



The Corporation of **THE CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER**  
**ENGINEERING, PARKS & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**

**COUNCIL REPORT**

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To: Mayor Darrell R. Mussatto and Members of Council

From: Alexander F. Kurnicki, Streetscape Planner

SUBJECT: LOUTET PARK URBAN AGRICULTURE: NEXT STEPS

Date: December 1, 2009

File No: 4230-18-02

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**PURSUANT** to the report of the Streetscape Planner, dated December 1, 2009, entitled, "Loutet Park Urban Agriculture: Next Steps";

**THAT** UBC Greenskins Lab proceed with fund raising and the development of a implementation plan for the proposed urban agriculture pilot project in an underutilised portion of Loutet Park; and,

**THAT** staff work with UBC Greenskins to coordinate the implementation of the pilot project and Council be kept informed of the process.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1 Greenskins Lab display boards (Open House October 27, 2009)
- 2 Open House completed comment sheets.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this report is seek Council's approval for UBC Greenskins Lab to proceed with fund raising after the completion of a successful public process for the under utilized portion of Loutet Park proposed to be an urban agriculture pilot project.

## **BACKGROUND:**

At the September 21, 2009 meeting of Council it was resolved: 'That staff proceed with a public consultation process regarding the proposed siting of an urban agriculture pilot project in an underutilised portion of Loutet Park, and report back to Council with the results'.

Staff conducted a public consultation event on Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup> at Brooksbank Elementary School Gym from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. The event was an open house format with an introduction by the City's Streetscape Planner, introducing the project and giving a brief timeline of events up to this point (Attachment 1). This was followed by a short presentation by UBC Greenskins Lab outlining food security issues and how they apply to the North Shore as well as some conceptual design ideas for Loutet Park. Following these presentations, both Staff and Greenskins Lab fielded questions from the some 56 people in attendance. Sign-in sheets and comment forms were provided, the completed comment forms are included as Attachment 2.

Of the approximately 56 people attending, approximately 40 people were members of the immediate neighbourhood, and approximately 20 spoke. Of those, only two people voiced dissent. Overall, support for the proposed project was overwhelming positive; many questions were centered on gaining more information to confirm their positive understanding and support for the initiative. In short, they just wanted to find out more about what it would look like, how it would function and how can they get involved once implemented. Many questions centered on logistical issues such as existing soil conditions, what kind of soil would be imported, maintaining access to the parking lot and existing trail, and how the public and local schools could be engaged. Only one couple dissented, stating that this was not appropriate use of parkland nor a suitable location for food production. The proposal would interfere with the current use for this portion of Loutet Park (informal off-leash dog park).

One concern common to both 'sides' of the discussion was the need for assurance that the soil was free of contamination. From staff's knowledge of the site's history, the potential for contamination is minimal. With the combined factors of the age and depth below existing grade of the historic landfill and the known source of the fill above, staff is confident that there is minimal risk for contamination and the soil is suitable for food production. However, a certified lab will be conducting soil tests to ensure the soil is safe and free of contaminants. This soil test will be funded from existing Engineering, Parks and Environment budget sources.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Based on the positive feedback from the Loutet Park Community at the Open House, staff recommend that UBC Greenskins Lab be allowed to proceed with fundraising with the understanding that once an implementation plan and appropriate funds are raised, the 5 year pilot project will commence. Greenskins will coordinate with staff on an implementation plan as well as addressing any coordination issues between the City and the proposed urban agriculture project.

Staff will keep Council informed as to the progress of the project.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

It is intended that this proposal for Loutet Park will be cost neutral to the City. This will be further researched by Staff and reported to Council during the course of this process. Greenskins Lab produced the open house material (Attachment 1), limiting the City's contribution to staff time and provision of some limited material support which has been covered under existing budgets.

### **INTER-DEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Staff has worked with Corporate Service, Community Development and Finance departments in the development of this proposal.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS:**

Staff recommendations in this report are in keeping with the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan, specifically Community Objective C2: "We will protect and maintain new and existing public infrastructure and amenities and enhance the natural and built environments".

### **CORPORATE PLAN AND/OR POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

The proposal for Urban Agriculture on City Owned Land outlined in this report is in keeping with the Official Community Plan. Flowing directly from one of the objectives in the Official Community Plan to investigate options for community gardens in residential neighbourhoods of the City, this policy on Urban Agriculture establishes a framework for locations in the City. Urban Agriculture will contribute to a sense of place in the City as well as improving the livability and providing opportunities for people to engage with nature.

This proposal would also support a broad number of goals and objectives expressed in the City's Official Community Plan:


- 7.3.1. *To maintain and enhance well-being and quality of life for all community members.*
  
- 9.10.5 v *Undertake a study to investigate the role of the City ....in providing and maintaining garden plots in areas accessible to the higher density residential areas of the City.*

9.10.5 vi *Make efforts to increase the usefulness of existing facilities through more innovative programming;*

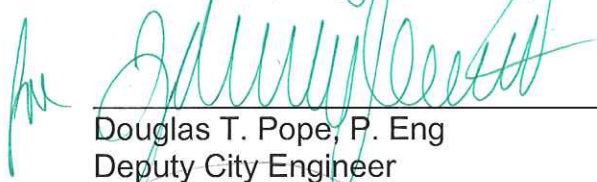
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

  
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Alexander F. Kurnicki, MBCSLA  
Streetscape Planner

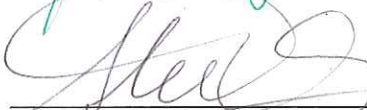
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