

Cates Hill Neighbourhood Association

COMMUNITY GARDEN PROPOSAL



Spring 2010

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Acknowledgements

This document is the result of the collective efforts of the following local residents:

- Brett Dowler
- Joanne Fallow
- Jennifer Hall
- Jack and Julie Headley
- Nicola Murray
- Owen Plowman

We are very grateful to Karen Wristen for sharing her insight and wisdom regarding Community Gardens, and to the Bowen Agricultural Alliance for their support.

Contact

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Summary

This document is a proposal to Bowen Island Municipality requesting:

1. Permission for the establishment of a Community Garden in the Cates Hill Neighbourhood Park on Bowen Island;
2. Support in the amount of \$20,000 in cash and in-kind services and materials to “jump start” the development of the physical infrastructure needed for the Garden.

In the Neighbourhood Park, there are, essentially, three areas on three levels. The “middle level” (sometimes referred to as the “middle tier” currently has a labyrinth constructed at the western end, but the remainder of that level is under-utilized land, left devoid of vegetation and topsoil when the local area was first developed.

We envisage establishing a Community Garden in this location, to transform it into a vibrant centre of community activity and learning: an “outdoor classroom” where families will participate in organic food culture, and learn about the importance of water conservation and restoring biodiversity.

Background

The question of what to do with the unfinished portion of the “middle level” of the Neighbourhood Park has arisen at many neighbourhood gatherings, and it has been discussed extensively at the Cates Hill Neighbourhood Association’s Annual General Meetings. The land is Municipal property, and there has always been strong interest on the part of the Municipality in seeing some sort of community facility located on it.

At the Cates Hill Neighbourhood Association’s 2008 AGM, the question arose again, and several options were proposed. A group of volunteers formed a committee to determine which options were of most interest to the local residents; they designed a short survey to canvas the community about uses that they would support, either through frequent use, money, or labour. Many ideas were presented in the survey, which was delivered on-line and door-to-door.

Survey results indicated that the greatest interest was in establishing a fenced community garden adjacent to the labyrinth. The survey and results were presented to the members of the Cates Hill Neighbourhood Association at the 2009 AGM, where Karen Wristen of the Bowen Agricultural Alliance spoke about the process of developing Community Gardens. Discussion ensued and a formal motion to move forward with the development of the land for a community garden was voted on by the membership, and carried.

The neighbourhood residents are now ready to embark on the development of the Cates Hill Community Garden in 2010. An informal planning committee of seven residents have held several meetings in early 2010, and worked to achieve this objective.

Vision

We intend to create the first self-regulating Community Garden on Bowen Island, to:

1. Meet an established community demand for access to community garden plots for recreational purposes;
2. Contribute to community development and foster positive social interaction;
3. Restore biodiversity in Cates Hill Neighbourhood Park;
4. Promote organic gardening practices;
5. Increase environmental awareness;
6. Serve as a template for similar Community Garden initiatives elsewhere on the Island.

Objectives

To obtain financing for supplies and services to augment the community labour and material support. There is a surge of agricultural activity on Bowen Island, with the establishment of the Bowen Agricultural Alliance, and we hope to embrace and focus some of that enthusiasm for the Cates Hill Neighbourhood Garden. Ideally the garden will be prepared during early 2010 so that it can be planted for the upcoming gardening season. We hope to receive a substantial financial injection that could rally the numerous volunteers towards a community-wide endeavour.

What does this bring to the Community?

The Cates Hill Community Garden will bring benefits for local residents, and for Bowen Island as a whole. It will use Municipal funds and volunteer time in a practical way that provides direct benefit to the community.

1. In establishing this Community Garden we hope to see it serve as a template for other Community Gardens on the Island.
2. It will see a currently-unused piece of land – essentially waste ground – transformed into a working green space that will be a source of pride for all residents.
3. It will provide community participants with fresh, healthy, and affordable organically-grown food.
4. It will be a source of exercise and recreation for participants and their families.
5. It will bring neighbours together in a positive way and increase awareness of sustainability and good nutrition.
6. It will represent a tangible effort to reduce Bowen Island's ecological footprint and GHG emissions.
7. It will realize the desire of the Cates Hill community to see development of the unused portion of the Neighbourhood Park.

