

Spears Park Community Gardens Project

Kick-Off Meeting - March 24, 2022

Meeting Notes

The Parks + Open Space Director Luis Perez Demorizi provided a power point presentation outlining the Spears Park property location and existing site conditions. The subject location is at the street intersection of Washington and Walnut Park and being proposed as a community garden. The proposed project would only be successful if there was coordinated 'friends' group effort initiated to assist the project to fruition. An advocacy group could be developed among the attendees and potential other interested residents not in attendance. There is an existing community garden at Nahanton Park that could serve as a learning tool to this project at Spears Park. Property survey fieldwork is completed. The city is awaiting final topographic survey documents to begin conceptual design of the gardens.

There was a question-and-answer session that included Newton Parks, Recreation, and Culture staff and approximately 12 Newton residents.

The following list of statements and/or questions were brought forward at the meeting:

- 1) Resident made a statement regarding potential use of community garden including hydroponic gardening and the installation of a perimeter planting buffer.
- 2) Councilor Greenberg made a statement regarding the design of a sitting area at the garden so members of the community can sit and enjoy the garden.
- 3) Resident made a statement regarding the project timeline. PRC stated design would begin within the next 6 months.
- 4) Resident made a statement regarding the project costs. PRC stated survey cost was \$6500.00 and preliminary design was \$14,000. Site amenities cost would be developed in a cost estimate by the design consultant.
- 5) Resident made a statement regarding the lease price of the future garden plots, same as Nahanton? PRC stated plot pricing levels will be determined by the PRC Commissioner as the project develops.
- 6) Resident made a statement regarding the project needing a large amount of compost material.
- 7) Resident made a statement regarding Newton North High School having a compost program and the opportunity for partnership with the HS.
- 8) Councilor Greenberg made a statement regarding the need for water service at site. PRC stated water service would be extended to the property during construction.
- 9) Councilor Greenberg made a statement regarding the funds potentially going back to the garden. PRC stated the decision would have to be made during the project.

- 10) Resident made a statement regarding the development of a friend's group. PRC stated introductions to other friends' groups would be made to this group.
- 11) Resident made a statement regarding remain design fees funds be allocated to the construction of the garden project.
- 12) Resident made a statement regarding the next steps to a friend's group. Would it involve a business plan? How long would it take? PRC responded yes and it would take approximately two months.
- 13) Resident made a statement regarding some of the difficulties of the site , including possible less than ideal soils. PRC will find the best way to provide proper gardening medium (clean soils in raised beds).
- 14) Resident made a statement regarding the allowance of beehives. PRC stated beehives would not be allowed in this parcel due to safety concerns.
- 15) Resident made a statement regarding future meeting arrangements. PRC stated meetings can be a hybrid type or meet at the site outside after the design consultant initiates
- 16) Meeting adjourned.