



Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
Service Center
March 28, 2012
7:00 p.m.
Meeting Minutes

Members present: David Cecutti-Chair, Ned McCoy-Vice Chair, Chris Clinton, and Steve Stidhem

Members absent: Jamie Bremer, Mel Ehrlich and Ingrid Grass

Staff members present: Matt Earman and Fred Hahn

Guests present: None

Public participants present: None

Recording Secretary: Marja Keplar

I. Call to Order

Mr. Cecutti called the meeting to order at 7:16 p.m.

II. Approval of February Meeting Minutes

Mr. Cecutti asked if anyone had changes for the February meeting minutes. There was one minor change from Mr. McCoy *A motion was made by Mr. Stidhem and seconded by Mr. Clinton to accept the minutes with the change from the February meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 4-0.*

III. Public Comment Items Not on the Agenda

None

IV. Community Gardens

Mr. Cecutti explained that Ms. Bremer was planning on providing a presentation, but based on her work schedule she was not able to attend tonight and Mr. Stidhem will be providing the presentation regarding community gardens.

Mr. Stidhem said the presentation includes the information provided by Ms. Bremer. Mr. Stidhem will provide an overview of community gardens, the rewards, raised beds, what's needed for a community gardens. He will also share some samples and what the next steps would be.

Mr. Stidhem said there was a subcommittee of PRAC created. He talked to some residents from his neighborhood, which seemed very interest. Also, Ms. Bremer did a lot of research regarding community gardens. The potential garden season is from April 15th through November 15th, which is quickly approaching. They are becoming very popular and the City of Dublin has a lot of unused land near neighborhoods that could be used for this purpose. There are some different options on how to proceed. The City could provide information to the homeowner's association (HOA) and let them run their own, the City could provide the area and the structure, and another option beneficial to both ideas would be to host classes to help people understand gardening in general.

Mr. Stidhem provided some of the rewards of community gardens. Since the food is mostly organic, then it allows for high quality of fruits and vegetables, which provides great nutrition. It provides exercise by the physical activity and it's good for your mental health. Community gardens also tend to foster a sense of community identity, ownership and stewardship among the gardeners. It also provides great learning and it provides a place for youth to learn and explore

gardening. Also, some research indicates it that property values around community gardens increase fast than properties that are not around community gardens.

Mr. Stidhem said Ms. Bremer provided some information on why to use raised beds. They do look nicer, it helps improve drainage and helps eliminate the problem of soil compaction and hard-pan.

Mr. Stidhem said in order for this to happen there needs to be communication and coordination with the interested residents. There needs to be a plan put into place and communication needs to take place with the civic/homeowner's associations. Some items needed would be rain barrels, water source and compost bins. A shelter would be nice, but not needed.

Mr. McCoy asked who would build the raised beds.

Mr. Stidhem said he was not sure. This would be a part of the planning the commission would need to discuss. He said there would probably also need to be mulch or something placed around the beds to walk on other than mud.

Mr. Hahn commented that typically when communities have a community garden, most have one garden and the community comes to the garden, not gardens in different neighborhoods. He asked what would be the downside of having a centralized garden instead of neighborhood sites. Most parks have the ability to tap water, but the upfront cost to tap into City water is in the approximate range of \$14,000 per tap.

Mr. McCoy asked if it would be cheaper if there were retention ponds in the area.

Mr. Hahn replied that there are advantages and disadvantages to different ideas. If you use retention ponds, then you it would involve the mechanicals and it would be subject to the availability of accessible water. Mr. Hahn said if there were gardens in one location, then cost would be less of an issue, but if there are multiple locations, then the cost could magnify.

Mr. Stidhem said there are advantages of multiple small gardens versus one large garden. There would be cost savings to have one versus multiple small ones, but then you may not necessarily have the sense of "community" that you would if there were a few in neighborhoods. Maybe start with a small test location in a neighborhood that is interested and see how it works.

Mr. Hahn said staff would definitely want some sense of approval and buy in from the HOA before planning it in a neighborhood.

Mr. Cecutti said there would be a convenience factor if they were in neighborhoods instead of one large garden.

Mr. Stidhem said there are some examples of community gardens such as Washington Township and St. John Lutheran Church of Dublin. Both of these have fees associated and rules. They both have seemed to work well and there is a growing need.

Mr. Hahn said he has talked to Janell Thomas with Washington Township and she said their community garden works well. She said the peer pressure seems to work well for good policing. Everyone seems to keep it neat and tidy. There have been a few incidents, but very minor. There doesn't seem to be an issue with theft. One of their issues has been with lack of water. They had to place a large water tank that they fill up offsite for watering.

Mr. Stidhem said he recommends that the City assign a staff member to oversee this project and create some structure. Possibly use the horticulture department or volunteer services. Staff could work with the homeowners/civic associations and help identify target areas and solicit volunteers to roll out a test garden. There are so many individuals interested in volunteering and some people love gardening.

