
Oak Bay Parks
Allotment Garden Meeting

Wednesday January 20, 2010, 4:30 p.m.

Notes of the Oak Bay Allotment Garden meeting held at the Oak Bay Municipal Hall, Wednesday, January 20 2010.

In Attendance:

Monty Holding, Oak Bay Parks and Recreation Commission
Lorna Curtis, Director Oak Bay Parks and Recreation
Lorne Middleton, Oak Bay Parks Services
Jill Preston (Recorder), Parks Clerk
Tara Ney, Oak Bay Municipal Council
Rick Lee, plot holder #1
Jill Lee, plot holder #1
Liz Elliott, plot holder #2
Paul West, plot holder #3
George Anderson, plot holder #4
Pearl Anderson, plot holder #4
Helen Lansdowne, plot holder #5
Sylvia Nielsen, plot holder #6
George Ford, plot holder #7
Dale Dymianiw, plot holder #8
Janet Komars, plot holder #9
Frank Jackson, plot holder #11
Susan Hawkins, plot holder #11
David Korman, plot holder #12
Micqualyn Waldie, waitlist
Carol Davies, waitlist
Tony Nicholson, waitlist
Corey Burger

Call to Order:

Monty Holding called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

1) **Introductions:**

Monty Holding welcomed all in attendance and sign up sheets circulated the table for attendance and information updates.

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2) **Explore Possibility of Modifying Existing plots to create more plots**

Plots are currently a historical mismatch of size and layout. If all plots were sized at 6.5 feet by 17 feet with a path between, 38 plots could be created in place of the existing 12. Discussion followed to explore the possibility of standardizing the size of the existing plots, thereby creating many more plots in the process and meet the demand of the waitlist.

Plot Holder's Comments:

- This would be a disrespectful way to treat plot holders who have invested time, money and patience in establishing soil conditions and plants to obtain crops.
- The smaller size gardens would be 'toy gardens' and would not be able to contain the perennials, berries and vegetables.
- There is limited sunlight in the garden; some smaller plots would be continually in the shade.
- Currently each plot holder deals with their compost and storage; smaller plots would make that impossible. Community composting would be required.
- Some plots have been self limiting in size; however plot holders have had the option to move if a larger plot becomes available.
- Plots should be grandfathered, re-establishing the size once the current tenants relinquish their spot.
- More plots in the area will cause trouble with the current water tap situation.
- Is there a possibility of creating smaller new plots elsewhere in the Municipality and keep the larger plots for those who are interested or need them.
- Some plots are underused; would those tenants be willing to share. Also, if a tenant is ill for a length of time could some one from the waitlist help out temporarily.
- Plots need to be kept to a reasonable size or the gardeners will not want them.
- Due to the current food crisis it is important that sizable plots remain.

Waitlisted Comments:

- We would be willing to wait if the plots were kept to a decent size.
- We would not want one of the small plots as described.

3) **Review Terms of Rental Agreement – consider a 3 year plot rotation**

The Municipality is considering a '3 year plot rotation'.

Plot Holders and attendees on the Waitlist all said 'NO' to this proposal due to the amount of time and money spent establishing their plots.

The Municipality will look into how other communities deal with absentee gardeners.

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4) **Review Annual Cost of Plot Rental**

The current rental rate of \$15 covers one half of the current water bill. Current Municipal expenses for the Allotment Garden include:

- Water: \$340/year
- Leaf Mulch 1-2 times per year:
- Chips for the pathway:

If prices are to increase the gardeners would like some services increased or implemented:

- Year round washroom access at Fireman's Park
- Gated fence to help deter animals, joggers, bikes etc.

5) **Explore Possibilities in the Oak Bay Community to create additional Allotment Gardens**

General Comments:

- The Municipality needs to use a greater imagination to create more plots. Consider underutilized Municipal space. Has the municipality considered:
 - The green space between the ball diamond at Fireman's Park and the Duplex – there are Municipal concerns about liability with baseballs etc.
 - The green space by the pathway between St Patrick and Oliver by Monterey School.
 - Henderson Park, north of the school.
 - Uplands Park.

 - Bowker Creek, behind Oak Bay High School and Armstrong – long walk in with equipment, not a lot of sunlight, limited parking.
- Could the Municipality connect residents with large homes to people who like to garden? A private organization already exists for this purpose; the municipality would not want to take on this project as they would become too responsible and carry too many risks.

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6) **Explore the Possibility of having one 'spokesperson' for the Allotment Gardeners to liaise with parks staff.**

Currently the Oak Bay Allotment Gardens are 'self policed'; other Community Gardens have 'associations'.

The benefits of an Association are:

- o To provide a collective voice
- o A means to getting issues and recommendations to the Municipality
- o Resolve issues within the Association

The current plot holders would hold an initial meeting followed by approximately 2 per year. The municipality would most likely be able to provide meeting space.

Items to consider when creating an Association include but are not limited to:

- o Nomination process
- o Voting process for example: one plot equals one vote, majority votes etc
- o How many meetings can Association Members miss without repercussions?
- o How will the Association liaise with the Municipality?

7) **Questions/Comments**

All items discussed at this meeting will be presented to the Oak Bay Parks and Recreation Commission. We will then schedule another meeting with the current Allotment Gardeners and people on the waitlist.

8) **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 5:40 pm.