



**City of Kingston  
Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee  
Meeting Number 01-2024  
Addendum**

**Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.  
Hosted at City Hall in Council Chamber**

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**8. Business**

The consent of the Committee is requested for the withdrawal of Business Item c), Community Garden Policy Update (Report Number ARCP-24-004).

**11. Correspondence**

- a) Correspondence received from Nick Laan, dated Monday, December 11, 2023, regarding the Community Garden Policy Update Report.

Addendum Pages 1 – 4

**From:** [Sullivan,Iain](#)  
**To:** [Sullivan,Iain](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Community Garden Policy Update  
**Date:** December 12, 2023 1:49:23 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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**From:** Jaynes,Janet <[jjaynes@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:jjaynes@cityofkingston.ca)>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 9:06 AM  
**To:** Nicholas Laan  
**Cc:** Campbell,Jennifer <[jlcampbell@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:jlcampbell@cityofkingston.ca)>; Gargaro,Tony <[tgargaro@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:tgargaro@cityofkingston.ca)>; O'Connor,Christine <[cloconnor@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:cloconnor@cityofkingston.ca)>  
**Subject:** RE: Community Garden Policy Update

Hello,

The City of Kingston acknowledges and thanks you for your communication. Your correspondence has been provided to all Members of the Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee and appropriate City staff. Please be advised that your correspondence may form part of the public agendas and minutes, and therefore will be made available to members of the public at the meetings, through requests, and through the website of the Corporation of the City of Kingston. Contact information, such as phone numbers and email addresses, will be redacted from documents shared with the public.



**Janet Jaynes (she/her/hers)**

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The City of Kingston acknowledges that we are on the traditional homeland of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat, and thanks these nations for their care and stewardship over this shared land.

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**From:** Nicholas Laan  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 8:58 AM  
**To:** Chaves,Paul <[pchaves@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:pchaves@cityofkingston.ca)>; Amos,Don <[damos@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:damos@cityofkingston.ca)>; Boehme, Ryan N. <[rboehme@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:rboehme@cityofkingston.ca)>; Osanic,Lisa <[losanic@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:losanic@cityofkingston.ca)>; Ridge,Gregory <[gridge@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:gridge@cityofkingston.ca)>; Stephen,Wendy <[wstephen@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:wstephen@cityofkingston.ca)>; City Clerk <[CityClerk@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:CityClerk@cityofkingston.ca)>

**Subject:** Community Garden Policy Update

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Hello members of the ARCP committee,

I am writing in reference to your meeting this Wednesday December 13<sup>th</sup> and the Community Garden Policy updates ( Report Number ARCP-24-004). I am urging you to not pass the policy update at this time and send it back for amendments.

The City staff have done an excellent job running the get involved engagement survey and getting feedback from residents. The in person meeting of community garden coordinators was also very helpful and informative. It has been great to see City Staff who are excited and supportive of community gardens at these meetings. What I am noting from the meeting is that the staff have come up with a good plan to make the process for finding and starting a new garden on city land more streamlined and efficient with well defined timelines. My concern is that many of the other issues brought up in the survey and consultation process have not made very much progress in this policy change. It is very important that we get this right because the current policy is holding back gardens from being the climate fighting, food security hubs that we all want to see them become.

Through my 15 years of experience working with the City through Oak Street Community Garden I have come to understand how important this policy document is. We have run into many situations where staff understand our situation and are supportive of our needs. Many times liability concerns based on what is written in the policy has gotten in the way of progress which would make the city a more food secure and accessible space for all. I have seen many gardens on privately owned land in the city soar ahead to become examples of sustainability that the gardens on City owned land are striving to do but often get blocked by policy.

Here are the sections in the policy that I believe need further revision before approval:

3.4.2.2 site requirements:

i. Above ground raised beds are an important part of any community garden for accessibility reasons and should be included in every site. The current issue is that the policy makes it very challenging to do any growing of food in ground. One major issue is the prohibitive cost associated with building a large number of raised beds for a decent sized garden. The raised

beds also need frequent replacement as they tend to rot away after roughly five years. We need to start putting emphasis on stewarding and improving our local soils. It is the more sustainable solution as it involves less material inputs and encourages people to start healing the local soil and adding carbon sequestration and lowering water use through the use of mulches and compost.

iv. Checking for past land use is a great start in finding spots to establish a new garden. We desperately need to have the City do a soil test in all locations. We have had many promising sites and projects rejected or delayed because there is potential concern over soil quality. In many of these situations a test could easily mitigate concerns or also allow us to make minor changes to a project based on the information available. These tests would also make it easier to wave the requirements of all beds being raised therefore reducing material costs and expense of establishing a new garden.

