

## **Proposal for a Community Garden at the Village**

### **Purpose**

The Landscape Committee proposes creation of a community garden for residents of the Village. The limited common area associated with each unit typically provides inadequate space and sun exposure for residents who wish to grow a bountiful vegetable garden. A community garden would allow interested residents to cooperatively share garden space in a designated area within the Village. The proposed garden, available to all co-owners and tenants, would be sited in a sunny area with room for potential expansion.

One or more members of the Landscape Committee would coordinate garden activities. In addition, residents who sign up for a garden plot would agree to contribute a few hours per month for upkeep of the entire garden. Users would pay a nominal annual fee to offset a portion of the expenses. The Village would fund the remainder of the expenses to initiate and maintain the garden through the Landscape Committee's budget. Pending approval by the Village Board and sufficient interest among residents, the proposed garden would open in spring 2008.

### **Benefits**

A community garden that is properly sited, maintained, and managed would:

- Enhance the natural beauty of the property and become an asset to the community
- Bring together residents who have a common interest in gardening (over half of the residents participate in the Flower Give Away!)
- Provide another amenity for current residents to enjoy
- Give prospective co-owners another reason to choose the Village
- Present an alternative to planting new shade trees in an open common area
- Educate gardeners on environmentally-sound, organic growing methods
- Allow residents to grow fresh, nutritious crops while saving money

### **Scope**

If the community garden concept is approved by the Board, the Landscape Committee will conduct a survey to determine how many residents would be interested in having a plot. The proposed garden would initially require a minimum of 12 residents to be feasible. This preliminary scope assumes an initial size of 20 plots averaging 100 ft<sup>2</sup> each within a total area of about 3,000 ft<sup>2</sup> (0.07 acre) and a maximum size of 6,000 ft<sup>2</sup>. A more detailed scope, including cost estimates, will be furnished for the Board's approval if the project moves forward. The American Community Gardening Association's guidelines for starting a community garden will be used as a framework (<http://communitygarden.org/starting.php>).

## Management

The Landscape Committee would appoint one of its members to serve as the Community Garden Coordinator, the person for residents to contact for all issues related to the garden. The Coordinator would seek advice as needed from other committee members, the Village Community Manager, landscape contractor, and master gardener. One or more committee members would be available to back up the Coordinator. The Landscape Committee, not the Coordinator, would have the authority to revoke a resident's gardening privileges.

## Rules

Detailed rules would be developed by the Landscape Committee with input from residents. All gardeners would be required to use accepted organic growing methods. Rules would specify:

- Responsibilities of gardeners, Landscape Committee, Coordinator, Village staff, and landscape contractor
- Schedule of garden activities
- Types of structures gardeners can build
- What plants cannot be grown
- Garden safety requirements
- Minimum expectations to contribute to overall community garden maintenance
- Consequences for gardeners who do not maintain their plots or fail to follow other rules

## Expenses

Foreseeable start-up and annual expenses include:

- Initial sod removal, plowing, and soil amendment
- Installation of an underground water line with shut-off valve and two spigots
- Initial and periodic soil testing
- Initial garden hoses with periodic replacement
- Annual loads of compost and mulch
- Miscellaneous supplies, garden signs, plot markers, bulletin board, publicity materials
- Garden tools (one or more of each) for shared use such as wheelbarrow, shovel, fork, rake, and hoe, available for check-out at the Village Office (2008)
- Storage shed with lock located at the garden (2009)
- Portable compost bin (2008) and dual-compartment compost bin (2009)
- Temporary perimeter fence (2008), and attractive permanent perimeter fence (2010)

## Fees

Residents who use the garden would pay a proposed annual fee of \$10 per 100 ft<sup>2</sup> of garden space. Charging a nominal fee would encourage a feeling of ownership in the garden. To suit a variety of gardeners, plots would be offered in several sizes (e.g., 50, 100, 200, and 300 ft<sup>2</sup>). Users would be required to sign an agreement to follow garden rules when they pay their fees; this agreement could include indemnification of the Village, if needed for liability reasons. To more accurately assess the feasibility of starting the garden, residents wanting plots for 2008

would pay a \$20 refundable deposit prior to construction of the garden. For comparison, Project Grow's ([www.projectgrowgardens.org](http://www.projectgrowgardens.org)) community garden at County Farm Park charges a \$20 membership fee and \$72 annually for the smallest available (375 ft<sup>2</sup>) plot.

### Location

The preferred location for the proposed garden is not yet identified. Criteria for site selection include sun exposure (minimum of 6 hr/day), space for expansion, proximity to existing underground water supply, existing fencing, perceived risk of vandalism, and convenience for users. Any objections by co-owners adjacent to a proposed garden location would need to be carefully considered. Potential locations identified by the Landscape Committee are:

- East side of Whitewood, open area along fence south of Norwood (see photos)  
Maximum available size approx. 120'x77'x102'x43' (6,200 ft<sup>2</sup>)
- Large common area between Pittsfield and Fernwood, south of Norwood (see photos)  
Maximum available size approx. 150'x50'x141'x33' (5,700 ft<sup>2</sup>)

### Activities

The proposed garden would open mid-April 2008. All gardeners would be required to remove all debris and structures (e.g., fencing, lumber) from their plots by mid-October 2008 to ensure the garden does not become unsightly during the off season. If annual tilling of the entire garden is needed, it would be conducted at the end of October. In subsequent years, the Landscape Committee might consider allowing returning gardeners (who have followed all the rules) to leave structures on plots to extend their growing season. The Landscape Committee would offer informational programs and host an annual event such as a potluck for garden users.

### Timetable

Task Description	2007	2008	2009
Review proposal with Board	■		
Survey residents for interest	■		
Newsletter article – request input	■		
Invite residents to committee	■		
Develop garden rules	■		
Stake area and stop weed killer	■		
Sign up residents for spring 2008		■	
Install water line		■	
Plow area, test/amend soil		■	
Buy garden tools/equipment		■	
Open garden to residents		■	
Prepare garden for winter		■	
Sign up residents for spring 2009			■
Buy/install shed/compost bin			■
Open garden to residents			■
Prepare garden for winter			■