

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: <u>06/01/10</u>		Item Number: <u>A-1</u>	
PRCS COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM: Consideration of Issuing a Statement to the City Council Regarding Developing Additional Community Gardens within Culver City.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Pam Robinson, Acting PRCS Director		Phone Number: (310) 253-6655	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒	Attachments: ☐
Public Notification: (Email) Meetings and Agendas – Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission (05/27/10); (Email) Parks, Recreation & Community Service Department Updates (05/27/10); (Email) Senior Citizens (05/27/10).			
Department Approval: Pam Robinson (by P. Mooney) (05/26/2010)		City Attorney Approval: N/A	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: N/A		City Manager Approval: N/A	

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Commission consider issuing a statement to the City Council, through the City Manager's Office, emphasizing the need for developing additional community gardens within Culver City.

BACKGROUND:

At the October 6, 2009 Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission meeting, a member of the public came forward during "Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda" and requested that the Commission agendaize a discussion on expanding the Culver City Community Garden program. She stated that the program had only 16 plots and the community had grown to 39,000 residents. She also commented that the program had not been updated in 35 years, that her neighbor had waited five (5) years to get her community garden plot and that there was currently a minimum three (3) year wait for plots.

Later in the meeting during "Items from Commissioners," Commissioner Stuart requested and received consensus to agendaizing the topic of community gardens at a future meeting. Chair Daly Redholtz suggested that the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee meet with community garden stakeholders to discuss ideas for the possible expansion of the program before the issue was brought before the full Commission.

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At the December 1, 2009 PRCS Commission meeting, Commissioner Kim reported that she and Commissioner Greene, as members of the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee, had met with then PRCS Director La Pointe and members of the community regarding community garden issues.

At the May 4, 2010 PRCS Commission meeting, the issue of community gardens came up during *Agenda Item A-1: Upcoming Agenda Items to be Considered by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Commission and its Subcommittees*. Parks Manager Patrick Reynolds reported that the Parks Division continually gets requests from the public to develop more community garden plots, but unfortunately our parks do not have room for new community gardens. He mentioned that the Redevelopment Agency staff was looking into developing community gardens, at least on a temporary basis, on vacant Agency parcels. It was noted that the issue of developing temporary community gardens on vacant Redevelopment Agency parcels will not come before the PRCS Commission as an Agenda Item, but could come back as an information item. Subsequently, members of the Commission expressed the opinion that both the Commission and the PRCS Department should have some involvement in the development of community gardens within Culver City.

The Culver City Community Garden

Currently, there is only one designated community garden within Culver City. It is located in Veterans' Memorial Park, between the AmVets Building and the Boy Scout Hut, at 10860 Culver Boulevard. There are 16 plots, access to which is determined through placement on a waiting list; the plots are not distributed through a lottery. There are currently 22 on the waiting list and the wait can be anywhere from three to six years.

Eligibility criteria for placement on the Community Garden waiting list are: (1) Culver City residency; and, (2) applicants must dwell in an apartment, condo, or townhome with no gardening space of their own. There is an annual \$30 rental fee for each plot, which includes water and green waste disposal service. Senior and Social Services Disability Specialist Darren Uhl is responsible for overseeing the waiting list, collecting the annual fees, issuing keys, resolving complaints and providing the renters with occasional informational updates. It is estimated that about 40 staff hours annually are spent managing the Community Garden.

Renters are required to have their plot weeded and planted so that the overall garden looks nice and that weeds do not encroach on the neighboring gardens either by ground or air. Gardeners are responsible for removing trash and gardening tools from the area at the finish of each garden use. General maintenance and green waste removal is overseen by the Parks Division; it is estimated that a value of approximately \$3,600 in Parks Division resources are expended annually on the Community Garden.

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Community Gardens in Surrounding Areas

The Los Angeles Community Garden Council (LACGC; a non-profit corporation) serves as a resource for those interested in local community garden programs. LACGC connects people with community garden space in their neighborhood. According to their website (www.lagardencouncil.org):

Approximately 70 community gardens are growing in Los Angeles County, serving 3,900 families. Community gardens are vibrant, cooperative organizations that build neighborhood self-reliance, and reduce poverty, mitigate global warming and benefit the LA River and Ballona Creek watersheds. Los Angeles devotes little taxpayer money to community gardens yet they return abundant neighborhood benefit.

DISCUSSION:

The intent of this evening's agenda item is to give the Commission an opportunity to consider issuing a statement to the City Council, though the City Manager's Office, emphasizing the need for developing additional community gardens within Culver City. Currently there are no plans to develop community gardens within our parks or open space areas; however, if and when this situation changes, such plans would come before the Commission for discussion and possible recommendation to the City Council. A statement such as the one now being considered could be a way for the Commission to convey its' view regarding the importance of community gardens to the City Council in a more general way. The statement might include the following points, among others:

- Community gardens are important assets that improve the overall quality of life
- Community garden programs are highly valued by the public
- Culver City currently has only one community garden, while thousands of residents met the basic eligibility requirements to participate in the program
- The space in our parks is limited, highly programmed and does not lend itself to the development of new community gardens at this time
- The Commission respectfully requests that when the City Council is considering land uses within Culver City, the development of community gardens be given a high priority

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FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the discussion of this Agenda Item.

ATTACHMENTS:

None.

MOTIONS:

That the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission:

1. Issue a statement to the City Council, through the City Manager's Office, emphasizing the need for developing additional community gardens within Culver City.

or

2. Provide staff with alternate suggestions.