

MEMORANDUM NO. M17-112

TO: Recreation Committee
FROM: Dean R. Bostrom, Executive Director
Craig Talsma, Deputy Director/Director Admin & Finance
Mike Kies, Director Recreation & Facilities
Dustin Hugen, Director Parks & Facilities Services
RE: Chino Park Community Gardens
DATE: October 11, 2017

Background

Within the 2014 Comprehensive Master Plan, community gardens were identified within Chino Park as a future unfunded capital project. This initiative is consistent with our mission of being environmentally responsible and also our district goals to (1) create and sustain quality parks, facilities, programs and services and (2) embrace conservation and environmental stewardship to help provide long term sustainability. The 2017 budget includes \$5,000 for development of the community gardens at Chino Park.

In the fall of 2016, the park district and the Village were approached by Community Rep Linda Dressler, who is also a local real estate agent, regarding a community-based grant program established by the National Association of Realtors (NAR). While we were unable to meet the grant deadline last year due to timing, we have submitted the grant application this year prior to the October 15, 2017 deadline. The maximum grant award is for \$5,000.

Chino Park is currently leased from the Village of Hoffman Estates through an Intergovernmental Agreement. The agreement was approved in 2008 with a term of 20 years. Within the agreement, the Village must approve all physical improvements proposed by the park district.

Per district Policy 05.17 *Notification of Park and Facility Improvements*, a public meeting was held on October 3, 2017 at 7pm in the Triphahn Center boardroom (see attached minutes).

15 days prior to the meeting all residents located within 300' of the park's boundaries (85 residents) received a postcard informing them of the public meeting and a large sign was posted at the entrance to the park providing details of the public meeting.

Three residents were in attendance representing two households. All three residents voiced their opinions regarding the proposed garden plots. Comments made included: garden plots in general are an eyesore; non-residents should be prohibited from renting garden plots; the district should make other recreational and aesthetic improvements to the park; the garden plots should be located elsewhere such as Village Hall.

Additional discussion was held on the future potential of making available additional garden plots at Chino Park if the initial 16 garden plots were determined to be successful in 2018. No decisions were made regarding the future expansion other than that another public meeting would be held prior to the park board determining whether or not additional garden plots would be made available following the 2018 planting season.

Following the public meeting, staff evaluated the concerns addressed at the meeting regarding the garden plots being an eyesore. In addition, preliminary rules and regulations regarding the rental of garden plots were evaluated. It was determined that only four or five households who live on Evanston Street would be able to visually see the garden plots from their property and that rules and regulations could be revised to address the garden plots from becoming an eyesore.

Implications

Attached is a conceptual plan for the garden plots including phases to add additional garden plots in the future.

Each of the 16 garden plots is 15’x15’ with a wood chip path between each of the plots similar to the design of the Village’s two garden plots as well as most other park districts that have community garden plots. In addition to the 16 garden plots there are four additional ADA accessible plots. Staff is in the process of securing a prospective Eagle Scout to build the four ADA planters. Currently the Village has two community gardens; one at Sunderledge Farm which contains 30 plots and the Westbury Fire Station which contains 20 plots; and sell out the first day registration is open.

The total budget for the garden plots is \$10,000 with the district budgeting \$5,000 in 2017 and an additional \$5,000 anticipated from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) grant. The breakdown of the \$10,000 budget is as follows.

- \$5,200: New asphalt to allow for ADA accessibility
- \$4,000: Water supply necessary to support the gardens
- \$ 800: Construct the ADA accessible planters and misc. items

Attached is a copy of the proposed guidelines for maintaining and programming the community garden plots. If approved, the garden plots will be made available for rental starting April 2, 2018.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the proposed community gardens as depicted on the conceptual plan as well as the proposed operating guidelines. If the NAR grant is not secured, staff recommends an additional \$5,000 be included in the 2018 budget to fully fund the overall anticipated expenses for the first phase of the project. The park board approval of the proposed garden plots would be contingent upon the Village’s approval of the proposed community garden plots.