#### 3.4.4

vii – General Liability Insurance. During the last three years the city has been providing insurance for gardens who have requested. We are very low budget organizations and this cost was a significant budget line for our community. We felt like the current situation had been an improvement but do not see a change reflected in the policy here.

xii – Environmental innovation and demonstration is encouraged. This is great to read in the policy but in practice any innovations we attempt to implement at the garden tend to take years of back and fourth before we are allowed to make changes on the ground. The long delays and waits often lead to disengagement in our volunteer groups.

xiv – Encouraging water conservation in all gardens is an excellent goal and I stand behind any measures to get community gardens to implement water saving practices. Charging for city water on site however is another significant barrier to a low funded group that is trying to improve food access to vulnerable populations. Originally gardens were not charged for water access. Newer gardens who have started up after this policy change have expressed that running for years without water is challenging to start a new garden and environmentally unsustainable, as many people start driving vs walking and cycling to sites in order to bring water with them. When they finally get city water brought in they end up having to increasing their fees to members which makes equal access for some members more challenging.

#### 3.4.6.1

i.v – All trees and shrubs need prior approval before planting. Having helped start Oak Street Food Forest this line is very challenging. Young trees die and need to be replaced and sometimes nurseries have a very narrow window for ordering stock. Also many plants at nurseries go out of stock fast. Communication back and fourth with the city has tended to take

months for simple requests. This whole process makes it near impossible for establishing a food forest or little forest. I think a better approach would be to have an approved idea with a list of backup or similar trees. Allow the group to make decisions on the ground as they arise and report changes in the end of year report to the city. This is the current approach that we had agreed to with city staff and it is important to have in writing as part of the policy moving forward.

3.4.6.2 – liability insurance – see my comments above in section 3.4.4 vii

Finally I encourage you to read all the comments in Exhibit D of ARCP-24-004. I think you will find that many of the community feedback comments support the changes I am requesting in this message.

Thank you for all the work that you do in the city and please continue to work towards making it a sustainable, climate friendly, livable place.

Nick Laan

Oak Street Community Garden and Food Forest



**City of Kingston  
Arts, Recreation & Community Policies Committee  
Meeting Number 01-2024  
Addendum 2**

**Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.  
Hosted at City Hall in Council Chamber**

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**11. Correspondence**

- b)** Correspondence received from Joyce Hostyn, dated Wednesday, December 13, 2023, regarding the Community Garden Policy Update Report.

Addendum Pages 1 – 5

- c)** Correspondence received from Cathy Christie, dated Wednesday, December 13, 2023, regarding the Community Garden Policy Update Report.

Addendum Pages 6 – 9













**From:** [Jaynes,Janet](#)  
**To:**  
**Cc:** [Campbell,Jennifer](#); [Gargaro,Tony](#); [Sullivan,Iain](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Community Garden Policy  
**Date:** December 13, 2023 1:05:05 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)  
[image003.png](#)  
[image004.png](#)

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**From:** cathy christie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 13, 2023 12:53 PM  
**To:** Osanic,Lisa <losanic@cityofkingston.ca>; Stephen,Wendy <wstephen@cityofkingston.ca>; Chaves,Paul <pchaves@cityofkingston.ca>; Boehme, Ryan N. <rboehme@cityofkingston.ca>; Amos,Don <damos@cityofkingston.ca>; Ridge,Gregory <gridge@cityofkingston.ca>  
**Cc:** Jaynes,Janet <jjaynes@cityofkingston.ca>; Ayla Fenton  
**Subject:** Community Garden Policy

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside your organization. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

Greetings,

I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who has worked on this critical policy document.

My name is Cathy Christie. I am on the Board at Lakeside Community Garden, and I serve as the Chair of KASSI- Kingston Area Seed System Initiative. KASSI is a small, local non-profit working to ensure that locally adapted, climate resilient seeds are always available for everyone in our community. You can learn more about our work at [seedsgrowfood.org](http://seedsgrowfood.org).

Seeds are the foundation of our local food systems and ecosystems. They need to be acknowledged, celebrated and included in the Community Garden Policy.

People have been saving and sharing seeds for thousands of years. This practice is being undermined by the four multinational chemical companies that control the global seed supply. Most of the seed sold in Canada is grown somewhere else in the world (often under conditions that exploit the environment and the growers) and transported to Canada where it is packaged and sold.

We need to grow and save local seeds because they are the foundation of local food systems and local ecosystems.

Community Gardens provide a unique place to bring people together to recover the lost art of seed saving and protect our local seeds for all the excellent reasons outlined in the draft policy.

I have included edits in the Appendix (below) that demonstrate how easy it would be to strengthen the policy by adding SEEDS wherever possible.

I would also like to respectfully suggest that you replace the term “food security” with “food and seed sovereignty” in the policy.

“Food security does not distinguish where food comes from, or the conditions under which it is produced and distributed. National food security targets are often met by sourcing food produced under environmentally destructive and exploitative conditions, and supported by subsidies and policies that destroy local food producers but benefit agribusiness corporations.

Food sovereignty emphasizes ecologically appropriate production, distribution and consumption, social-economic justice, and local food systems as ways to tackle hunger and poverty and guarantee sustainable food security for all peoples. (Change for Children <https://changeformchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Food-Security-vs-Food-Sovereignty.pdf>)

To have food sovereignty we must have seed sovereignty because local seeds (for food, medicine and our native kin) are the foundation of local food systems and local ecosystems.