Mr. Hahn said this would be a great project for an Eagle Scout project. Mr. Hahn said we are in position to quantify cost and determine what the cost of the raised beds would be, including proper soil amendments. We would need to see if we have neighborhood buy in and figure out some locations that may already have water taps.

Mr. Stidhem said Stonefield has a gazebo. We could use a rain barrel for water if necessary.

Mr. Hahn said some communities make you bring your own water. This might not work during long hot summers, but it's an option. Staff will work on quantifying costs.

Mr. Stidhem said there are great benefits and staff should stay on top of it. It's a great idea to donate any excessive food to the food pantry also. There should be some way to tie it together with Healthy Dublin.

Mr. Hahn said Janell Thomas does speak favorably about the community gardens. They do not have the raised beds and do not seem to have much in cost, because Washington Township community gardens do truly seem to be a volunteer program. Mr. Hahn said he would also follow up on composting and the rain barrels.

Mr. Hahn suggested that this commission discuss the pros and cons and put together a list of the pros and cons. There might not be an argument for a community garden, but there may be some opposition to neighborhood community gardens.

Mr. Stidhem said a list could be put together of pros and cons, but it would be a good idea to just find the easiest area with water and see how it works. We should do some analysis, but the City should start a test garden and see how it works.

V. Items of Interest Updates

Mr. McCoy said he is still working on paths in Dublin and he recalls that the direction from Council is to have more river access.

Mr. Hahn said this remains a continuous Council goal.

Mr. McCoy asked Mr. Hahn what he would need to do to get a draft map of what paths exists today.

Mr. Hahn said the GIS staff is working on a draft map now, so it may be available for the April meeting.

Mr. McCoy asked the commission what their opinion was on water access. He said through his travels he has had the opportunity to look at different places and what type of paths and it peaked some interest this gorgeous river we have in Dublin. He was in Davis, California and he went for a run and they had bikepaths on both sides of the river, which is really nice for the community. St. Louis has bike paths along their lake. San Antonio has more walkways for shopping. In one City they were putting inner tubes in the water during the hot summer and going down the river. He asked if people could navigate down the Scioto River.

Mr. Hahn said during normal water levels there are some people that put kayaks and canoes in the river up at the dam or various locations. One of the phases of Amberleigh will have a more formalized design to access the river to put kayaks and canoes in the water. We will be adding access at Scioto Park this year. There are some erosion issues on the asphalt, so we are going to intercept some of the water coming down the asphalt drive and turn it into a basin at the bottom and as we are doing that we are going to create a path way to the river to carry kayaks/canoes to the river.

Mr. McCoy asked if there was anywhere in the south end of Dublin to get out of the river.

Mr. Hahn said there really isn't anywhere. In Dublin the last stop would be the Dublin Spring area, but it is not convenient because there is no parking in that area. As you go further down the river it becomes residential area. It would be very difficult to remove a kayak from the river here.

Mr. McCoy asked if the City owns any land at the south end of the river.

Mr. Hahn said the City does not own land south of the river. Columbus has a relatively large piece of land, still in the Dublin area, south of 161 on the west side of the road. This land is still surrounded by private property. Mr. Hahn said one

of Council's big focus on the Bridge Street Corridor, is the idea of a larger community scale park along the river and more or less in the area of historic Dublin. This could provide some better river access. Council's expectation is to have a more serious amount of parkland in this area. This year, under I-270 on the east side, there will be a more formalized park with some parking higher up and there will be walking access to the river. You can go upstream from here.

Mr. McCoy said there is a beautiful path along the creek area from the old post office at Shawan Falls down to the Veteran's park.

Mr. Stidhem said the City of Dublin does have some great creek areas that are great to have paths around also.

Mr. Hahn said part of the Bridge Street Corridor Study contains a dedicated OCLC area. Post Road will have to be redirected and swing a little more north and Frantz Road will continue a little further north than it does now and a part of this will include a better path system along the north side of Indian Run which is currently private property. It is a part of the Bridge Street Corridor transportation plan. The entire Bridge Street Corridor Plan is on the City's website and you can view the open space and transportation plan. There is some discussion on some of the areas you have brought up. Also at Monday night's Council meeting they passed the Bridge Street Development Code. At the next Council meeting they will review the area rezoning within the Bridge Street Corridor.

Mr. McCoy said as an action plan, we'll wait and look at the map and possible connections along with the Bridge Street Corridor Plan and continue to look around and come with more ideas for paths along the river.

VI. Staff Updates

Mr. Earman said staff is getting ready for spring and summer. We are getting the pools ready, staff hired and getting ready for camps.

Mr. Hahn said Council did appoint the two new members that would be replacing Mr. Cecutti and Ms. Bremer. Todd Keiner and Megan Stevens will be sworn in at the April meeting. This commission will remain a board of seven members.

