Implementing Successful Community Gardens
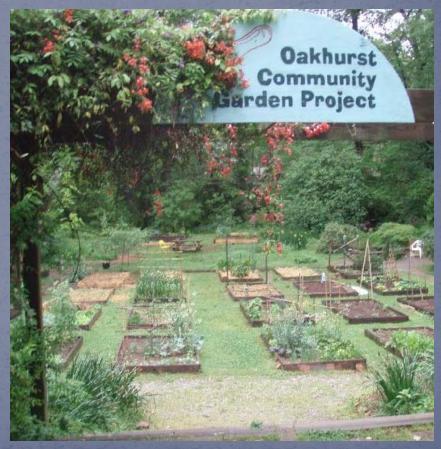
Presented by:

Sean J Murphy and Stephen Causby

September 2010

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SOUTHEASTERN ENGINEERING, INC.

1. Four types of Community Gardens

- Food Replacement
- Education
- Healthy Food
- Social Benefits

2. Inception of the Garden Idea

- Community Support
- Staff Support
- Elected Officials

- Do you need help from a Consultant?

2. Community Support and Buy In

- **Cost to tax payer**

- **Perceptions (looks)**

- **Cost(fees) – access for all - affordable**

- **The right location is everything**

2. Staff Support

- **Time constraints**
- **Management costs**
- **Staffing requirements**
- **Legal / Liability / Security Issues**
- **Programming**

2. Support of Elected Officials

- **Show that you can limit the costs**
  - Cost limited to start up and infrastructure
  - Garden self sustaining
- **Prove that it serves a significant sector (or an outspoken one)**
- **Show that it will not require to much time from staff or that you can support necessary staffing**
- **Have good attendance at interest meetings, etc**
  - Advertise and get the word out

2. Do you need professional help ? Consultants

- **Size and scale of project**
- **Complexity of site**
  (permits, grades, brown-field, etc)
- **Budget vs. likely fees**
- **Writing an RFP that will get qualified responses.**
  - Exclude those without experience, encourage professionals with requisite experience to apply
  - Allow and encourage teams of professionals including engineers or landscape architects supplemented by farm and garden experts.

3. Selecting the right location

- Appropriate Density
- Walking and Biking Distance
- Sun Light
- Soils
- Accessibility (Flat is good)
- Lease Private Land
- Schools vs. Public Parks

- Proximity to other amenities
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Water
- Environmental Concerns
- Impacts on Surroundings

4. Methods of Succesfully Involving the Public

- **Get the Word Out - Advertise**
- **Hold an initial Public Interest Meeting**
- **Establish a Community Garden Committee (CGC)**
  - **Let them help Design**
  - **Charrettes**
  - **Open House (Input welcome)**
- **Involve the Public thoroughly**

4. Getting the Word Out

- *Signs/Banners*
- *News releases*
- *News Letters*
- *Website*
- *Facebook/Social media*
- *Utility Bills*
- *Churches and HOA's*
- *Farmer's Market*
- *Public Meetings*
- *Organic/Healthy Food Venues*
- *Community Centers / Active Volunteer Areas*

SUWANEE COMMUNITY GARDEN

- Do you like to play in the dirt?
- Would you like your fridge and dinner table filled with organic fruits and veggies that you've grown?
- Would you like another opportunity to engage in the Suwanee community?

*If you answered yes to any of these questions,
you need to be part of Suwanee's Community Garden!*

Plans are underway now for the Garden, which will be located on White Street in Old Town and ready for planting in spring 2010.

*We need your input! Join us on **Wednesday, June 10 at 6:30 pm** for the community kickoff meeting at City Hall.
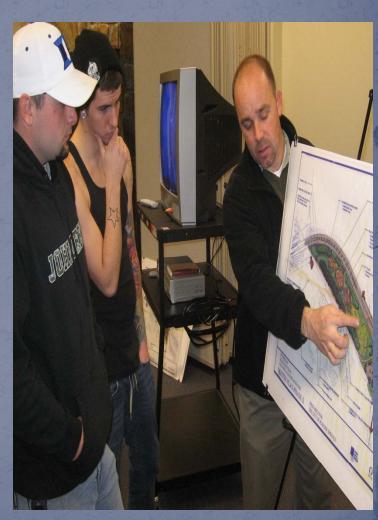If you can't make the meeting, please contact Jessica Roth.*

City of Suwanee
330 Town Center Avenue ~ Suwanee, GA 30024
Jessica Roth ~ jroth@suwanee.com ~ 770-945-8996
www.suwanee.com/community.garden.php

