

Friday, December 9, 2016      **To: Community and Protective Services Committee**  
**Concerning: CAPS December 13, 2016      London's Community Gardens Program**  
**Agenda item 11: London Community Gardens Strategic Plan: Year One Update**

**Councillors Salih, Armstrong, Cassidy, Squire and Usher:**

**I believe firmly in the importance of shared and community gardens.** I've been webkeeper of the Community Gardens London website since it began in February 2011, advocating for and celebrating urban agriculture and garden undertakings and innovations. I remain concerned about London's community gardens program (Lcgp)<sup>i</sup>.

The Year One Update report has no budget information at all about London's community gardens program. How can anyone know the good things going on in a program – and justify its good points - if there are no reports, no budget, no involvement of the people involved in that program?

The report mentions delay of information going to gardeners and changes in gardens management. It gives no explanation of how a new-hire City staff person will be selected and does not explain how budget shifts from outside manager to internal manager will not affect program budget.

**Please do not let this item become just a consent item.**

**1. Please request budget information**

This letter requests CAPS and Council to require that full budget and program information – including the recent internal “Lean Six Sigma” review – be delivered to Council, to gardeners in the City's community gardens program, and to the public as soon as possible (suggest end of January 2017). This information should be placed on the City website.

- Also, to require staff/managers to submit an annual report each year going forward<sup>ii</sup> and that gardeners, community partners and the public be notified of that report. Information to be placed on City website

In six garden seasons since the *London Community Gardens Program Review* was endorsed by Council (April 4/11) and the City's arrangement with a gardens managing agency<sup>iii</sup> changed, there have not been annual reports that give full budget information, gardener numbers, and program types and attendance.

**2. Please request information about communication and garden management**

There has not been work toward gardener management of the gardens, broad community awareness of the program, or involvement of interested citizens in the program.

There's been no website developed for the use of gardeners/partners in the program so that they can communicate with each other and become involved in managing the program

**3. Please request a report back about progress in gardener/community involvement**

Please request staff to report back to you by end of March 2017 (at the latest) on communication with gardeners and interested community members.

**4. Please request a report back about work being done by the new City staff garden manager**

... again, suggesting this be by end of March 2015

I want London to have a community gardens program which has many, diverse gardens. I look forward to a time when there are more gardens across the city, with more gardeners who are able to enjoy gardening and fellow gardeners at the same time they get more fresh food. I want to see gardeners and community partnerships in neighbourhoods. Community and shared gardens can be – and should be – an important part of a city's web of urban agriculture undertakings. And urban agriculture is tied to all aspects of a city's urban ecosystem.

**The report you've been handed leaves out gardeners, community and so many possibilities. Please don't let this continue.**

Sincerely,

***Maureen Temme***

66 Palmer Street, London N6H 1P7

webkeeper: Community Gardens London      <http://www.communitygardenslondon.ca>

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<sup>i</sup> I am webkeeper for the Community Gardens London website, which has existed since February 2011 to celebrate, advocate for and educate about community and shared gardening and urban agriculture. In 2009 I and others met with Ross Fair (then head of Community Services) and Cheryl Smith to state concerns about how London's community gardens program was handled. I've commented on the London Community Gardens Program Review, which was done and endorsed by Council April 4, 2011. I've commented since on guidelines and strategic plan documents developed, and attended all public forums held to develop the strategic plan. I've posted about all such submissions on the CGL website. I've had several meetings with staff involved with the program, including one several years ago where C. Smith told me that in-kind services could not be separated out as budget information, but dollars spent by the managing agency did come to her for review. Last fall (2015) I and R. Harvey spoke personally with S. Stafford; he said he expected to set a meeting with garden-interested community members last fall (2015) and that he'd consider an annual meeting and report. He also mentioned then that, for the first time in some years, an actual count of the garden plots had been done and that (as I'd pointed out in correspondence) there were not 600 plots, it was more like 435. This September (2016) Mr. Stafford replied to my email inquiry about annual report and budget, saying that there would not be an annual report with budget info and that the review being done was internal.

<sup>ii</sup> It would be great if reports were submitted and publicly available for garden seasons 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 – *five previous* seasons.

<sup>iii</sup> Managing agency is London Community Resource Centre, an independent charity, which has not posted its own annual report on its website for several years. Its last report was 2009/10, and it contained no budget or program information. LCRC was the agency managing the gardens prior to the review, and a situation there was the reason for a review which resulted in the *London Community Gardens Program Review*, done under Ross Fair (then head of community services). Much from that Review has not been done, particularly regarding community partnerships and involvement of gardeners and interested community partners in the management and development of the gardens.