Mr. Hahn said the Ballantrae Spray Park is almost completed. There are a few minor items to finish up, but it should be ready to open when the season gets here. It will be open approximately the same hours of the pool, with no mid day shutdowns or restrictions like we had last summer.

Mr. Cecutti asked about park that was noted in the newspaper.

Mr. Hahn said the Holder-Wright Master Plan was presented Council last month.

Mr. Hahn said May 12th will be the dedication for the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Park opening. Everyone will be receiving invitations to the park dedication.

Mr. Clinton commented that the boards and commission training is coming up in April.

Mr. Hahn said it is geared for new members but existing members are definitely welcome to attend.

VII. New Business/Round Table

No new business

VIII. Agenda for Next Meeting: April 18, 2012

Mr. Hahn said there will be elections and the new members will be sworn in at the April meeting.

Mr. Cecutti asked what else should be on the agenda.

Ms. Keplar suggested updating the new members on the 2012 items of interest.

Mr. Cecutti said this is his last meeting. He encouraged the commission to move forward with their service. He has enjoyed his time on the commission.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marja Keplar, CAP-OM
Administrative Assistant

Attachments: Community Gardens Information
 Basic Raised Bed Information
 Starting a Community Garden

Potential garden season April 15th-Nov15th

Rewards: Community gardening has the potential to offer a range of benefits to individuals, families, communities and the environment. Benefits include:

- **Food Production** - Community gardens allow people to grow high quality fruits and vegetables for themselves, their families and their community.
- **Nutrition** - Some research indicates that community gardeners eat more fruits and vegetables than non-gardening families.
- **Exercise** - Gardening requires physical activity and helps improve the overall physical health of gardeners.
- **Mental Health** - Interacting with plants and nature helps reduce stress and increases a gardener's sense of wellness and belonging.
- **Community** - Community gardens foster a sense of community identity, ownership and stewardship among gardeners. They provide a place for people of diverse backgrounds to interact and share culture traditions.
- **Environment** - Gardens help reduce the heat island effect in cities, increase biodiversity, reduce run-off from rain, recycle local organic materials and reduce fossil fuel use from long distance food transportation.
- **Learning** - People of all ages can acquire and share skills and knowledge related to gardening, cooking, nutrition, health, culture, etc.
- **Youth** - Community gardens provide a place for youth to explore gardening, nature and community.
- **Property Values** - Some research indicates the property values around community gardens increase faster than property values in similar areas without gardens.

Above all, community gardens can provide a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment for all.

Why raised beds:

Heavy clay soils do not warm up or dry out easily in the spring and therefore the use of raised beds is a way to improve drainage, allow the soils to dry out sooner in the year and allow for earlier plantings.

Raised beds are generally associated with a more intensive style of growing plants, and can provide more usable growing space.

- They also eliminate the problems of soil compaction and hard-pan.

A reasonable width for raised beds is 4-feet which allows easy access to the whole bed from both sides for most adults and even children. Paths between beds are usually in the range of 18" to 24". H

Building materials: Building materials vary. The choice of what materials one uses often depends on availability, affordability, and concerns about potential contaminants. Some common materials include wood, concrete blocks, brick, stone, straw bales but can also include any container (old bath tubs, kitchen cabinets, milk crates, just to name a few), plastic lumber, sheet metal, high density plastic mesh. Cypress, cedar, fir, locust and pine treated with linseed oil as a preservative are always good, safe choices. Walnut, while resistant to rot, is not a good choice do to its allopathic effects on plants. Some gardens use plastic or treated lumber and there is lots of information for and against both types of materials, as is also true for creosoted railroad ties and tires

Fill with yard waste, compost , (a good garden mix is 1/3 compost, peat moss, Vermiculite)

Other things needed:

Rain barrels at shelter house (not necessary but nice to have to save rain water)

Water source

Compost bins

Sample: Garden Agreement - From Washington Township Community Gardens

Each gardener will be allocated a 12'x14' plot in the Washington Township Community Garden at Amlin Crossing Park, 5468 Cosgray Road, Dublin. Plots will be assigned first come first serve. Gardeners will be given the option of retaining the same plot from year to year.

1. The annual fee for a garden plot is currently \$30. There is also a \$20 clean up deposit. Fees are payable to Washington Township (4675 Cosgray Road, Hilliard, OH 43026) and must be paid in full at the time of registration. The plot fee is non-

refundable but return of the cleanup deposit is available to gardeners who clean up their garden and “put it to bed” by November 15, and complete their volunteer commitment by participating on one or more of the volunteer opportunities. Gardeners will also have the option of donating the deposit back to the garden for future improvements. Each gardener must also sign a Waiver and Release form during the registration process in order to complete registration.