“The Lexicon of Sustainability defines seed sovereignty as “The farmer’s right to breed and exchange diverse open source seeds which can be saved and which are not patented, genetically modified, owned or controlled by emerging seed giants.”

When smallholder farmers are empowered to take control of their seed security, they also build seed sovereignty. Keeping seeds in farmers’ hands and maintaining a high diversity of seeds is critical for building resilient food systems in the face of climate change.” (SeedChange- <https://weseedchange.org/food-sovereignty/>)

Community Gardens play a vital role building and maintaining local resilient food and seed systems and ecosystems when we include gardener or grower in this definition.

Finally, I would like to add my voice to the many people who have expressed their concerns about raised beds in Community Gardens. Of course, there is a place for them to ensure accessible places for everyone who needs them, but they should not be a requirement for every bed. Here’s why...

In 2018 we were thrilled when KASSI received a grant from the City of Kingston and the United Way to build eight raised beds at Lakeside Community Garden (LCG). At the time the space that we had

kindly been allocated at Lakeside was overgrown with pasture grass. Our attempts to plow it in previous years (when there was a lot of rain) simply churned up the clay and created a swamp where thick clumps of pasture grass were the only plants that grew and thrived.

It was our first attempt to use raised beds to grow seeds and it has been an unmitigated disaster. Every fall we would prepare the beds for the subsequent growing season and no matter what we did to remove or suppress the pasture grass it would emerge again! and take over the raised beds. The boards that we used to raise the beds provided a sanctuary for the pasture grass lurking below or growing in the areas around the KASSI Seed Gardens. It was a nightmare.

We removed the boards this year. It was a lot of work. I hope that you can picture our relief every time we removed a board, knowing that the roots of the pasture grass would have nowhere to hide. These beds without their boards will be so much easier to plant and maintain in the spring.

We also created several beds to grow KASSI seeds with leaf bags and compost (no boards just to be clear) over the past few years. These are inexpensive and ready to plant when we make them. The pasture grass is easy to access and remove so they are much easier to maintain.

These beds give us the flexibility that we need to grow enough plants to produce seeds that preserve the genetic variation of a given crop or species. Some of our crops require 80+ plants. We simply couldn't afford to build raised beds following the directions in the Draft Policy. Our ability to grow locally adapted, climate resilient seeds would be severely limited by this requirement.

Thank you for considering these requests.

I would be delighted to meet with you to discuss any questions or concerns that you have about any of these suggestions. I would also be happy to meet you at Lakeside Community Garden so that you can see all the wonderful things that are happening there.

Thank you for the work that you are doing to make Kingston a more sustainable city.

Sincerely,

Cathy Christie

**Appendix:** Please use these suggestions to guide your work and add SEEDS anywhere that food is included in the draft document. If you send me this information as a Word document, I could make these changes and send it back to you.

### **3.0 Policy Statement**

#### **3.1 Policy Goal**

...Supporting the Community Gardens Program will:

- i. Ensure an inclusive, healthy, and safe community by removing barriers to urban food AND SEED production and supporting the development of a broad community food sustainability plan.
- ii. Assist in the protection and conservation of the natural environment through less waste generation, proactive 2 environmental management and building a resilient local food AND SEED systems, in alignment with the development of a community food SOVEREIGNTY security plan

- iii.
- iv. Maintain and increase the protection of green infrastructure (e.g., existing greenspaces, new trees, and SEED and pollinator gardens) in alignment with Kingston’s Tree Equity Program.

**3.2 Community Gardens Program**

The Community Gardens Program encompasses any piece of land gardened collectively by members of the community, in partnership with a non-profit society and the City. The Community Gardens Program includes, but is not limited to, the following types of activities:

- i. Growing annual and perennial food plants, medicinal plants, and flowers
- ii. Growing Indigenous, cultural, and native plants
- iii. Pollinator gardens
- iv. Little forests
- v. Community Orchards and Edible forests including fruit trees, nut trees and/or shrubs
- vi. Edible landscaping

The City recognizes that community led planting management on City owned lands promotes community development, increases opportunities for recreation, socialization and healthier lifestyle, provides access to healthy LOCAL food AND SEED, permits sustainable agriculture, and contributes to an increased tree canopy.

**3.4 Policy Application**

**3.4.1 Community Gardens Program Features**

The Community Gardens Program may have the following features:

- i. Allotment plots, communal plots, donation plots or gardens and amenities such as access to water supply and shared tools.
- ii. Accessible compost bins, a tool storage shed, signage and other provisions necessary for the operation of the Community Gardens Program, subject to City approval.

The Community Gardens Program may:

- i. Promote the production of local, healthy and fresh food AND SEED;
- ii. Enhance local food AND SEED SOVEREIGNTY ~~security~~;
- iii. Provide gardening and other environmental education activities to encourage the involvement of schools, youth groups, and older adults in gardening AND SEED SAVING activities;
- iv. Host harvest festivals and other family-oriented activities that encourage positive social interactions among all community members;
- v. Encourage partnerships with other community organizations; and

Donate surplus food AND SEEDS to local food AND SEED distribution organizations, food pantries, food