
TOWN OF BRADFORD WEST GWILLIMBURY COMMUNITY GARDEN POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury recognizes that community gardens provide health, economic, educational, social, and environmental benefits to participants and the community at-large. They provide for a sense of community by connecting people with similar interests and create opportunities for inter-cultural and inter-generational interaction. Community gardens can also be an important source of low-cost, nutritious food while promoting food security for participants. The Town's Official Plan seeks to recognize and reinforce both a strong urban centre and a strong agricultural community. Community garden activities bring both of these perspectives together.

A *communal garden* (also referred to as a community garden) is a single piece of land gardened collectively by a group of people. The resulting produce and/or plant materials are distributed amongst the volunteers or donated to specific causes (food banks, community meal organizations, crisis care facilities, etc.)

Allotment gardens (also referred to as community gardens) are lands separated into plots that are assigned to individuals, families, or groups and cultivated separately. The resulting produce and/or plant products are owned by the gardeners of the assigned plots.

For the purposes of this policy, the term *community garden* encompasses both meanings.

The following policy sets out the manner in which community gardens on publicly-owned lands will be administered.

2.0 SCOPE

The Community Gardens Policy applies to all publicly-owned lands within the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury.

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Community Garden Administration

The administration of each community garden facility is to be conducted by a non-profit organization, hereafter referred to as the "Community Garden Committee."

3.1.1 Community Garden Committee Responsibilities

The Community Garden Committee is responsible for:

- i. Ensuring all gardeners sign an agreement to participate in the garden that outlines the conditions of participation, including a waiver to hold the Town harmless and indemnification clause;

- ii. Orienting all new gardeners to the community garden facility, including water use, communal space, equipment usage and storage, expectations, and rules of conduct;
- iii. Meeting with Town staff at the beginning, mid, and end of season to monitor the garden's progress and to address issues in a timely fashion;
- iv. Charging, collecting, and accounting for fees received from gardeners on an annual basis. The amount of the fee shall be decided by consensus of the Community Garden Committee. All revenues collected are to be used for the purposes of the Community Garden Committee's administration, maintenance, and operation of the community garden facility and do not have to be remitted to the Town. The fee shall not exceed \$50 per gardener per year, unless otherwise authorized by Council; and
- v. Providing an annual status report to Council by November 30 of each year that details the number of plots, active gardeners, waitlist information, fee collection and usage, fundraising, expenses, and partnerships with businesses and other organizations.

3.1.2 Community Garden Committee Selection

Applications to be considered as a Community Garden Committee must be submitted to the Director of Leisure Services by January 31. All groups applying to be a Community Garden Committee must be of a non-profit and/or charitable nature. Applications must demonstrate that they have:

- i. A minimum of five (5) active volunteers committed to the development, maintenance, and operation of the community garden facility;
- ii. Designated a "Community Garden Administrator" who will serve as the primary point of contact with the Town and assumes ultimate responsibility for the administration, maintenance, and operation of the community garden facility and ensures compliance with the Community Garden Policy;
- iii. Designated a "Community Garden Treasurer" who will be responsible for collecting fees, maintaining financial records, and preparing an annual report to the Town by November 30 of each year that includes the number of plots, active gardeners, waitlist, fees, fundraising, expenses, and partnerships with businesses and other organizations; and
- iv. Created a document to describe how the Community Garden Committee will be organized and plan to operate the garden facility, including:
 - a. A democratic structure to designate leadership and make decisions within the Community Garden Committee;
 - b. The process of how members of the public may join the Community Garden Committee; and
 - c. Any additional rules of conduct agreed upon by the majority of the Community Garden Committee.

Council will appoint the Community Garden Committee by April 30. The maximum term of a Community Garden Committee is five (5) years. The Town reserves the right to cancel or end the Community Garden Committee's term at any time. At the end of the

term, the incumbent Community Garden Committee is permitted to re-apply in accordance with the process outlined in section 3.1.2 above.

When faced with more applications for Community Garden Committee than community garden facilities, Council will select a Community Garden Committee by evaluating the following:

- The strength and quality of the application;
- The applicant's track record with community activities and events; and
- A demonstrated commitment to the Town.

3.2 Community Garden Rules

The Community Garden Committee is responsible for ensuring that the administration, maintenance, and operation of the community garden facility complies with the following:

1. Participation in the community garden facility must be made on a first come, first served basis with a preference to those who are Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury residents.
2. Access to the community garden facility is seasonal (May 1 – October 31). All above ground materials, including plantings, stakes, and/or markers, must be removed by October 31 unless the gardener has reserved the same plot for the following year. Then, only perennials may remain over the winter season.
3. Community garden facilities are open to the gardeners between sunrise and sunset. The Community Garden Committee may designate a more restrictive access timeframe, as per rule 5 below.
4. The use of pesticides is not permitted in the community garden facility at any time. Fertilizers must be used according to manufacturer's instructions and shall not be left unattended. The use of organic fertilizers and compost is encouraged, preferred, and recommended.
5. Any additional rules agreed on in consensus by the Community Garden Committee.

3.3 Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Support and Commitment

The Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury supports the use of certain public lands for community gardens and commits that:

1. The Town will provide initial assistance to construct the community garden, including fencing, bed structures, walkways, and accessory facilities, where applicable and available.
2. The Town will supply, locate, and empty recycling and trash containers as part of routine property maintenance.
3. The Town will host a website dedicated to community garden information.
4. The Town reserves the right to conduct inspections of the community garden facility. If any contravention of Town by-laws, rules, policies, and/or procedures is found, the Community Garden Administrator will be notified. Depending on the severity of the infraction, the restriction and/or cancellation of the gardener's privileges may result.
5. The Town reserves the right to discontinue or cancel the community garden program at any time with 30 days written notice to all gardeners.

3.4 Gardener's Responsibilities

Interested gardeners will apply to the Community Garden Committee for access to the community garden and agree:

1. To pay an annual rental fee to rent a plot within a designated community garden;
2. To keep their plot(s) weeded and tidy;
3. That if a gardener's plot becomes unkempt and/or invasive to other plots, they will be given 10 days notice to remedy the situation by the Community Garden Committee. If the gardener does not comply within 10 days, their plot may be remedied by the Community Garden Committee, reassigned to another gardener, and/or have their annual fee forfeited;
4. To not plant corn and/or any tall crops where they will shade other gardener's plots unless the gardener can demonstrate that there will not be a negative effect to the satisfaction of the Community Garden Committee;
5. That garden plots may be used to grow vegetables, grains, berries, fruits, beans, herbs, and flowers;
6. Smoking is prohibited within the community garden facility;
7. Pets are not permitted in the community garden facility;
8. That gardeners are responsible for supervising any guests they bring to the community garden facility, including other adults, youth, and children;
9. That gardeners shall not sell garden produce or engage in for-profit business practices resulting from the community garden facility. Gardeners may fundraise for site improvements and activities;
10. That all structures, facilities, and/or buildings not provided by the Town must receive approval from the Director of Leisure Services and/or his/her designate prior to installation;
11. That theft of items in or around the garden will result in expulsion; and
12. That any gardener who feels that the rules governing the community garden have been violated is to provide a written complaint to the Community Garden Administrator.

DATE DRAFTED: May 26, 2014

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DATE OF REVISION: June 3, 2014