2. A water source will be installed close to the garden. Please use water responsibly. No hoses may be used.
3. Each gardener is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of their garden plot during the garden season, from April 15 through November 15. Watering, weeding, harvesting, and any other garden related maintenance are all the responsibility of the gardener. It is also the responsibility of the gardener to keep the walkways surrounding their plot clear and free of trash, plant materials, and supplies. Planting must commence by June 15.
4. Washington Township Parks & Recreation Department staff plans to till all garden plots each fall, weather permitting. Otherwise tilling will be completed in the spring.
5. Plant non-invasive annual plants and seeds only.
6. Access to the community garden is available from dawn to dusk, seven days a week during the garden season.
7. Garden plots should be cared for regularly. It is the gardener’s responsibility to notify the garden committee if they are not able to care for their plot for an extended period of time. If any plot becomes un-kept through neglect, the gardener will be given notice to clean it up. If the clean up does not occur within ten days the garden will be subject to reassignment.
8. At the end of the growing season, gardeners are responsible for “putting the garden to bed” and leaving the plot as they found it in the spring. Gardeners must provide their own gardening tools. No tools or supplies of any kind may be left unattended at the garden site.
9. Children are welcome in the garden but must be accompanied by an adult and must be supervised at all times.
10. No drugs or alcohol are permitted in the park. Persons are permitted on Washington Township property only when not under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
11. No pets are permitted in the garden. Pets are permitted in the park on a leash.
12. Gardeners may only pick their own crops, unless given permission by another gardener.
13. The application of non-organic pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides) is prohibited. Organic practices are preferred.
14. Gardeners should give consideration to others by planting tall crops where they will have the least impact on neighboring gardeners, at south end of plot only.
15. Perimeter fences are discouraged, but if used must appear neat and tidy. No structures may obstruct vision throughout the garden. Exceptions are trellises and wire used to grow climbing plants, which may not exceed 6’. No treated wood may be used. Erection of a fence or garden structure must have prior approval of the garden committee.
16. Never throw anything such as trash, weeds, plant material, spoiled fruits or vegetables in the field surrounding the garden. A compost pile will be maintained for such purposes.
17. The Garden Committee is responsible for ensuring that the rules are followed at all times. Issues will be discussed at periodic meetings. Discussions will be communicated via email.
18. Garden plots must at all times be maintained in a safe condition, and if any condition is deemed unsafe, the Garden Committee will require the gardener to rectify the situation immediately. If the Garden Committee is required to intervene a second time, the gardener must relinquish his/her plot. The Garden Committee reserves the right to restrict any person’s access to their garden plot based on safety concerns or unwelcome behavior.

19. **Gardeners are encouraged to plant extra.** There will be periodic delivery of extra produce to the Dublin Food Pantry.
20. The Washington Township Community Garden is open to residents of Washington Township only. Proof of residency is required at registration.
21. Plots will be available on a first come first serve basis.
22. This garden agreement is subject to change.

Church branches out through community garden

by [St John Lutheran Dublin Ohio](#) on Wednesday, July 28, 2010 at 1:35pm

Church branches out through community garden

Wednesday, June 16, 2010 11:19 AM

By JENNIFER NOBLIT

ThisWeek Staff Writer

By Lorrie Cecil/ThisWeek

Pastor John Greig sits in the community garden at St. John Lutheran Church, 6135 Rings Road. Some of the produce from the garden is donated to the Dublin Food Pantry. This is the second year of the garden, which was expanded, and all 60 plots are full. If the old adage is correct, the corn planted at St. John Lutheran Church should yield a good crop this fall.

One patch in the church's community garden was knee high last week.

This summer marks the second year for the community garden at the church, 6135 Rings Road. The garden was expanded this year because of demand, and all 60 plots are full, Pastor John Greig said.

The garden was started last year to make use of five acres of unused land sitting beside the church, which has 800 members.

"We were looking around at the needs of the community," Greig said, adding that some members of his congregation and even the community aren't allowed to have gardens. "So we thought, 'Why not have a community garden?'"

After checking with Dublin's zoning department, the church established 15- by 20-foot plots for a community garden.

This year's garden started with more than 30 plots, but more were added when demand increased.

"We tilled 36 plots again and it filled up right away, so we added more," Greig said. "Now we're at 60 plots and we still had a few people inquiring, so we could have had a few more."

The plots cost \$10 per year; gardeners are given the land and water.

"We ran out irrigation across the (church) driveway for water," Greig said.

Along with new plots, a biennial garden also was added this year at the request of gardeners who wanted to plant fruits and vegetables such as rhubarb and blueberries.

Greig said that land in the biennial garden won't be tilled in the fall and spring like the rest of the land.

With corn, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, potatoes, onions, cabbage, eggplant and more planted, the community gardeners should have a plentiful bounty this year.

Last year's excess produce was put to good use, Greig said.

"We had somewhere around 700 to 800 pounds of excess produce that was donated to the Dublin Food Pantry and Faith Mission (in downtown Columbus)," he said. "We had people to run (food) down a couple days a week last year."

A feast also is planned for the end of the season.

"We will have a harvest dinner in September," Greig said, adding that some of the items served could be a bit exotic.

