



Staff Report

Community Services

Report To: Committee of the Whole
Meeting Date: October 23, 2017
Report Number: CSPW.17.110
Subject: Amendment to the Municipal Land Use Agreement/Proposed Changes with Free Spirit Gardens
Prepared by: Aaron McMullen, Facility Manager/Building Maintenance Coordinator

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report CSPW.17.110 entitled "Amendment to the Municipal Land Use Agreement/Proposed Changes with Free Spirit Gardens";

AND THAT Council approve the proposed changes to the Municipal Land Use Agreement for the use of the eastern greenspace of the Beaver Valley Community Centre for public gardens as outlined in this report.

B. Overview

This report outlines a request received from Free Spirit Gardens for an increase in size of the Community Garden from 75' x 75' to 75' x 100' and eliminate the installation of a 6' chain link fence and install a natural barrier.

C. Background

At the September 26, 2016 Council meeting, Council heard from the delegation Free Spirit Gardens, requesting usage of a Town owned plot of land for the purpose of erecting a Community Garden. Council's resolution was as follows:

"THAT Council acknowledge receipt of the correspondence from Matt Code, Free Spirit Tours, requesting donation of a plot of land for the creation of a community garden;

AND THAT Council refer this correspondence to Community Services to meet with Matt Code on the availability of land for a community garden and to report back to Council," Carried.

The correspondence received by Council asked for a donation of a plot of land for the creation of a Community Garden, however, Staff are recommending the donated use of a plot of land.

With the direction from Council, Staff investigated many Town owned lands including the Tomahawk grounds, 177 Bruce Street and the Beaver Valley Community Centre (BVCC). Of these grounds, Staff felt that the BVCC greenspace would be the best fit as it offers a desirable plot of land, a central location with good walkability from residential areas as well as accessibility and parking.

Staff met with Free Spirit Gardens on April 5, 2017 to discuss the usage of the BVCC property and their desire to move forward with the project. As part of the discussion, Staff received requests that identified the need for fencing, a shed, the supply of water to fill a storage tank, storage of composting and wood chips and signage. Staff requested that Free Spirit Gardens provide the Town with a proposal detailing all aspects and requests for their project.

The original proposal for Community Garden space consisted of a garden area of 75' x 75' and the installation of a 6' chain link fence surrounding the perimeter. All costs incurred for the installation and preventative maintenance will be the responsibility of Free Spirit Gardens.

On October 13, 2017, Staff received a request from Free Spirit Gardens to increase the size of the Community Garden and change the style of the protective barrier surrounding the Community Gardens. The proposed change in size would be an additional 2500 sqft with a total increased foot print of 75' x 100'. The increase in size is to accommodate a garden space for volunteers to grow food for the food bank and for school workshops to have a working space.

D. Analysis

Staff feel this venture is a great opportunity for the community at little risk or cost to the Town.

Historical usage of the requested greenspace has involved the Beaver Valley Agricultural Society's annual Fall Fair. In most recent years, the usage of the greenspace for this event has been inconsistent. Staff reached out to the Beaver Valley Agricultural Society's Vice President to determine if a Community Garden would interfere with the Fall Fair in any way. It was determined that use of the plot of land for the gardens will not interfere with the Beaver Valley Fall Fair as the main focus of the event would be on the Moreau Park Property.

In 2011, the Beaver Valley Curling Club and Town Staff identified the greenspace at the east end of the BVCC as a potential location for a future Curling Club Facility. Staff suggest that locating the garden on the property does not dramatically affect the potential as further discussion with the group also identified a potential of alternate locations of the Curling Club Facility on the south side of the building if it was to proceed.

Town Staff have discussed the request from Free Spirit Gardens with the Town's Backflow Prevention and Water Meter Coordinator to ensure all regulations and requirements will be met for the supply of water. The installation of a water meter, dual check valve and the assurance that an air gap would be required at the end of the supply hose into the water supply tank are the recommended requirements. Staff recommend that Free Spirit Gardens be responsible for the water charges related to the water usage for the Community Garden.

The increased foot print size will not interfere with any of the BVCC's annual rentals or events.

E. The Blue Mountains Strategic Plan

Goal #2: Engage Our Communities & Partners

Goal #3: Support Healthy Lifestyles

Goal #4: Promote a Culture of Organizational & Operational Excellence

F. Environmental Impacts

Through the Sustainable Path, one of the goals within the Healthy, Active Community and Accessible Health Care, is to ensure that all residents have access to healthy, nutritious foods. A couple of key strategies and actions propose the development of a plan to enhance community food programs and gain support from the residents while also stating the development and implementation of the “community garden” concept.

G. Financial Impact

Through Staff report CSPW.17.039, Staff recommended “that no fees be charged for the use of the land. However, all expenses related to the Community Garden management and operation be the responsibility of the Community Garden organizers including the water fees for usage as determined within the fees and charges bylaw. All costs incurred for the installation of fencing, shed, water tank, gardens materials will be the responsibility of Free Spirit Gardens.”

H. In consultation with

Director of Community Services

I. Attached

1. Revised Site Plan of Free Spirit Gardens

Respectfully submitted,

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