

# **BUGs Community Meeting Regarding Community Garden Project in Glebe Memorial Park**

Centertown Community Health Centre, March 25, 2009, 7 to 9:00 pm

The following documents information, comments and input provided.

**Total Attendees = between 45 and 50 (does not include meeting facilitators)**

## **Facilitators**

- Susan Wellisch - Community Garden Transition Coordinator, Bytowne Urban Gardens (BUGs)
- Moe Garahan - Just Food / Community Gardening Network (CGN)

## **Attendee Make-Up**

- BUGs (Bytowne Urban Gardens)
- City of Ottawa (Community Funding Division)
- Councillor Doucet's Office (representative)
- Glebe Community Association (GCA)
- Just Food
- Parents
- Ottawa Internationals Soccer Club (OISC)
- Residents (adjacent, Glendale, surrounding streets, neighbourhood)
- Rink representative (Glebe Park Rink Rats)
- Teachers

## **1. BUGs & Project History**

- History of BUGs from past to present
  - Organization website: <http://www.bugsottawa.ca/>
  - Initiative of two Grad students
  - 1998 Garden City Environmental Award
  - Held a number of public workshops on seed starting, organic gardening
  - Involved in community development; outreach through gardening
  - Beaver Barracks was one of three sites, hence the name: Bytowne Urban Gardens ; the only site which survived ten years on (leased site on yearly basis from May to October; 32 plots, no charge but volunteer time; partnership with YMCA, Centretown Community Health Centre, etc. )
  - Last gardening season at Beaver Barracks was 2007. Land being developed by CCOC. As a result, BUGs has been looking for a new home
  - 2008 Funding from City of Ottawa, Green Partnership Program and Community Foundation to help with transition from Beaver Barracks to new location
  - Article in Glebe Report, February 13, 2009 "Community gardening in your community!" received positive feedback (i.e. approximately 18 people emailed asking for plot)
  - See ourselves a bit like an Outdoor Community Centre (serve community through open workshops or programs; encourage people to join; provide learning opportunities for schools, day cares or day camps; provides amenity that complements / beautifies community and can be enjoyed by anyone)

## **2. Just Food / Community Gardening Network (CGN) & Involvement with Project**

- History of Community Garden Network (founded in 1997)
- 2007 Just Food (umbrella organization that includes the CGN; offers workshops and events; serves as information and resource-sharing network that supports the sustainable development of community gardens within the city)
- BUGs is great example of community building
- 2008 Hallmark Proposal to start nine community gardens across City (to date: six have been completed)

## **3. Discussion of Key Issues, Questions &/or Concerns Identified (chaired by Just Food / BUGs)**

- Stressed the fact that community garden is a beneficial use of park space
- A proposal had been shown to attendees present at the March 11 meeting; this map was based on understanding between stakeholders present during meeting at Councillor's office back in January 2009
- Following March 11 meeting, map required amendments to reflect use by soccer group where community garden had been planned
- Landscape architects received new dimensions from soccer group; proposed new map, which was received at Just Food/CGN on Tuesday, March 24, 2009
- Oval portion near Chamberlain Ave. in new area under discussion for location of community garden
  - Soil testing not done for this specific area; hoping to have results by meeting of April 8, 2009
  - Salt drift likely not a concern according to City
- Dimensions at Beaver Barracks were 2900 sq. ft. (29 plots - 10'x10'); the site which had been shown to the March 11, 2009 meeting attendees was 2475 sq. ft. (45'x55'); the new area (oval portion near Chamberlain Ave.) would be  $\frac{2}{3}$  of that (1750 sq. ft.)

N.B. Concern over how BUGs will be able to fit in all its members in a garden of this size; answer was that plot size/type under study; however, BUGs will not be able to provide garden space to all its members

N.B. Concern regarding the possibility that BUGs will ask for more garden space in the park; answer was that BUGs is not currently thinking of asking for more space. However, park use can change, which means that this may be a possibility in the future; baseball diamond was given as example of changing use in the park

N.B. Concern raised about lack of community consultation; BUGs and Just Food/GCN accused of being sneaky; answer was that BUGs and Just Food/CGN thought that they had consulted all stakeholders in good faith; later learned that GNAG is not the only community organization in the Glebe; Glebe Community Association (GCA) aware of BUGs project since late January.