"Part of our mission here is to be multicultural and multigenerational. (The community garden) is not only for members, but also our preschoolers and the community," he said. The garden was divided fairly evenly last year among the church congregation, preschool parents and the community, but this year 40 to 50 percent was taken by community members.

"We have some people from India visiting family this summer," Greig said. "Their family has a plot, so they decided to get a plot, too. Locally, we have people come from as far as Muirfield and Hilliard."

While the fresh produce is nice, Greig said the garden gives both church and community members a chance to get

outside and expand their horizons.

"Pretty much every night you see people out there (working). It's a good opportunity for church members and community members to get to know each other," Greig said.

Expansion is expected for next year's community garden; Greig said there's room for 100 plots. The community garden eventually will have to be moved, though.

"We're hoping to expand and do other ministries, but until then, we'll use the land (for the community garden)," he said.

A community center that could include a gym, day care and adult day care is planned for St. John Lutheran Church in the future. The church soon will look for partners and begin talks with the city, Greig said.

"We're looking at the needs of the community and see how we can help the community and share the love of Jesus as we do it," he said.

For more information on St. John Lutheran Church, look online at stjohndublin.ctsmemberconnect.net.



AMERICAN COMMUNITY GARDENING ASSOCIATION

Growing community across the US & Canada

Basic Raised Beds Info Sheet

This information in part came from Information compiled from an ACGA Experts Panel Conference call, staff and volunteer resources and additional internet based research.

What are raised beds?

Raised bed gardening is a form of gardening in which the soil is formed in 3–4 foot (1.0–1.2 m) wide beds, which can be of any length or shape. The soil is raised above the surrounding soil (6 inches to waist high), sometimes enclosed by a frame generally made of wood, rock, or concrete blocks, and enriched with compost. (Wikipedia). There are a number of reasons to use raised beds just as there are reasons not to, therefore before one commits to utilizing them one should evaluate if they are appropriate and necessary for a specific site and intended use.

Why Raised Beds?

Horticultural Reasons:

- Heavy clay soils do not warm up or dry out easily in the spring and therefore the use of raised beds is a way to improve drainage, allow the soils to dry out sooner in the year and allow for earlier plantings.
- Sandy soils dry out too quickly, adding organic matter can help mitigate this effect.
- Urban soils are often contaminated and/or of poor quality and the use of raised beds is often a way of gardening in an area that otherwise would not support gardening.
- Raised beds are generally associated with a more intensive style of growing plants, and can provide more usable growing space.
- They also eliminate the problems of soil compaction and hard-pan.

Gardener-specific Reasons

- Raised beds provide a means of access to, enjoyment of and the ability to participate in gardening for people who are physically and otherwise challenged.
- Raised beds with children can delineate the garden space.

Site-specific Reasons:

- Knowing about soil nutrient levels and possible pollutants is a good beginning for any garden. Soil tests are recommended. In urban areas, lead can be a major concern.
- On steep slopes, raised beds can act as a form of terracing
- For specific crops that thrive in particular soils, raised beds can be amended appropriately.

Why Not Raised Beds?

- In more arid climates, raised beds dry out more quickly.
- In the Southwest, cement is often used as building materials, e.g., concrete blocks, broken sidewalk. The concern is leaching of alkalinity, accelerants that may be carcinogenic .
- Some garden advocates believe no-till gardening can be more effective and productive.
- If people are able to garden in ground, raised beds might be an unnecessary expense.

Building / Creating Raised Beds

Bed size: The least expensive way to create raised beds is to mound the soil in the garden while creating paths to walk between the beds. A reasonable width for raised beds is 4-feet which allows easy access to the whole bed from both sides for most adults and even children. Paths between beds are usually in the range of 18" to 24". However, if the raised beds are part of a garden that includes people who have physical challenges then the paths between beds will need to be wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs.

Bed lengths depend on the needs of the people creating them but generally range from for 8-feet to 25-feet. Bed sizes for constructed raised beds is usually a function of the materials. Depending on the height and length of a bed, additional reinforcement may be required to prevent the sides from bowing.

Building materials: Building materials vary. The choice of what materials one uses often depends on availability, affordability, and concerns about potential contaminants. Some common materials include wood, concrete blocks, brick, stone, straw bales but can also include any container (old bath tubs, kitchen cabinets, milk crates, just to name a few), plastic lumber, sheet metal, high density plastic mesh.

Cypress, cedar, fir, locust and pine treated with linseed oil as a preservative are always good, safe choices. Walnut, while resistant to rot, is not a good choice due to its allopathic effects on plants. Some gardens use plastic or treated lumber and there is lots of information for and against both types of materials, as is also true for creosoted railroad ties and tires.

Barriers: If the raised beds are being created or constructed in or over soil that is not contaminated then there is no need to use a barrier between the beds and the soil. If however, the beds are being built over contaminated soils, then a barrier between the growing medium and the contaminated soils is a good idea.

