****Union City Community Garden Steering Committee Meeting

October 9, 2018

Meeting Summary

Present: Giavani Smith, Tristan Crum, Fred Conrad, Deb Harris, John Adler, Allison Duncan

Recap of several key points from September Meeting

* Recap of opportunities identified at the September meeting
	+ Etris Center – edible landscape and maybe a few raised beds
	+ Fire Stations – edible landscape/ orchards
	+ New Community Building – community garden near the playground
	+ Former Public Works Building – alternative for community garden/ potential urban farm

Discussion of Norcross Discovery Garden Park in Norcross, Gwinnett County

* Want to create a place not just for gardeners, but for the whole community
* The City has purchased additional acreage to add to the garden to use for community space and events – no vegetable beds, but focus on native plantings
* The Norcross garden was professionally designed by someone hired by the city
* Deb assumed the role of the champion for the garden
	+ Three public meetings
	+ Lots of support at the meetings for the garden
	+ Community survey of what to include in the garden
* Granite beds cost about $2,000 each; high up front costs, but minimal maintenance costs down the road
* There is a fence around the garden, but it is not secure
* The city empties the garbage, fixes the bathrooms, fixes the ceiling fans in the pavilion, etc, but the garden organization assumes most of the routine upkeep and maintenance
* Located a grill next to the fire station near the garden – amenity for firemen and the community
* The garden is the grounds of the welcome center, so it has to look good – there are rules about minimum maintenance standards, etc for all members
* The garden organization raised money to install the fountain
* City has installed security cameras and signs as a deterrent for vandalism
* Slate chips are used in between the beds, which are ADA compliant
* The overall garden is 35 beds with 4 that are maintained by the garden club
* The garden club Board does the fundraising for the garden and the city is the fiscal agent
* Beds are rented by individuals – it is up to the individual as to whether they choose to use identifiers in their beds
* The garden is an official city park, so it is also governed by city park rules

Discussion of Heritage Park Garden in McDonough, Henry County

* The garden was built as a part of the park – no specific break out on costs of the different components because it was all done as a package
* The garden club is organized as a 501(c)3
* The city/county owns the land
* The county pays for water
* The garden club pays for all tools, plants, fertilizer, etc
* Garden club members pay dues to the club, rather than renting/ owning the plots themselves
* The garden serves the senior community

Discussion

* Union City has a long agricultural history
* City has the potential to get a lot of garden volunteers
* Find people who are interested in gardening – they could become the champions/ board members
* Promote opportunities through Your Union City platform
* Much of the communication was lost when the city newspaper ceased to circulate
* Union City recently held its first Civic Dinner
	+ Focus was on millennial engagement
	+ Concern about the availability of fresh produce at food retail outlets in the city
	+ Concern about areas in the city that are a food desert
* Union City is well positioned to create unique places
	+ The city needs to have some involvement; even if a government is not involved
	+ Budget needs to be considered
	+ A primer of Metro Area best practices would be helpful to other gardens

Next Steps

* A field trip to other sites will be coordinated on November 15, 2018
* Look for gardens in other cities similar in size to Union City; the garden at Truly Living Well’s Washington Road site in East Point was suggested
* Another model may be the way city of Atlanta conducted open houses on city owned land that could be suitable for gardens – opened up an application process for those sites, with mixed results