Implementing Successful Community Gardens

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September 2010

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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 too 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 Successfully 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
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
- Updated after 1 year

Don’t be over zealous (Keep it fun and free)

Updated after 1 year
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
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.
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- A copy of this presentation along with a link to download 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.