Landscape fabric which allows moisture to pass through while suppressing weeds and plant roots from growing through is often used. On heavily contaminated soils quite often a base of gravel covered by an additional layer of landscape fabric and then the growing medium is used to provide good separation.

Tips from the Conference Call

Materials to use (or not use)

- Use linseed oil to preserve wood
- Locust, cedar & cypress are good wood options
- Potentially railroad ties if you plant a foot out.
- Master gardeners in some areas use treated lumber – much less toxic than in the past.
- Get soil tested, Extension offices will sometimes test soil.
- Green Cement may be a potential alternative
- In arid Southwest, maybe better to utilize straw bales, cobb, or adobe
- Building supply companies sometimes have damaged goods or lumber that they'll donate, sometimes have grants for community gardens.

Size

- 4' is good width for working on both sides.
- 4'x25' – makes calculations easy because you're always working 100 s.f.
- 10x20, put fence board as walkways, 4'x4' easy to reach from any direction.
- If using really long beds, 20-25 feet reinforce with rebar or giant bolt across the middle work, to prevent bowing in the middle

Construction

- San Antonio uses raised (elevated) beds for people with disabilities. They came up with a design for 2-4x4 boxes straddled in middle by bench.
- On participant used concrete block, capped blocks with wood to allow for sitting, more rectangular style, in a horseshoe style. Another community garden used a mix of wood, douglas fir, cedar, redwood and raised 10".
- Cedar beds done in tiers for ease in filling and can then be moved if necessary.
- Anything can be used (milk crates, old dresser drawers, kitchen cabinets, also children's pools on asphalt)
- Fill with yard waste, compost, (one participant used Mel Bartholomew's book) 1/3 compost, peat moss, vermiculite
- Beet's Peat is a more environmentally friendly peat made of coconut hulls.

Ideas for barriers against contaminated soils and gophers:

- Used heavy-weight plastic and heavy rains created a pond.
- Landscaping fabric cloth under beds
- Not all plants take up contaminants
- Paved over soil, then built new soil on top.
- Hardware cloth, screen or netting for gophers.

Additional Resources:

John Jeavons, *How to Grow More Vegetables*

ATTRA: The NCAT Sustainable Agriculture Project - <https://attra.ncat.org/>

How To Garden Advice.com - http://www.howtogardenadvice.com/garden_info/raised_bed_gardening.html

eXtension - <http://www.extension.org/>

About.com - <http://organicgardening.about.com/od/startinganorganicgarden/a/raisedbed.htm>

Most state Extension agencies can help with locating soil testing services. Other good sources of information include:

Cornell Waste Management Institute: <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/soilquality.htm>

Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities: <http://cwmi.css.cornell.edu/healthysouls.htm>

Starting a Community Garden

This fact sheet is designed to give many different groups the basic information they need to get their gardening project off the ground. These lists are in no way meant to be complete. Each main idea will probably trigger more questions, so an assortment of ways to carry out that idea are presented; pick and choose those that seem to apply to your own situation.

1. Form a Planning Committee
2. Choose a Site
3. Prepare and Develop the Site
4. Organize the Garden
5. Insurance
6. Setting up a New Gardening Organization
Organizational Considerations | Bylaws
7. How to Manage Your Community Garden
Sample Guidelines and Rules | Application Form
8. Troubleshooting
Children's Plots | People Problems and Solutions
9. Resources
Horticultural information | Seeds | Bedding plants

FORM A PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Determine if there really is a need and desire for a garden.
- What kind of garden--vegetable, flower, trees, a combination?
- Who will the garden serve--youth, seniors, special populations, people who just want an alternative to trash?
- If the project is meant to benefit a particular group or neighborhood, it is essential that the group be involved in all phases.
- Organize a meeting of interested people.
- Choose a well-organized garden coordinator.
- Form committees to accomplish tasks: Funding & Resource Development; Youth Activities; Construction; Communication.
- Approach a sponsor. A sponsor is an individual or organization that supports a community garden. Site sponsorship can be a tremendous asset. Contributions of land, tools, seeds, fencing, soil improvements or money are all vital to a successful community garden. Some community gardens can provide most of their provisions through fees charged to the membership; but for many, a garden sponsor is essential. Churches, schools, citizens groups, private businesses, local parks and recreation departments are all potential supporters. Community Development Block Grants are sometimes available through your municipality.
- Make a list of what needs to be done.
- Find a garden site.
- Obtain lease or agreement from owner.
- Decide on a mailing address and central telephone number(s). Try to have at least 3 people who are very familiar with all pertinent information. Form a telephone tree.
- If your community garden has a budget, keep administration in the hands of several people.
- Choose a name for the garden.

CHOOSE A SITE

- Identify the owner of the land.
- Make sure the site gets at least 6 full hours of sunlight daily (for vegetables).
- Do a soil test in the fall for nutrients & heavy metals.
- Consider availability of water.
- Try and get a lease or agreement which allows the space to be used at least for 3 years.
- Consider past uses of the land. Is there any contamination?
- Is insurance something you need to consider?

