction company are trying to work with the gardeners so that gardening activities occur during

construction as approved by the Board of Aldermen. However due to the construction timeline and limited space, it's becoming harder to access the site safely.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr Park gardeners are also asking for consideration of various items:

Garden fence replacement - Replacement was not approved during the construction design phase for the park. Adding new fence for the expansion of the garden that ties into the existing garden fencing was approved.

Greenhouse installation - The Family Garden purchased a greenhouse and began installation. In the past garden representative(s) requested approval for any changes to the site prior to modifications. Staff recently asked the gardeners to cease installation due to the greenhouse not being included in the design or construction of the park, the need to confirm it meets the town's zoning and inspections criteria and awaiting park construction completion to see if it corresponds with the aesthetic make-up of the park.

Shading concerns - Gardeners would like additional tree removal along the north side entrance to the park and near the new garden expansion due to shading. Clearing of brush and some thinning of trees is included in the construction only.

Watering concerns - During construction cisterns are on site and if necessary PW can bring in water for the gardeners use. Cisterns and a rain catchment system are included in the park design. Also an alternative option includes OWASA water being used in which the Town incurs the cost. An onsite well is scheduled to be filled in during construction which would make inoperable.

Security cameras - An email was sent to the Board of Aldermen about an increased problem with theft in the community garden. A suggestion was made to install a security camera.

Gardening during construction - Both groups would like to continue gardening during construction. However, safety of gardeners and families along with liability concerns have heightened. Park closure signs are posted at park entrances and anyone that comes on the property during construction hours are informed by the construction company staff that the park is closed.

Management needs - recently the Family Garden requested the town take over management of their portion of the garden. The Family Garden has suggested funds from their garden group could pay for a garden manager possibly for the Family Garden as well as CCGC. CCGC has not requested a garden manager.

Note that any change from the current construction schedule and design is subject to modifications in the design, additional design cost, change orders and additional construction and supply costs.

See Attachment C for a more detailed account of garden history.

See Attachment D for additional current information about the gardens.

FISCAL & STAFF IMPACT: None at this time

RECOMMENDATION: Accept staff report and direct staff on any changes.