Support for the Community Garden

As mentioned above in the "Background" section, of several alternatives for use of the area of the Neighbourhood Park in question, the concept of a Community Garden received most support from the membership of the Neighbourhood Association in a survey taken in 2008/2009.

More recently, an informal email poll was taken at the end of February 2010, to determine the desire to see the garden established. 45 households in the Cates Hill area received an email message asking two questions:

1. If a Community Garden is established, would you request a plot?

2. Would you be prepared to pay a yearly user fee for the plot?

28 responses were received; 13 stated that they would request a plot (46%), and 15 stated that they would pay a yearly user fee (53%). Note that the target audience for the poll (the 45 households) represents slightly more than half of property owners in the neighbourhood. It did not include individuals renting their accommodation; if we include this additional pool of potential users and offer the plots island-wide, we are confident that all plots in the Community Garden will be spoken for very quickly.

The Bowen Agricultural Alliance (BAA) has asked its membership by online survey about support for a Cates Hill Community Garden. 100% of the 20 survey respondents supported the garden, with one requesting a plot. BAA maintains a list of interested gardeners and continues to seek out community gardeners island-wide. It will support efforts to ensure that Cates Hill Community Garden is fully subscribed if permission is given.

The area proposed for the Community Garden is approximately 50 feet wide by 130 feet long. With room for parking for four or five vehicles, the fenced garden area would be 50 feet wide by 100 feet long. This fenced area would be divided into over twenty gardening plots, each 100 square feet, and would include supporting facilities.

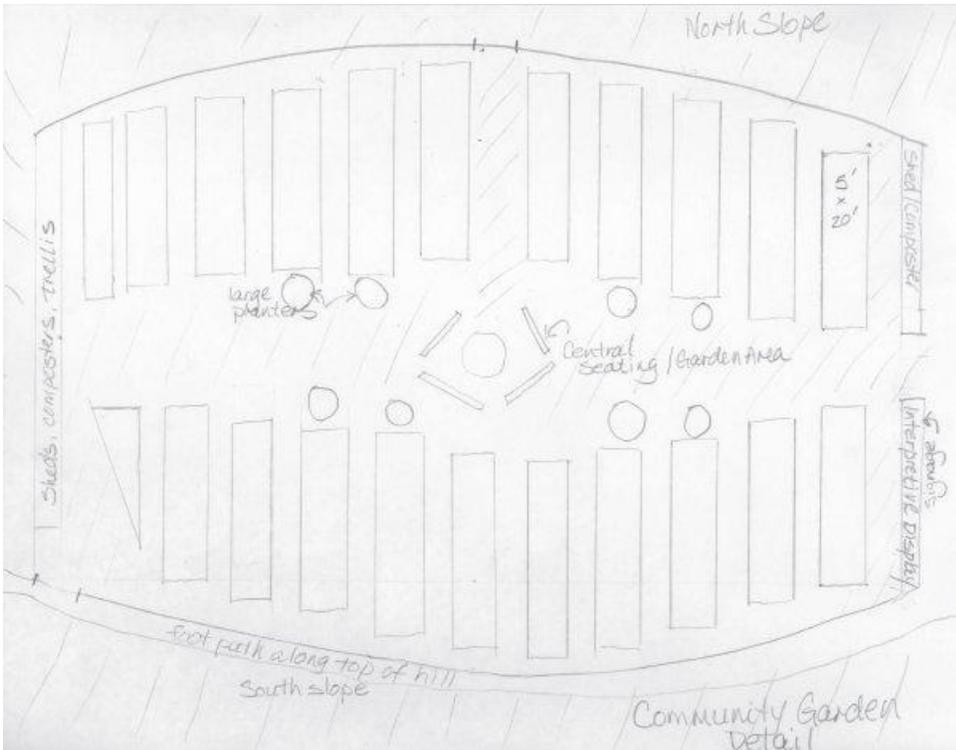
The map and sketch below show the portion of the Neighbourhood Park to be used for the Community Garden.