PREPARE AND DEVELOP THE SITE

- Clean the site.
- Develop your design.
- Gather your resources--try to gather free materials.
- Organize volunteer work crews.
- Plan your work day.
- Decide on plot sizes, mark plots clearly with gardener's names.
- Include plans for a storage area for tools and other equipment, as well as a compost area.
- Have a rainproof bulletin board for announcing garden events and messages.
- Arrange for land preparation--plowing, etc--or let gardeners do their own prep.
- Will the garden be organic?
- Lay out garden to place flower or shrub beds around the visible perimeter. This helps to promote good will with non-gardening neighbors, passersby, and municipal authorities.

ORGANIZE THE GARDEN

- Are there conditions for membership (residence, dues, agreement with rules)?
- How will plots be assigned (by family size, by residency, by need, by group-- i.e., youth, elderly, etc.)?
- How large should plots be (or should there be several sizes based on family size or other factors)?
- How should plots be laid out?
- If the group charges dues, how will the money be used? What services, if any, will be provided to gardeners in return?
- Will the group do certain things cooperatively (such as turning in soil in the spring, planting cover crops, or composting)?
- When someone leaves a plot, how will the next tenant be chosen?
- How will the group deal with possible vandalism?
- Will there be a children's plot?
- Will the gardeners meet regularly? If so, how often and for what purposes?
- Will gardeners share tools, hoses, and other such items?
- How will minimum maintenance (especially weeding) be handled both inside plots and in common areas (such as along fences, in flower beds, and in sitting areas)?
- Will there be a set of written rules which gardeners are expected to uphold? If so, how will they be enforced?
- Should your group incorporate and consider eventually owning your garden site?

INSURANCE

It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain leases from landowners without liability insurance. Garden insurance is a new thing for many insurance carriers and their underwriters are reluctant to cover community gardens. It helps if you know what you want before you start talking to agents. Two tips: you should probably be working with an agent from a firm which deals with many different carriers (so you can get the best policy for your needs) and you will probably have better success with someone local who has already done this type of policy or one that works with social service agencies in the area.

SETTING UP A NEW GARDENING ORGANIZATION

Many garden groups are organized very informally and operate successfully. Leaders "rise to the occasion" to propose ideas and carry out tasks. However, as the workload expands, many groups choose a more formal structure for their organization.

A structured program is a means to an end. It is a conscious, planned effort to create a system so that each person can participate fully and the group can perform effectively. It's vital that the leadership be responsive to the members. Structure will help an organization to last; it will promote trust; it will help your group grow and create new opportunities for leaders to develop.

If your group is new, have several planning meetings to discuss your program and organization. Try out suggestions raised at these meetings and after a few months of operation, you'll be in a better position to develop bylaws or organizational guidelines. A community garden project should be kept simple as possible, whether large or small.

Bylaws are rules that govern the internal affairs of an organization: they are officially recorded by the State or Province in which your organization resides. They are required when you form a nonprofit corporation, but are useful even if your group is a club or a group of neighbors. Many battles are won simply because one side has more pieces of paper to wave than the other. It's helpful to look over bylaws from other similar organizations if you are incorporating. Guidelines and Rules (see TROUBLESHOOTING for examples) are less formal than Bylaws, and are often adequate enough for a garden group that has no intention of incorporating.

Organizational Considerations:

- What is your purpose? What are your short and long-term objectives?
- How are decisions to be made? Who chooses leaders and how?
- How will work be shared? Who does what?
- How will you raise money? Membership dues, fund raising, grants, sponsors?
- Are you open to change? Flexibility is important when goals and members change. Do you want to be incorporated or act as a club?

What goes into formal Bylaws:

- Full official name of organization and legal address.
- Organizing members, names and addresses.
- The (brief description of the) purpose, goals and philosophy of the organization.
- Membership categories and eligibility requirements.
- Membership dues, how much and when paid.
- Specify when and how often regular or special meetings of the membership are to be held, as well as regular and annual meetings of the board of directors.
- State what officers are necessary, how they are chosen, length of term, their duties and how vacancies are filled.
- Organizational dissolution processes
- State special committees, their purpose and how they operate.
- Establish a system so that bylaws can be rescinded or amended, maybe by a simple majority. State any official policies or practices: e.g.. garden group will avoid the use of hazardous substances; group will agree to keep all adjacent sidewalks in good repair and free of ice and snow in season; group will make all repairs necessary to keep equipment, fences and furniture in good order and repair.
- Include a Hold Harmless clause (sample):

"We the undersigned members of the (name) garden group hereby agree to hold harmless (name owner) from and against any damage, loss, liability, claim, demand, suit, cost and expense directly or indirectly resulting from, arising out of or in connection with the use of the (name) garden by the garden group, its successors, assigns, employees, agents and invites."

