

Peterborough

Food Action Network



March 17, 2017

Arenas, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
c/o Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services
City of Peterborough
kdoherly@peterborough.ca

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of Peterborough's Food Action Network and Nourish, we thank you for your continued support of Peterborough's Community Gardens. We would like to provide you with feedback on the Report APRAC17-002: Water Access for Community Gardens presented and accepted at the February 28th meeting of the Arenas, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, with the hopes that you might reconsider some of the recommendations, and offer your support for a proposed solution for the ongoing water shortage being experienced by four gardens currently located on city property.

First of all, we wish to thank municipal staff, and the committee, for working and committing to ensuring that all future community gardens that are located in city parks will have access to water. This will go a long way to ensuring the resilience and success of these community efforts to strengthen food security for individuals and families living in the city.

However, we would like to further discuss some of the points under the title 'Recommended Solutions' in the Report. Both suggested limits on proposed locations, and timelines being proposed could unintentionally jeopardize the community development approach that has worked so successfully in creating the thriving network of gardens that currently exist in Peterborough. We would respectfully recommend that timelines for submissions be later in the winter, so that they align with the March meeting of your committee, where decisions can be made regarding new garden allocations. It has been our experience that interest in gardens does not emerge until the new year, with many members of the public not ready to plan until spring is in sight. Our experience has been that requests for new gardens typically occur between January and March, and this has allowed us enough time to complete the required steps outlined in the Community Garden Policy. We understand that you need to have information in a timely way in order to make a decision prior to growing season. For this reason, we are requesting that a deadline of early March be set in order to ensure that you would have what you need to review and provide approval at your March meeting?

Although your recent decisions were very helpful in addressing the future needs of gardens for water, we are still left with the reality that four existing gardens located on city property do not have water. We would like to propose the following solution: that the gardens purchase water

storage tanks at their expense and that the city use its existing watering vehicles and water supply to fill the tanks on a regular basis during the summer. In this scenario, the community is making the major investment and the city is being asked to make a minor adjustment to its existing operations to accommodate our need for water. All gardens are encouraged to set-up water catchment systems, but in the event of a drought, these systems cannot provide sufficient water for community gardens.

It is our hope that you may be able to revisit this issue in order to come up with a planning process that will enhance and not threaten the future success of urban agriculture in the city.

And in addition, we are asking for the city's support in finding a sustainable solution for four of our very popular and much loved gardens.

We would be very happy to discuss this in person at your request.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rosana Salvaterra

Chair, Peterborough Food Action Network

Jillian Bishop

Community Food Cultivator, Nourish