

2. COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK - FOOD SECURITY GROUP

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AS AMENDED

That Council approve the following:

1. That \$20,000 be allocated to the Community Garden initiative to facilitate and offset the cost and development of community gardens within Ottawa-Carleton. Funds for this project are to be provided from the \$20,000 proceeds of sale of non-viable land at 214 Hinchey Street declared surplus (by the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee) on 1 Feb 00.
2. That as many new community gardens as possible be established this Spring with the assistance of the Region (at the following locations):
 - Laurier at Bronson (empty lot, north side)
 - Centretown near "Bugs"
 - Sandy Hill/Lowertown
 - Southeast Ottawa near Heatherington
 - Vanier
 - Heron Park Community North (east end of Apolydor recently designated as garden park area by the city).
3. That the Region provide access to soil testing procedures. That use of region-owned roto-tilling equipment be approved to dig up new community gardens. That water access be found for each new community garden.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Community Services Committee Co-ordinator's report dated 24 Jan 00 is immediately attached.
2. Extract of Draft Minute, Community Services Committee, 3 Feb 2000, follows the report and includes a record of all votes.
3. Finance Commissioner's report dated 7 Feb 00 providing a Finance Department comment is at Appendix 1.

Our File/N/Réf. 03-000-0127
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 24 January 2000

TO/DEST. Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Committee Co-ordinator

SUBJECT/OBJET **COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK-
FOOD SECURITY GROUP**

REPORT RECOMMENDATION

That the Community Services Committee receive this report for information.

BACKGROUND

Representatives from the above-named organization have requested that the Committee receive a presentation in connection with the Final Report of the Task Force on Poverty. The group co-ordinator, Ms. Brenda Inouye, will make the presentation.

No supporting documentation has been provided.

M. J. Beauregard

Extract of Draft Minute
Community Services Committee
3 February 2000

COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK- FOOD SECURITY GROUP

Co-ordinator, Community Services Committee report dated 24 Jan 00

Ms. Brenda Inouye, Coordinator, Community Garden Network of Ottawa, addressed the Committee. She proposed the joint implementation of a food security policy between community members and regional Health, Environment and Transportation, Social Services and Planning and Development Approvals Departments, as per Recommendation 18 of the Final Report of the Task Force on Poverty. Ms. Inouye said food security is a critical and immediate need in Ottawa where approximately 30,000 per month use a food bank. In addition, consumers are constantly faced with whether their foods are treated with pesticides or genetically-modified organisms. As well, over 90% of the food comes from outside the Region: this causes poor air quality and increased carbon dioxide emissions due to transportation of food over long distances.

Ms. Inouye continued by saying that, although it is the jurisdictional responsibility of the federal and provincial governments to manage the Canadian food system, it is community members and local government which must deal with food-based problems, most intensively and effectively.

Some solutions include:

- community gardens;
- good food box programs;
- collective kitchens;
- community economic development projects through which people can grow the organic food of their choice;
- people working together to support the local food distribution system;
- people preparing nutritious meals together and learning how to produce and market products.

The speaker noted the group's vision expands beyond these measures to include community gardens, good food box programs and collective kitchens in every neighbourhood. Participants would increase their capacities through these initiatives, and increased employment would result through support of food-based community economic development projects and further support of the local food system. Ms. Inouye said an explicit food security policy would allow certain changes in present policies and by-laws that present barriers to the expansion of food security initiatives in the Region and would allocate appropriate resources for its implementation. She concluded her presentation by highlighting the need to work together and use resources as efficiently as possible.

Extract of Draft Minute
Community Services Committee
3 February 2000

She pointed out that the Toronto Food Policy Council, under that city's Health Board, has facilitated the development and implementation of a food policy in collaboration with community members, non-profit groups, local farmers and industry representatives. As well, Vancouver, Kitchener-Waterloo and Victoria are presently taking similar steps.

Councillor L. Davis indicated she was prepared to put forward a Motion to provide \$20,000 from the recent sale of non-viable land in her ward to cover the various costs associated with bringing more community gardens into various areas. Ms. Inouye responded that one of the main costs relates to the salary of a Co-ordinator, and the proposed amount would cover that cost. Councillor W. Byrne, having assumed the Chair, clarified, in response to a query from Councillor Doucet, that Recommendation 18 of the Task Force on Poverty, which refers to the establishment of a regional food security policy, has been approved as part of the discussion on Item 1.

Terrie Meehan, a disabled mother of three children, two of whom are also disabled, said she has had to rely on food banks to meet her family's needs, because, based on current assistance rates, it is necessary to use any means to have anything close to a nutritious diet. Ms. Meehan said she preferred a "hand-up" to a "hand-out" and is excited to be part of the Food Security Group. The Ottawa-Carleton Region needs to gather its resources to form an effective plan. She spoke about programs such as the Southeast Ottawa Good Food Box and the Quality Fresh Food Club that have made a difference in her community and in her family. She indicated that her community would like a community garden but there are barriers to this happening. Ms. Meehan pointed out that working families often do not have the knowledge and the resources to ensure they have adequate, nutritious diets. They need a food security plan to add strength to what currently exists. Collective kitchens, food bank clubs and other strategies mean people can feed themselves and their families with dignity, not through charity.

Elicia Wernikowski, a gardener at the Carlington community garden, indicated that 120 families were working a garden plot there and it is estimated that 700 people ate the garden's produce last season. Some of the benefits of garden plots include low cost, fresh organic food, physical exercise, fresh air and sunshine, and a sense of satisfaction and pride at being productive and involved in one's own and the community's well-being. Another benefit comes from working with people from many different cultures and backgrounds and as a result, seeing them as neighbours, not as strangers. Ms. Wernikowski said the Carlington community has responded in the following manner:

- tools were donated by individuals and businesses;
- knowledge and expertise on organic gardening was provided by local farmers and gardeners:

Extract of Draft Minute
Community Services Committee
3 February 2000

- labour and expertise was provided by a local plumber;
- compost was provided by the City of Ottawa and the Region.