Garden design

We propose to enclose an area of 50' x 100' with a deer fence, and then construct 20 to 24 raised beds, made from wood measuring 5'x 20' x 16". Pathways three feet wide will provide access to the raised beds.

A proposed design is shown in the sketch below.



Community Garden specifics

Deer fence

The perimeter deer fence will be constructed using a combination of wood posts for gates, and metal posts with wire fencing.

Soil

Suitable soil for organic vegetable gardening will be purchased and transported from "off island" to complete the raised beds and get the garden started. We plan to provide a composting facility which will be used to amend the soil over the long term.

Timeline and phasing

As soon as the site is sufficiently dry to permit access, the volunteer team is ready to start work. However, there are some preparatory steps that would likely be most efficiently undertaken by the municipality:

1. Remove remaining stored gravel, rocks and boulders (the site is currently being used by the Municipality to store these);
2. Contour the site to design specifications;
3. Consult on the water collection system most appropriate for this garden and install any necessary infrastructure; and
4. Fence the site (this could be done with a combination of municipal and volunteer labour).

Once this work is completed, volunteers will build beds, composters, tool sheds and display/message boards using funds obtained from:

- Garden plot subscription fees;
- Municipal grant funds; and
- Fundraising efforts, which are poised to commence as soon as municipal consent is obtained.

Water

Water for the Community Garden will be provided through either a hookup to the Cove Bay system, or installation of a catchment system, or a combination of the two.

The irrigation system envisaged will include zone distribution and single valve shutoff at each of the 20 beds.

Liability

We propose that this garden be established as a part of the municipal Parks and Recreation programme and insured for liability by the municipality.

Parking

We calculate that 4-5 angled parking spaces can be created at the entrance to the site, which will be adequate for ongoing community garden needs. For work parties, when large numbers of people are expected, we will ensure that carpooling arrangements are in place to prevent traffic congestion. We also note that the road shoulder is sufficiently wide in the area adjacent to the Park to permit several cars to park. Should the municipality feel additional parking needs to be made available, we note that the Tir-na-nog parking lot is seldom used and expect that a user agreement could be entered into with the owner and lessee to permit occasional parking.

Gardener Agreement

We propose that all participants using the Community Garden sign a Gardener Agreement. An example is provided in Appendix 2. This Agreement could be monitored and enforced by an elected representative of the gardeners.

Community Garden budget

Materials, transportation, machine expenses, not including labour, are currently budgeted at \$29,480.36 (see Appendix 1).

Labour to be provided through volunteer support from the Cates Hill residents, BAA, and Bowen Island Community. Donations of small equipment and machinery time have been received from various parties in the Neighbourhood.

Applications for a total of \$10,000 in grant funding to provide additional support for the establishment of the Community Garden are currently pending (see Appendix 1).

Registration and membership

Registration

We propose that registration for garden plots be handled by Parks and Recreation staff, in consultation with the garden representative described above.

Membership

We propose that garden membership be offered first to residents of the neighbourhood, on the grounds that this will maximize our goals of building a vibrant community centre and fostering positive social interaction. It will also help to ensure that the garden is regularly maintained and supervised.

At the same time, we recognize that, since we are requesting funding support from the Municipality, it will be essential to guarantee that a fixed, minimum percentage of the plots be held for the community at large.

We can state with confidence that Neighbourhood residents will take up 12 of the 20-22 plots; we can project with reasonable confidence that, once all residents are canvassed, that number might well grow to 20. The issue is therefore primarily one of municipal policy, rather than of ensuring the garden is fully subscribed. We are keen to learn the views of BIM staff and Council members on this issue.

Food production will be encouraged and affiliation with the Bowen Agriculture Alliance will be explored.

