



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 23-362, **Version:** 1

Item #: A-6.

(1) Consideration of Forming a PRCS Commission “Community Gardens Ad Hoc Subcommittee;” and (2) If Desired, Appoint Two PRCS Commission Members to the Newly-Formed Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

Meeting Date: November 1, 2022

Contact Person/Dept: Francisca Castillo/PRCS
Phone Number: (310) 253-6645

Fiscal Impact: Yes No

General Fund: Yes No

Public Hearing:

Action Item:

Attachments:

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission (10/28/2022); (E-Mail) Parks, Recreation & Community Service Department Updates (10/28/2022); (E-Mail) Community Gardening (10/27/2022); (E-Mail) Community Garden User Group (10/28/2022)

Department Approval: Armando Abrego, PRCS Director (10/27/2022)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Commission (1) consider forming a PRCS Commission “Community Gardens Ad Hoc Subcommittee;” and (2) if desired, appoint two PRCS Commission Members to the newly-formed Ad Hoc Subcommittee.

BACKGROUND

The former site of the Community Garden, 10860 Culver Boulevard, Culver City CA, 90230, is now under construction as part of the Wende Museum Creative Community Center and Housing Project (the Project; located at 10808-10860 Culver Boulevard). Although the Project originally included plans for a community garden site, the Conditions of Approval of the Comprehensive Plan were amended by the City Council on January 24, 2022, to state: “The Project will provide an equivalent amount of open space on the Project site to replace the displaced community garden. The City will work to relocate the community garden space at a Culver City Park.” At that time, the City Council directed staff to investigate potential alternative locations for the Culver City Community Garden and return with a report.

That initial report on potential alternative locations for the Culver City Community Garden was presented to the City Council on September 19, 2022, by Recreation and Community Services Manager Francisca Castillo. The purpose of the report was to start the conversation on the community garden relocation and obtain further direction from the City Council. The City Council referred the issue to the PRCS Commission to research potential locations and to engage with community to gather their input, ideas and expertise on the topic of community gardens. City Council members indicated that they would like the PRCS Commission and staff to focus on (1) locations with alternatives to taking down trees; (2) consideration of multiple sites for different uses such as communal and community gardens, along with the related development of rules unique to each type of environment; and (3) including an analysis to allow for equity and access in the development and operation of the community garden site(s).

Information Regarding the Former Community Garden

The Culver City Community Garden (Garden) was established to provide a place for active participation in gardening for residents of Culver City who would otherwise not have the opportunity. The earliest Community Garden photograph on file is dated 1975. For many years, the Community Garden was managed by the Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) Department.

To be eligible for a Garden plot, applicants were required to: 1) be a Culver City resident; 2) live in an apartment, condominium, townhome, or other dwelling unit; and 3) have no gardening space available to them. One plot was allowed per family/household. Plots were non-transferable to family members, friends, or others, regardless of the circumstances. The PRCS Department maintained a waiting list of interested plot renters. These guidelines were contained in the Community Garden Rental Agreement, which was last updated by staff in 2018. The Community Garden Plot Rental Fee was \$30.00 annually. A new and/or a replacement key to the Garden was available for purchase for \$11.00.

The Community Garden was approximately 4,500 square feet in size, gated and surrounded by an 8-foot fence. There were 17 plots with four different plot sizes, which were: 18 feet by 8 feet; 18 feet by 4.25 feet; 22 feet by 8 feet; and 22 feet by 4.25 feet. No-fee parking was available in the adjacent parking lot and nearby Veterans Memorial Park parking lots. Per the Rental Agreement, water for plant irrigation was provided to gardeners.

DISCUSSION

During 2010, 2011 and 2012, the PRCS Commission had a Community Gardens Ad Hoc Subcommittee whose purpose was to act as a liaison between the PRCS Commission and the community on all matters pertaining to the development of new community gardens within Culver City. At that time, there was robust public interest in community gardens. Discussions were held regarding ways that groups might build grassroots support for the development of additional community gardens within Culver City. The 2010-2012 Subcommittee did not focus on finding space in Culver City parks for community gardens. Instead, the group focused on nontraditional types of community gardening, such as portable gardens (e.g., on trailer beds), raised bed gardens, rooftop gardens and utilizing vacant lots for community gardens until they were developed. Although these ideas received some support, no community garden plans were formally submitted to the PRCS Commission or the City Council for consideration during those years.

In response to the September 19, 2022, City Council direction, staff is recommending that the PRCS Commission consider forming a “Community Gardens Ad Hoc Subcommittee” (Subcommittee). The Subcommittee members could assist staff in doing outreach, liaise with the community regarding the topic of community gardens, and work toward fulfilling the City Council objectives stated above.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is no fiscal impact associated with this discussion.

ATTACHMENTS

None.

MOTIONS

That the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission:

1. Consider forming a PRCS Commission “Community Gardens Ad Hoc Subcommittee;” and,
2. If desired, appoint two PRCS Commission Members to the newly-formed Ad Hoc Subcommittee.