The community also learned about nutrition and food preservation, and participated in pick-your-own trips to local farms for good, inexpensive produce. Gardeners volunteered their time, shared knowledge, provided labour to new or less able gardeners, and shared produce with those unable to garden at the time. Ms. Wernikowski said the benefits of community gardens go beyond the dollar value of the food itself and are difficult to quantify, especially in the short-term. They include improved social relations among diverse people and the feeling of being connected, of breaking social isolation, of belonging to and having a stake in one's community. She asked that the Region help in accessing suitable land and water sources, testing soils, and using its knowledge, expertise and connections to sustain and improve existing community gardens and develop new projects which can only enhance the community as a whole.

Frances Tanner, part time coordinator, Carlington Community Garden, began by thanking the Committee for approving Recommendation 18 of the Task Force on Poverty report. She spoke about the book "Real Food for a Change", which estimates that, if the population only ate as much local food in Ontario as it did in the 1970s, there would be 10,000 more jobs in Ontario today. Ms. Tanner pointed out that an estimate of the cost of produce from the Carlington garden represents approximately \$30,000; if the gardeners had to pay organic prices, the 120 families would have spent that much money over the season to buy food; if they estimated their time, the result would be different. She thanked regional staff from the Social Services and Environment and Transportation Departments for their support to-date, and the Task Force on Poverty for including the food security recommendation in its report.

At this point, the Committee Chair, A. Munter, read a number of Motions presented by Committee members. Speaking to her Motion to provide \$20,000, Councillor Davis said she saw this as an opportunity at community building, and something that should be a priority in high density areas. She posited that using the funds from the sale of non-viable land for this purpose is an appropriate use, since the profits from the sale are being returned to the community. She suggested it was incumbent on staff to report back on locations, to work with Councillors in this regard, to establish priorities and to report back to Committee at a later date.

Extract of Draft Minute
Community Services Committee
3 February 2000

Councillor D. Holmes said her Motion comes from the food security group and lists areas where there already are community gardens, however it does not preclude the fact there may be other lands the Region can provide for this purpose. The Councillor felt that finding a little more funding, as well as providing staff resources, would also be useful. She indicated that, in light of initiatives in other cities, the Region needs to get busy and activate its residents to find more gardens.

Councillor A. Loney said that coordinating the efforts of all departments in order to make things happen is the most important aspect of this initiative. If community gardens are planned at the start of new housing projects, such as the one in Nepean, it would be simpler and cheaper. Councillor Loney said he could support the proposal, and he stressed the importance of communicating this loudly throughout the Corporation to ensure things happen.

Councillor M. McGoldrick-Larsen expressed the belief this is an opportune time to meet some of the goals and objectives of sustainable communities. She indicated that the housing development referred to in her Motion has vacant land all around it and the City of Nepean owns the adjoining vacant lands: all this provides opportunities for partnerships from the conceptual stages.

Councillor W. Byrne requested that the food policy group contact Ottawa-Carleton Housing with a view to accessing its resources at a number of housing sites in her community or nearby. The Councillor said this is an initiative that would serve the residents of those communities well.

Moved by L. Davis

That \$20,000 be allocated to the Community Garden initiative to facilitate and offset the cost and development of community gardens within Ottawa-Carleton. Funds for this project are to be provided from the \$20,000 proceeds of sale of non-viable land declared surplus land at 214 Hinchey Street on 2 February 2000, subject to a comment from the Finance Department being received prior to Council consideration of this item.

Extract of Draft Minute
Community Services Committee
3 February 2000

Moved by D. Holmes

That as many new community gardens as possible be established this Spring with the assistance of the Region (at the following locations):

- Laurier at Bronson (empty lot, north side)**
- Centretown near "Bugs"**
- Sandy Hill/Lowertown**
- Southeast Ottawa near Heatherington**
- Vanier**
- Heron Park Community North (east end of Apolydor recently designated as garden park area by the city).**

CARRIED, as amended

That the Region provide access to soil testing procedures. That use of region-owned roto-tilling equipment be approved to dig up new community gardens. That water access be found for each new community garden.

CARRIED, as amended

Moved by M. McGoldrick-Larsen

That the Community Garden Network work with the Nepean Housing Corporation to develop a community garden in Longfields, Madden Court Housing Development as well as the new housing project of 72 units beside Madden Court.

CARRIED, as amended

Moved by W. Byrne

That the Community Garden Network coordinate with Ottawa-Carleton Housing to establish community gardens on their sites, including buildings

CARRIED, as amended

Our File/N/Réf. 03-07-00-0127
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 7 February 2000

TO/DEST. Regional Council

FROM/EXP. Finance Commissioner

SUBJECT/OBJET **COMMUNITY GARDEN NETWORK - FOOD SECURITY
GROUP**

Finance Department Comment

The Community Services Committee approved the following recommendation at its meeting of 3 February 2000:

“That \$20,000 be allocated to the Community Garden initiative to facilitate and offset the cost and development of community gardens within Ottawa-Carleton. Funds for this project are to be provided from the \$20,000 proceeds of sale of non-viable land at 214 Hinchey Street declared surplus (by the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee) on 1 February 2000, subject to a comment from the Finance Department being received prior to Council consideration of this item.”

If Council wishes to assist in offsetting the cost and development of the Community Garden initiative, the revenue generated from the sale of the property located at 214 Hinchey Street can be used as funding source. This revenue will be credited to the “Sale of Surplus Land” account (A/C # 001-119909-407005).

T. Fedec
on behalf of the Finance Commissioner