City of Suwanee
GEORGIA

4. Public Interest Meeting

- **Describe the project**
- **Describe the Site**
- **Introduce the garden development team**
- **Have an expert speaker**
- **Survey Audience**
  - **Be sure to ask about experience**
  - **Ask about time commitment availability**
  - **Ask about interest level and involvement**
- **Have a Question Period (brief)**
- **Have a Suggestion Period (longer)**
- **Take notes**

4. Establish the CGC

- **Steering Committee vs. Board**
- **City vs Private Mgt.**
- **Number /Size**
- **Goals**
- **Scope**
  - Name
  - Logo
  - Extra amenities
  - Fund raising
  - Event org / labor
  - Creating bylaws (rules for the garden)

4. The Charrette Meeting

- 2-3 hours required
- Public vs. Special Invitation Only
- Small Groups
- Facilitated by expert/s
- Staff on hand for questions
- Introduce site in detail
- Brainstorm (1/3 meeting)
- Small Group design session (1/3 meeting)
- Present Ideas and debate (1/3 meeting)
- Record Consensus Ideas (Staff/consultants

5. Setting the Garden Rules (By-Laws)

- Organic or non organic
- Animals or not
- Fees
- Maintenance Requirements
- KISS (less is more in most cases)
- Don't be over zealous (Keep it fun and free)
- Updated after 1 year
- Volunteer Hours Required
- Enforcement
- Priority in assignment of plots
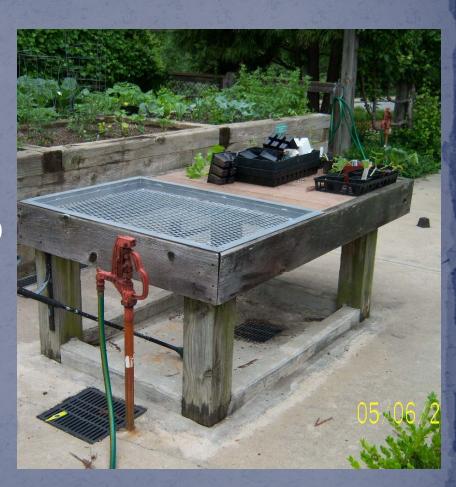- Waiting Lists
- Abandonment
- Access to Garden
- Watering

6. Critical Components

- **Water Access**
- **Good Drainage**
- **Good Soil**
- **Fencing**
- **Seating**
- **Shelter from the sun**
- **Compost bin**
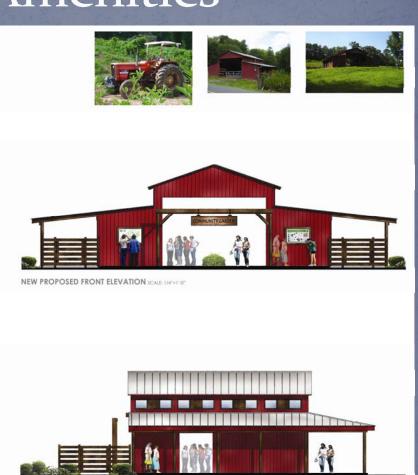- **Water Hoses, Wands, Buckets, Etc.**

7. Desirable Components

- Parking
- Bike Racks
- Bathrooms
- Grills and Picnic Areas
- Children's Gardens/Learning Areas
- Clustered seating areas (groups)
- Bike racks
- Wash table
- Waste and recycle bins
- Tool Storage
- Irrigation, Cisterns, Wells, Rain Harvesting
- Information Board

8. Unique Garden Amenities

- **Personal lockers**
- **Outdoor classrooms**
- **Interpretive areas**
- **Learning stations – In-garden library**
- **Barns / Adaptive re-use structures**
  - *Classrooms*
  - *Meeting rooms*
  - *Admin offices*
  - *Bathrooms*
  - *Refrigeration*
- **Bees**
- **Chickens**
- **Other farm Animals**
- **Cisterns**

NEW PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"

NEW PROPOSED RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"

9. Plot Types

- **Raised Plots**
- **Ground Plots**
- **Sizes of plots**
- **Wheelchair Plots**
- **Barrier Free Plots**

10. Art in the Garden

- **Plot Art**
- **Plot Numbers**
- **Large Works**
- **Thinking outside the box**

11. Designing the Garden

- **Survey the Site**
- **Analyze the topography, trees and other natural features**
- **Plan for required parking and ADA Access**
- **Consider buffers, access and infrastructure**
- **Consider positive and negative impacts on the surroundings**
- **Layout the plots and paths (from charrette input)**
- **Locate water spigots and hose bibs**
- **Locate amenities (seating, etc) (from charrette input)**
- **Present plans to elected officials for approval**

