



POLICY

Recreation, Culture & Facilities

Policy #:

Issue Date:

Revision Date:

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Community Garden Program Policy

The City of Niagara Falls supports the creation of community garden plots on municipal property when feasible. It has been established through the City's Recreation and Culture Ten Year Plan that development of new community garden plots is encouraged.

The City of Niagara Falls Community Garden Program Policy is designed to guide and support community groups to successfully develop community gardens on City-owned property.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process, obligations and protocols for community groups and the City to develop and manage a community garden projects on municipal owned and leased lands.

Scope

This policy is applied to all City-owned land and to all community gardens located on City-owned land. It provides organizations, individuals, and neighbourhood groups the opportunity to operate a community garden on city-owned land.

Community Garden Project Applications

It is the responsibility for the City to make available a community garden project application. The application form will be made available online for community groups to access as long as there is adequate municipal property available to install a community garden. Paper applications will be made available upon request.

1. Applications must include background on the applying organization, a description of the project, budget listing, potential partners, site plan, construction plan, and an on-going management plan.

2. Applications will be accepted all year long only if there is available and suitable municipal property to host a new community garden.
3. Applications will be reviewed and recommended by the Park in the City Committee during the March committee meeting annually for project implementation for the same calendar year.
4. City Staff will give the application a final review once approved by the Park in the City Committee. The City will give the final approval on all projects.

Community Garden Locations

The City will select appropriate municipal property locations where establishing a community garden would be appropriate. There are many factors to take into consideration when determining such a location, including access to parking, water extraction, security, sight lines, soil conditions, existing users or occupants, proximity to dense residential dwellings and future growth plans.

1. The City will post available site locations on the City's website.
2. Existing site locations will be reviewed annually to ensure locations are currently suitable and/or consideration to include additional municipal properties.
3. Other municipal property that are not listed as a suitable site location can be reviewed by the City if requested through the application process.

Agreement & Term

All approved community group applicants must enter into a lease agreement with the City to commence their community garden project. The City will draft an agreement to be signed by both parties prior to any work being completed for the project.

1. Each approved community garden application will be granted for a five year lease agreement term.
2. Each community garden will be inspected and reviewed by City Staff during the 4th year of operation to ensure the garden is being operating effectively.
3. Community gardens can be extended for an additional 5 years, once passed inspection by City Staff.
4. An authorized community group representative will need to sign an agreement with the City.

The Role of the City

1. Provide a listing of available municipal land that is available to develop a community garden.
2. The City Staff Liaison for the Park in the City Committee will act as the primary Community Garden Liaison who will coordinate activities between the City and the participating community groups.
3. Review, approve and comment on Community Garden applications that have been accepted by the Park in the City Committee. The City has the right to deny an application, regardless of the approval from the Park in the City Committee for any reason. Note: the growing of commercial produce, cannabis or illegal substances is not permitted. The raising or housing of animals is also prohibited.
4. Review, approve and comment on any permits that are needed to be completed for the means of establishing a new community garden project.
5. Circulate the application information about the proposed community garden and its location to City departments and any external agencies for review and comment as required.
6. Prepare the lease agreement document to be signed by both the City and the Applicant.
7. Provide in-kind support to community groups establishing a community garden when able and within reasonable means.
8. Provide a letter of support to community groups for external grant applications to support start-up community garden projects.
9. Conduct periodic reviews of existing community garden projects and their operating practices.
10. Approve any lease agreement extensions.
11. Add the organization to the City's insurance policy for the duration of the garden operation.

The Role of the Community Group (Applicant)

1. Completing and Community Garden Program application.
2. Community garden project development, construction and management.

3. All financial obligations associated with the community garden project.
4. Recruitment and management of volunteers associated with the community garden.
5. Create any necessary policies, procedures, or rules that will be associated with the community garden.
6. Develop a maintenance plan and annual budget.
7. Follow all local health regulations accordingly.
8. Keep records of annual costing, maintenance schedules and other documentation associated with the garden for future inspection by City Staff.

Permits

Community groups must follow standard relevant building codes and acquire any necessary permits to erect and install structures on site.

Garden Construction

1. The community group is solely responsible for any costing involved with the development and construction of the new community garden.
2. Construction of the garden must follow in accordance with the lease agreement, submitted site plan 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.

Community Garden Operation

The community group responsible for managing the new garden will be tasked with various obligations to ensure the garden is well kept and maintained to a reasonable standard.

1. Responsible for recruiting and managing volunteers to plant and maintain the community garden beds and associated grounds/amenities (eg; watering equipment, storage units, grass cutting, etc.)
2. Arrange for regular waste collection from designated containers.
3. 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.
4. Administration daily duties and any required health and safety training.
5. Keep records of garden maintenance, costing, volunteer activities and other associated activities with the garden that will be reviewed during the renewal inspection.

Decommissioning a Garden Operation

Written notice must be sent (paper or email) to either party within 60 days of terminating the agreement in place. All costing associated with termination and clean-up of the existing municipal lands associated with the community is the sole responsibility of the managing community group.

Submitted By: Kathy Moldenhauer, General Manager of Recreation, Culture & Facilities

Recommended By:

Approved By Council On:

Report #: