



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee **Date:** March 10, 2010
From: Dave Semple
 General Manager, Parks and Recreation **File:** 11-7375-00/Vol 01
Re: **Community Garden Administration**

Staff Recommendations:

That:

1. The City enter into an agreement with the Richmond Food Security Society for the administration of community gardens that have been designated by the City on lands owned or controlled by the City on the terms and conditions set out in the attached report.
2. The Chief Administrative Officer and the General Manager, Parks and Recreation be authorized to execute the agreement on behalf of the City.
3. Council approve one time funding of \$15,000 to be funded from Council contingency in order for the Richmond Food Security Society to provide educational outreach, community garden enhancements and other community garden related programming in Richmond in 2010 - 2011.

Dave Semple
 General Manager, Parks and Recreation
 (604-233-3350)

Att. 1

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY			
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Law	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Budgets	Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

At the September 29, 2009 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting the following referral was made to staff:

that "the City work with the Richmond Food Security Society and other non-profit organizations to establish a community-based delivery system for Richmond's community gardens."

This report responds to that referral as well as to the Council term goal to, "demonstrate leadership in and significant advancement of the City's agenda for sustainability through the development and implementation of a comprehensive strategy."

Analysis

The Community Garden Program in Richmond has been extremely popular and currently has over 100 people on the waiting list for garden plots. As the program continues to expand it would be beneficial to have experts in community gardening responsible for its administration.

There are currently no staff within the Parks Programs Section with specific expertise in community gardening. The cost associated with hiring someone would not be offset by the revenue generated from the garden fees (currently approximately \$8000 a year). Partnering with the Richmond Food Security Society (RFSS) is an ideal solution for management of the program. The RFSS also has experts in community gardening on their board and staff; these people will be able to provide guidance on the community garden program as a whole, as well as provide advice to community gardeners.

The Richmond Food Security Society is a network of residents and organizations working toward building food awareness and improving food resources for Richmond. In urban areas of Richmond, community garden plots can play a role in food production for residents and enhance community engagement.

The Community Garden Program currently has approximately 200 garden plots at four city owned sites. The Parks and Recreation Department will be expanding this program further with sites projected at Paulik Park and a location to be determined in Steveston within the next year. If administration of the program is transferred to the Richmond Food Security Society they would assume responsibility for the community garden duties currently being covered by the City. Specifically, they would maintain the garden plot wait lists, allocate the plots to members of the public, and assist with enforcement of garden rules when necessary.

In addition, the Richmond Food Security Society would expand the community garden program to include educational opportunities for plot holders and the public, and work with each garden to establish volunteers to assist with the administration of the site. The goal would be to decentralize a portion of the program so that the individual gardeners assume partial ownership of their garden's success. Similar models have proven to be very successful in Vancouver and

Seattle where plot holders on public land are ultimately accountable to the City, but largely self regulating. The result is a community based, decentralized program.

The logistics of a partnership between the City of Richmond and the Richmond Food Security Society would be outlined in an agreement for a three (3) year period. The provisions of that agreement would include but not be limited to the terms outlined in attachment 1.

If Council endorses the staff recommendation in this report the timing of the agreement would be mid to late April 2010. There would be some overlap between the City and RFSS this season which would allow for a smooth transition between organisations and a high level of customer service for the plot holders.

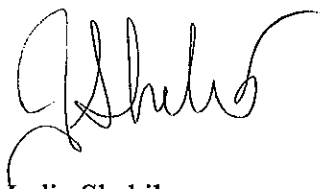
To date the City has not set aside any resources specifically intended for education and outreach related to community gardening. A one time funding request for \$15,000 would allow RFSS to set aside resources specifically for this purpose. The intent for this funding would be to educate interested members of the public on local food production, community gardening and food preparation. In addition, the funds would be used to provide specific start up programming costs for new community gardens to ensure their success.

Financial Impact

\$15,000 for the one time additional funding request from Council contingency.

Conclusion

A partnership between the City of Richmond and the Richmond Food Security Society which allows them to administer all or some community gardens on City land is an ideal way to improve the overall success of the program. Additional operating funding of \$15,000 will assist the RFSS with establishing a high level of community gardening programming for Richmond residents.



Jodie Shebib
Manager, Parks Programs
(604-244-1275)

JS:js

Attachment One

Partial business terms for agreement between the City and the Richmond Food Security Society for administration of community gardens.

1. The term of the agreement will be three years commencing on or about April 15, 2010 or such other date as the City and the Richmond Food Security Society (RFSS) agree.
2. The RFSS will provide the following services:
 - (a) management of the City's community garden program;
 - (b) educational programming related to community gardening, local food production and preparation;
 - (c) assistance with the establishment of a volunteer committee at each community garden location.
3. The City may immediately terminate the agreement if the RFSS breaches any of its obligations under the agreement.
4. The City may, without cause, terminate the agreement upon 30 days written notice to RFSS.
5. RFSS should seek to work with (Community Associations) in Richmond to support community gardens in their respective areas.
6. The RFSS shall establish garden plot fees which shall be subject to approval by the City of Richmond Parks Programs Department.
7. RFSS will retain all fees paid by community gardeners for garden plots and use such fees for the purposes of paying all or part of the costs of the community garden program.
8. RFSS shall only assign garden plots to Richmond residents and shall make such assignment using the wait list currently maintained by the City of Richmond.
9. Any additional community garden plots and locations on public land must be approved by Council and be consistent with an approved park or open space master plan.
10. The City of Richmond reserves the right to make changes in its policies, bylaws, and regulations concerning community gardens.
11. The RFSS shall require that all community garden plots are pesticide free.
12. RFSS will make an annual presentation to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee with an update on the previous season. (Presentation to occur in the Fall of each year). Such presentation shall include a financial statement setting out all income received and all expenses paid.