



Staff Report for Council Meeting

Date of Meeting: March 24, 2021

Report Number: SRCS.21.06

Department: Community Services
Division: Public Works Operation

Subject: Community Garden Agreement Execution

Purpose:

To update delegated authority permissions for actions pertaining to execution of community garden agreements as outlined in the City's approved Community Garden Policy.

Recommendation(s):

- a) That Staff Report SRCS.21.06 be received.
- b) That the Director of Public Works Operations be delegated the authority to authorize the entry into and termination, administer and execute Community Garden Agreements and renewals thereof.

Contact Person:

Ann Marie Farrugia, Manager of Parks Operations, Extension 5509

Report Approval:

Submitted by: Darlene Joslin, Commissioner of Community Services

Approved by: Mary-Anne Dempster, City Manager

All reports are electronically reviewed and/or approved by the Division Director, Treasurer (as required), City Solicitor (as required), Commissioner, and City Manager. Details of the reports approval are attached.

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Background:

The City's Environment Strategy (2014) provides direction to foster accessibility to locally sourced food in Richmond Hill. Access to local food provides healthier alternatives for residents and reduces the environmental impacts of long distance transportation of food. In July 2017, Council approved a Community Garden Policy (SREIS.17.012 – Attachment 1) for Richmond Hill. The policy provides a framework to guide where and how new gardens are created within the City and establishes the level of support that is provided to gardens on public lands.

Richmond Hill currently supports one (1) Allotment Garden and seven (7) Collective Gardens on City property. The Phyllis Rawlinson Allotment Garden, which is administered and operated by the City, provides residents with an opportunity to rent individual seasonal or annual garden plots. Located in Phyllis Rawlinson Park, the Allotment Garden is very popular with all plots fully leased in 2020 (68 gardeners). In contrast, Collective Gardens are managed by external community groups, volunteers or organizations and receive limited support by the City. Collective Gardens range from vegetable, ornamental flowers and pollinator gardens allowing a diversity of engagement and stewardship opportunities within the Community.

Execution of New Garden Agreements

The process to establish Collective Gardens on City property requires an executed agreement between the City and the Collective Garden group. Due to the recent organizational restructuring, administration of the Community Garden Program was transferred to the Community Services Department, Public Works Division within the Parks Operations Section. To facilitate administration of the program, such as renewing existing garden agreements and/or executing new agreements, SRCS.21.06 recommends that the Director of Public Works Operations be granted authority to execute Community Garden agreements. This authority will ensure management and administration of current and future gardens is established in an efficient and timely manner.

Financial/Staffing/Other Implications:

There are no new financial, staffing, or other implications associated with this report.

Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities 2020-2022:

As per Richmond Hill's Community Garden Policy, a revised delegated authority to execute community garden agreements will enable the City to continue fostering stewardship of green spaces and community building in the City. As such, the City's Community Garden Program supports Balancing Growth and Green as well as Strong Sense of Belonging in Council's 2020-2022 Strategic Priorities.

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Climate Change Considerations:

This initiative contributes to climate change mitigation by promoting local food production and the planting of native plants, which helps to reduce carbon emissions associated with food transportation and absorb/filter carbon emissions in the air.

Conclusion:

As a result of recent organizational restructuring and the transfer of the Community Garden Program to the Public Works Division in the Community Services Department, staff are requesting that delegated authority be granted to the Director of Public Works Operations to execute new Community Garden Agreements and renewals. This authority will help to ensure administration of the program is aligned within the appropriate division and department and ensures the City is prepared to administer the Community Garden Program for the upcoming 2021 garden season.

Attachments:

The following attached documents may include scanned images of appendices, maps and photographs. All attachments have been reviewed and made accessible. If you require an alternative format please call the contact person listed in this document.

- Attachment A – Community Garden Policy

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Community Garden Agreement Execution.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment A to Staff Report SRCS.21.06.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Mar 8, 2021

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Grant Taylor - Mar 4, 2021 - 2:35 PM

Antonio Dimilta - Mar 4, 2021 - 2:53 PM

Darlene Joslin - Mar 8, 2021 - 9:13 AM

MaryAnne Dempster - Mar 8, 2021 - 10:18 AM