N.B. Concern about closeness to soccer field; soccer balls could be kicked in the garden; answer was that different possibilities will need to be studied to help counter this issue, including for example the use of a retractable protective mesh netting which could be put up during games; this is an idea, needs to be discussed with landscape architect, City Parks Dept, etc.

N.B. Question asked regarding the possibility of including gardens in Central Park; answer was that BUGs and CGN were advised that Central Park was susceptible to flooding; someone raised

the possibility of raised beds in Central Park; answer was that raised bed not feasible because of high-cost issue.

N.B. Concern about vandalism; answer was that presence of BUGs in the park would increase number of adults in the park; statistically shown that higher number of adults help decrease vandalism

N.B. Concern about parking - whether presence of BUGs would decrease parking on adjacent streets; answer was that BUGs gardeners walk and bike to the garden

N.B. Comments made that the old BUGs garden was an eyesore, don't want to live near an eyesore; answer was that BUGs previous garden was built on very different site, not city park; Last year, that site was unkempt - no gardening allowed on premises due to CCOC development project; proposed site in the park created with help of a landscape architect; further, if portion of garden or plot in new site is left unkempt, steering committee will do follow-up with gardener(s) at fault and willing to give plot to someone else if situation not resolved.

N.B. Will BUGs be bringing a shed? Answer was that BUGs will not bring a shed to the park; during summertime, a portion of the shed already onsite would be used to store tools; in the winter, BUGs gardeners will continue to provide storing space for tools.

- BUGs reiterated that it wants to provide another activity in the park; a community garden is a great learning opportunity for kids, adults; BUGs gave assurance
- BUGs and other community gardens started with the help of the CGN use organic gardening practices; pesticides are not used

N.B.: Comment made - BUGs and its gardeners are bearing all risks in the present case; the site can go back to its previous state (grass) should they decide to leave, so there is no conflict

N.B. When you were looking for land, did you contact community association to ask them whether land could be offered elsewhere in the community? Answer was that this was a project which took place under the City's Green Partnership Fund (GPP), a partnership with the City of Ottawa to beautify public space. Private land was not considered as it did not fall within the mandate of the GPP.

N.B. Concern was raised over continuity; what happens in 5 years, once BUGs current leadership is long gone? Answer was that cooperation, good relations with park users, community associations will remain key to BUGs; BUGs constitution, steering committee positions will ensure leadership continuity over the years

N.B.: Attendee(s) proposed that a number of strips of land in different areas of the park be used by BUGs, rather than concentrated in one area, or having to relocate site proposal once again

N.B. Attendee asked about size of plots; Answer was that at previous site (Beaver Barracks), plots were approx. 10'x10', in current area for garden in Glebe Memorial Park under study (approx. 1750 sq. ft), more discussion regarding plot size, models (for ex: communal plot vs. individual plots), will be required

- Attendee mentioned that so far, a number of attendees have raised concerns about what will be taken away from park, rather than what BUGs garden can actually contribute to the community;

BUGs garden would be great opportunity to show concept of sustainability, educational tool; another attendee mentioned that community gardens are thriving across North America, from Vancouver to Montreal, mentioned studies which have shown increase of property value in vicinity of community gardens; great way to encourage biodiversity. Attendee proposed to provide studies regarding community gardens; please send email to [bugscordinator@gmail.com](mailto:bugscordinator@gmail.com) if this is of interest

N.B.: Attendee asked about water; answer was that water solution need to be studied carefully because BUGs original design changed

#### **4. Wrap up/Upcoming Tasks / Dates:**

- Meeting minutes posted for review & comment
  - Posted on BUGs website ([www.bugsottawa.ca](http://www.bugsottawa.ca))
  - Upcoming meeting - April 8, 2009:
    - Presentation of proposal and decision, based on March 11<sup>th</sup> and March 25<sup>th</sup> meetings
    - Detailed study of garden proposal and design

#### **Please Take Note:**

- **If you have further comments, input & ideas to add to the March 25<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes, please email: [bugscordinator@gmail.com](mailto:bugscordinator@gmail.com) by Monday, April 6, 2009**