Appendix 1: Community Garden budget

To be inserted

Appendix 2: Proposed Gardener Agreement

Registration Fees and Allotment Reservation

1. Garden plots are available to residents of Cates Hill Neighbourhood and the community of Bowen Island at large. The Municipality of Bowen Island will establish from time to time the minimum number of plots to be made available to the community at large.
2. Annual fees are \$30 per plot or \$15 per half plot. These fees are non refundable.
3. The fee includes frugal use of water but does not include soil amendments.
4. Plot rental terms run from March 1 to February 28 each year. CHCG reserves the right to change location and availability of plots from year to year. CHCG retains the right to refuse to rent plots if there is just cause.
5. Registrations are to be renewed annually by March 1. Registration reminders will be mailed to current gardeners at the beginning of each year. Any plot not registered and the fee not paid by March 1 will be made available to new gardeners.
6. Gardeners will elect a garden co-ordinator each year and advise Bowen Island Municipality of the election outcome. The garden co-ordinator will be responsible for administering this Agreement and reporting any violations of it to the Municipality. Gardeners not in compliance with the Agreement will not be permitted to subscribe for plots in future years. The garden co-ordinator will continue to hold office until the next co-ordinator is elected.
7. Plots must be cleared by current gardeners by February 28 each year and newly assigned plots must be cleared of any weed growth by April 1 in each year. Failure to do so will result in the plot being reassigned to another gardener.
8. After April 1 current gardeners may rent additional plots if they are available.
9. If, for any reason, a gardener finds that they cannot care for their garden, they are required to notify the garden coordinator and make arrangements for the care of their garden during their absence.
10. Gardeners registering after Aug. 15 for fall and winter gardens pay 1/2 the annual fee. (\$15).

Watering

11. The rental fee includes the frugal use of water. A gardener must remain in the garden while his/her garden is being watered. Gardeners must monitor their water use to avoid flooding of his/her garden and neighbouring gardens.

Planting Restrictions

12. Only organic methods of growing are permitted: no toxic chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides or herbicides. Gardeners using these items will lose their gardening privileges.
13. No trees are allowed because of shade and root problems.
14. No invasive species (e.g. bamboo, scotch broom, purple loose-strife)
15. Care must be taken with hard-to-eradicate plants such as birdweed and berry vines. If not kept in check they may be treated as weeds and removed at the direction of the garden co-ordinator.
16. Tall plants may only be planted where they will not shade neighbouring plots.

Smoking

17. Smoking is not permitted in the garden area. This is a safety issue and a means of preventing the spread of the tobacco mosaic virus.

Weeds and Trash

18. It is the gardener's responsibility to control the weeds and trash in their own plots and adjacent pathways and to clear their plot of trellis and staking material, plastic mulching, decorations and plant debris by April 1.

Rebar

19. Exposed rebar is not allowed for staking or trellising for safety reasons.

Pets

20. Pets are not allowed in the garden.

Storage

21. Storage on site for gardeners' tools or supplies will not be provided. Gardeners must pack what they need in and out.

Gates

22. Gardeners are asked to close all gates when leaving to keep the deer out.

Compost and Garbage

23. A refuse bin (for non organic garbage), a closed or sealed compost bin (for fruits and other organic foodstuffs) and an open compost bin (for leaves, stem and root material) will be available on site. Gardeners are encouraged to recycle their garden wastes in the garden's compost bins.

Harvesting

24. No one may pick another gardener's crop unless he/she has been given permission by that plot user.

Cooperation, Community and Volunteer Requirements

25. The purpose of the community garden is to provide access to land and water in an environment that promotes positive social interaction. Its success is a collective responsibility. These rules will be reviewed annually and may be improved.
26. This project will be more successful if the gardeners work together. In addition to the annual fee gardeners are asked to make a contribution of their time by participating in the following communal Tasks:
 - grass cutting – gardeners will be asked to cut the grass once during the season (inside the garden)
 - spring and fall cleanup
 - construction tasks and maintenance tasks
 - watering – gardeners will be asked to water the communal beds once during the season.
27. Conflicts or concerns with other gardeners should be worked out privately. If not, the coordinator will arbitrate.