For more information about whether to incorporate as a non-profit organization (a state function) or to get tax deductible charitable (501(c)3) status (a federal IRS function), go to:

www.tgci.com/magazine/96summer/tobe1.asp

www.nolo.com/article.cfm

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR COMMUNITY GARDEN

In order to offer a high quality community garden program, good management techniques are essential. Included in this fact sheet are the main ideas to consider in management, along with many different ways to carry them out.

Having written rules is very important with older groups as well as new gardens, since they spell out exactly what is expected of a gardener. They also make it much easier to deal with challenges as they arise.

Sample Guidelines and Rules

Some may be more relevant to vegetable gardens than to community flower gardens or parks. Pick and choose what best fits your situation.

- I will pay a fee of \$___ to help cover garden expenses.
- I will have something planted in the garden by (date) and keep it planted all summer long.
- If I must abandon my plot for any reason, I will notify the garden leadership.
- I will keep weeds at a minimum and maintain the areas immediately surrounding my plot if any.
- If my plot becomes unkempt, I understand I will be given 1 week's notice to clean it up. At that time, it will be re-assigned or tilled in.
- I will keep trash and litter out of the plot, as well as from adjacent pathways and fences.
- I will participate in the fall cleanup of the garden.
- I will plant tall crops where they will not shade neighboring plots.
- I will pick only my own crops unless given permission by another plot user.
- I will not use fertilizers, insecticides or weed repellents that will in any way affect other plots.
- I agree to volunteer hours toward community gardening efforts.(include a list of volunteer tasks which your garden needs).
- I will not bring pets to the garden.
- I understand that neither the garden group nor owners of the land are responsible for my actions. I THEREFORE AGREE TO HOLD HARMLESS THE GARDEN GROUP AND OWNERS OF THE LAND FOR ANY LIABILITY, DAMAGE, LOSS OR CLAIM THAT OCCURS IN CONNECTION WITH USE OF THE GARDEN BY ME OR ANY OF MY GUESTS.

Application Forms

Application forms can include any of the following information:

Name(s)

Address Zip

Telephone number:

Days

Evenings

Site Preference:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Size of plot. (list choices available)

Season:

Year round (must be maintained all year)

Short season (include dates)

Check the appropriate items:

- I am a senior citizen
- I am physically disabled
- This is my first year at this garden
- I would like a garden next to a friend, Name
- I have gardened here before and would like plot #___ if available
- I have gardened before at (where?); for how long?

TROUBLESHOOTING

Vandalism is a common fear among community gardeners. However, the fear tends to be much greater than the actual incidence. Try these proven methods to deter vandalism:

- Make a sign for the garden. Let people know to whom the garden belongs and that it is a neighborhood project.
- Fences can be of almost any material. They serve as much to mark possession of a property as to prevent entry, since nothing short of razor-wire and land mines will keep a determined vandal from getting in. Short picket fences or turkey wire will keep out dogs and honest people.
- Create a shady meeting area in the garden and spend time there.
- Invite everyone in the neighborhood to participate from the very beginning. Persons excluded from the garden are potential vandals.

- Involve the neighborhood children in learning gardens. They can be the garden's best protectors. (see below.)
- Plant raspberries, roses or other thorny plants along the fence as a barrier to fence climbers.
- Make friends with neighbors whose windows overlook the garden. Trade them flowers and vegetables for a protective eye.
- Harvest all ripe fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. Red tomatoes falling from the vines invite trouble.
- Plant potatoes, other root crops or a less popular vegetable such as kohlrabi along the side walk or fence.
- Plant the purple varieties of cauliflower and beans or the white eggplant to confuse a vandal.
- Plant a "vandal's garden" at the entrance. Mark it with a sign: "If you must take food, please take it from here."

Children's Plots

- Children included in the garden process become champions of the cause rather than vandals of the garden. Therefore your garden may want to allocate some plots specifically for children. The "children's garden" can help market your idea to local scout troops, day cares, foster grandparent programs, church groups, etc.
- Consider offering free small plots in the children's garden to children whose parents already have a plot in the garden.

People Problems and Solutions

Angry neighbors and bad gardeners pose problems for a community garden. Usually the two are related. Neighbors complain to municipal governments about messy, unkempt gardens or rowdy behavior; most gardens can ill afford poor relations with neighbors, local politicians or potential sponsors. Therefore, choose bylaws carefully so you have procedures to follow when members fail to keep their plots clean and up to code. A well-organized garden with strong leadership and committed members can overcome almost any obstacle.

RESOURCES

Horticultural information:

Cooperative Extension Service in your county
 Garden Clubs
 Horticultural Societies
 Garden Centers

Seeds:

America the Beautiful Fund
 725 15th St. NW, Suite 605, Dept. AG
 Washington D.C. 20005
 202-838-1649
 Garden Centers and Hardware Stores

Bedding plants:

Local nurseries
 Vocational-Tech Horticulture Department
 High school Horticulture classes
 Parks Department