

Staff Report

Report To: Community Services Committee
Report From: Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks and Open Space
Meeting Date: November 16, 2022
Report Code: CS-22-159
Subject: Ed Taylor Park Community Garden Request

Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-22-159 respecting a request by the Ed Taylor Park Community Garden Collective to establish a community garden at Ed Taylor Park, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council direct staff to process the application in accordance with the new Community Gardens Policy once approved by Council.

Highlights:

- Community gardens are consistent with the policy direction of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and are supported by the City's Official Plan.
- The City approved its first Community Gardens Policy in 2011. A new Community Garden Policy is pending approval.
- The City has two existing agreements for community gardens in the City.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

[Strategic Plan](#) Priority: Service Excellence - KR1 - Further develop a culture of learning, development, well-being and embrace new approaches to service provision

Previous Report/Authority:

[Minutes of July 7, 2021 Community Services Committee](#)

[Minutes of July 19, 2021, City Council](#)

[Minutes of the March 17, 2021 Community Services Committee](#)

[Minutes of June 15, 2022 Community Services Committee](#)

Background:

History of Community Gardens in Owen Sound

In 2011, the City developed a [Community Gardens Policy](#) to support opportunities for volunteer organizations to engage in urban agriculture on passively-used green space in City Parks. As a component of the Community Gardens policy development, a public meeting to gather community input was held on June 2, 2011. The meeting was promoted under the City's banner in the Sun Times newspaper, and a direct email was sent to parties who had expressed interest in the project.

Since 2011, community gardens have been established at St. Georges Park and the east Inner Harbour wall for box gardening, using the Community Gardens policy as the guiding document for land use agreements and the operation of the community gardens. There are also community gardens on privately owned properties, such as United Way, that operate outside any permission or approval from the City.

In 2021, a request by a group to establish a community garden in Stobbe Park was not successful and highlighted the need to update the existing Community Gardens policy. City Council directed staff:

R-210719-020

"THAT in consideration of the Community Services Committee minutes dated July 7, 2021 respecting Item 8.a.1 being the establishment of a community garden at Stobbe Park, City Council:

- 1. Does not approve the recommendation in Item 8.a.1.;*
- 2. Directs staff to undertake a full review of the Community Gardens Policy, save and except Stobbe Park which would be removed as a permitted community garden location; and***

3. Directs staff to include public input in the Community Gardens Policy review."

Planning and Heritage staff included a community gardens policy update in their 2022 work plan. A new Community Gardens Policy, presented earlier at this meeting under a separate report is currently being developed for consideration by Community Services Committee and Council. Public input is to be part of the update to the policy development.

Ed Taylor Park Community Garden Request

A request to establish a community garden at Ed Taylor Park was presented at Community Services Committee on [June 15, 2022](#).

The timing of this request occurred ahead of a new Community Gardens Policy staff had been directed to prepare, and the request was deferred:

CS-220615-002

*"THAT in consideration of the presentation provided June 15, 2022, respecting a Community Garden at Ed Taylor Park, the Community Services Committee recommends that City Council directs staff to bring **forward a staff report to the Community Services Committee in the Fall 2022 respecting a status update on a Community Garden at Ed Taylor Park**"*

Carried

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the request by the Ed Taylor Park Community Garden Collective in the context of the new Community Gardens Policy.

Analysis:

The new Community Gardens Policy recommends several changes from the original Community Gardens policy, including:

1. Removing Stobbe Park as a location that is supported by the City for the establishment of a Community Garden (as directed by resolution R210719-020);
2. Establishes a clear path for funding requests through a Landscape Improvement Grant within the Community Improvement Program supported by annual funding allocation in the City's operating budget; and,

3. Establishes a 4-step process for considering Community Garden Requests:
 - a. Review initial request to verify alignment with the Community Gardens Policy;
 - b. Community Garden Collective Submits a draft site plan and concept drawing;
 - c. Staff perform an assessment of existing conditions of the desired location and document;
 - d. Pending the outcomes of a,b and c, a licence agreement is established for the approved location, site plan and concept drawing via a report to Community Services Committee.

Ed Taylor Park is identified as a Park where a community garden would be permitted under the new draft policy subject to submitting a site plan for approval and consideration and signing a licensing agreement with the City.

Pending approval of the new policy, staff would receive and adjudicate the request from the Ed Taylor Park Community Garden Collective for funding under the City CIP [Landscape & Property Improvement Grant](#) program.

The CIP program requires applications to be submitted annually in 2 intake windows:

Application Deadline	Consideration by Community Services Committee	Consideration by City Council
October 31	First meeting in February	First meeting in March
March 31	First meeting in July	First meeting in August

Pending approval of the new policy, the City will be positioned to receive plans for a Community Garden at Ed Taylor Park over the winter months for consideration and approval (by staff or committee) and consideration.

Financial Implications:

An application for financial support and a license agreement is to be submitted by the Ed Taylor Park Community Garden Collective to the City's [Landscape & Property Improvement Grant](#) program.

Communication Strategy:

This report

Direct Correspondence with the Ed Taylor Park Community Garden Collective

Consultation:

Planning and Heritage Division

Attachments:

None

Recommended by:

Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks and Open Space

Pam Coulter, Director of Community Services

Submission approved by:

Tim Simmonds, City Manager

For more information on this report, please contact Adam Parsons, Manager of Parks and Open Space at aparsons@owensound.ca or 519-376-1440 x 1221.