Privacy of Personal Information

28. All information collected on registration forms will be compiled in a database accessible only to the municipality and garden co-ordinator and will be kept confidential. This information will not be lent, rented or sold.

CATEGORY	ITEM	UNITS	UNIT COST	AMOUNT
WATER				
Option 1	Catchment using 20,000 L plastic tanks	2	\$3,100.00	\$6,200.00
	Piping - 3" PVC	200	\$1.39	\$278.00
	Couplings	12	\$6.00	\$72.00
	Trenching - allowance			\$500.00
Option 2	Municipal water system hookup			\$1,100.00
	Annual fee			
Irrigation	3-4" Poly Hose (100 foot lengths)	8	\$100.00	\$800.00
	Soaker Hoses (25 foot)	24	\$15.00	\$360.00
	Manifolds	5	\$35.00	\$175.00
	Faucets	5	\$9.00	\$45.00
	Single Valve Shut-offs	24	\$9.00	\$216.00
	Connectors	50	\$0.50	\$25.00
	Clamps	100	\$0.25	\$25.00
	Misc. hardware			\$25.00
SOIL				
	Quote from Twin Island			
	\$23 - 27 / yd plus trucking fee	150 yds		\$7,500.00
	Gravel or Bark mulch for paths - 700' x 3' x 4" = 17 yds	17	\$35.00	\$595.00
				\$7,500.00
FENCE				
Perimeter - wire deer fence with 8' steel posts	Wire Fence 290 feet	290	\$2.50	\$725.00
	Steel Posts	26	\$10.00	\$260.00
	Clips for wire			\$25.00
Gates x 3 - Wood frame with double swing opening	6 x 6 Cedar Posts	6	\$4.50	\$27.00
	2 x 4 Cedar framing	72	\$1.49	\$107.28
	1 x 6 Cedar boards	216	\$1.49	\$321.84
	Hinges	18	\$5.00	\$90.00
	Spring close	6	\$10.00	\$60.00
	Latches	6	\$5.00	\$30.00
	Bolts & Nails			\$30.00
	Cement	12	\$6.00	\$72.00
RAISED BEDS				
	2 x 4 Corner posts with 2 x 10 sides stacked 2 high for edge height of 18 "above ground and dirt depth of 16 "			
	2 x 4 corners 2-24" boards buried 6" - 8 side braces - every 4'	576	\$1.49	\$858.24
	Each bed is 5' x 20' for a total 2 x 10 length of 100'	2400	\$1.49	\$3,576.00
	Nails - 6" spikes allowance			\$200.00
	PVC Pipe for post receptor for future cold frame post 8 per bed with 18" depth alongside bed posts			\$200.00
	Landscape cloth for pathways - 50 foot rolls - 700 feet = 14 rolls	14	\$35.00	\$490.00
				\$5,324.24
COMPOST BINS				
	3 stage wood and wire large bins	allowance		\$80.00
	Vermicompost x 2	allowance		\$100.00
				\$180.00
ELECTRICAL HOOKUP				
	Installation of a small panel and a few outlets (?)	allowance		\$2,500.00
TOOL SHED				
		allowance		\$500.00
TOOLS				
		allowance		\$200.00
MISCELLANEOUS				
	Wheelbarrows	2	\$69.00	\$138.00
	Hoses	3	\$40.00	\$120.00
	SprayNozels	3	\$8.00	\$24.00
	Bulletin Board	allowance		\$25.00
				\$307.00
TOILETS				
	Composting or Porta potty			
		allowance		\$1,000.00
MACHINE EXPENSES				
	Fuel & transport	allowance		\$400.00
TOTAL EXPENSES				\$29,480.36
FUNDING PLAN				
BIM	cash and in-kind support	requested		\$20,000.00