12. Maintenance

- **Plot replacement (raised)**
- **Weeding isles**
- **Perimeter / Boundaries**
- **Pumps/Wells/Irrigation**
- **Paths, Ramps, Etc**
- **Fencing**
- **Tool Replacement / Repair**
- **Other**

13. Parks surrounding gardens – Partnerships

- Availability of staff for maintenance
- Pooling resources
- Helps with funding
- Avoids excess cost for small group of users
- Helps with security
- Helps to gain more public attention

14. CSA's as community Gardens or Partners

- Option for funding and management
- Education
- Encourage public private partnership involving community in harvests
- Can provide programming and education not available in a small community garden
- Think Pumpkin Patch
- Think U-Pick Farm
- Think Strawberries, Peaches, Blueberries

15. Common Misconceptions

- Theft and Vandalism
- Security
  - Access is the Key
  - Local Context
- Deer
- Time Commitments

16. Building the Garden

- **Permits**
- **Contractors (if required)**
- **Work Days**
  - Be fully organized and have all materials on hand
  - Provide tools and gloves
  - Get donations of food and drink
  - Provide and fund prizes or t-shirts to volunteers
  - Organize into work groups by task
  - Safety Waivers
- Understand the nature of the tasks and labor

17. Open the Garden

- **Start with a Planting day celebration at least several weeks in advance of grand public opening.**
- **Grand Opening ideas**
  - **Bee Keeper Display**
  - **Urban Chicken Display**
  - **Local Ext. Office Booth with Garden tips**
  - **Local Garden and Farm Vendors**
  - **Food – healthy focused**
  - **Cooking Demo _ Healthy Focused**
- **Party in Park**
- **Tie to a Planting or Harvest Schedule**
- **Make sure the Garden is Planted and looking Good!**
- **Invite the Press – This is a hot topic today.**

18. Manage the Garden

- **Setting/holding to garden rules, guidelines**
- **Assigning work/responsibilities**
- **Periodic brainstorming, imagining sessions**
- **Annual planning session**
- **Partnerships**

18. Setting/holding to garden rules, guidelines

- Everyone is on same page from beginning
- Bring people back to them when conflict arises
- Decide on division of harvest (if applicable)

18. Assigning work/responsibilities

18. Periodic brainstorming, imagining sessions

- **Keeps up interest and involvement**
- **Carries garden forward with members' new ideas**

18. Annual planning session

- **Decide what to plant, when**
- **Coordinate new projects**
- **Changes to garden organization/funding/partnerships**

18. Partnerships

- **Maintenance, clean ups**
- **Large projects/new components**
- **Local food bank – donation programs**

Common Garden Sponsors in Georgia Metro Areas

19. Fundraising – Ongoing

- **Grants**
  - Corporate – Lowes, Home Depot
  - Educational/Kids – Youth Garden Grants
  - Food security – Disadvantaged, low-income communities
- **Donation of products/seeds/tools**
- **Fund Raising Events – Cooking demos, bake sales, farmers markets, pot lucks, etc.**
  - Connect others in community to your garden
  - Give people a chance to give, even if they don't want to farm
  - Build partnerships, marketing
- **Art Show in the park**

20. Involving Kids and Education

- **Education is an essential component to any community garden**
- **Kids Programming**
- **General educational programming**
- **Senior Programming**

20a. Education an essential component to any garden

- **Different skill/comfort levels, utilize more seasoned gardeners**
- **Kids will be biggest fans, bring excitement to garden**
- Give kids responsibilities/say in garden planning

20b. Kids Programming

- **Short basic lessons – allow them to participate, invest in garden**
- **More in-depth lessons –build skills, transfer responsibility**
- **Connect with local schools – farm to school programs**

20c. General educational programming

- Keeps interest level high, builds skills
- Connects garden with experts, sources of wisdom
- Provides forum for idea sharing, planning
- Community benefit
- Seasonal Information – Planting times and Harvest times are typically good times for training sessions.

Questions and Answers

- Thank you for your interest in our presentation.
- You may reach Sean at   smurphy@seengineering.com
Mbl - 770-630-9205

- You may reach Stephen at swcausby@gmail.com
(404) 520-1968

- A copy of this presentation along with a link to down load templates you may use for your gardens will be emailed to all those who leave their contact emails.
- Please make sure your email and contact info is legible.