



WILDWOOD®

January 15, 2019

The Honorable City Council
City of Wildwood, Missouri
16860 Main Street
Wildwood, Missouri 63040

Re: **Wildwood Community Garden Relocation Options (Wards – All)**

Council Members:

Background >>> In 2011, the City decided to address a request to create a Community Garden for its residents. The Community Garden was an idea of a resident (Ms. Wright) that had a keen interest in creating such a facility and she had prepared a plan for its development, including the size of the beds themselves, the rules associated with a group gardening effort, the organic nature of planting requirements, and the types of gardening plants that succeed in this kind of an environment. With this information and the City Council's approval, the Department of Planning and Parks was given the authorization to proceed forward with its implementation.

The first step in this process was to determine a location for this facility that would meet the requirements of visibility, safety, parking, and accessibility to needed water. The Department and Ms. Wright began reviewing locations for the Community Garden in the Town Center Area. This search included several sites, but one (1) location was chosen almost immediately due to compliance to the criteria that had been set, and noted above, along with the owner of it (Edward Kohn – Greenberg Development) offering its use at no charge to the City. The location that was offered and became the location of the Community Garden was the southwest corner of Taylor Road and Main Street.

With the location selected, City personnel began the process of creating a plan to accommodate a garden of forty-five (45) beds. The plan was developed and reviewed by an initial group of gardeners and found acceptable to them, which led to its construction at the identified location. Thereafter, the garden remained at that location, with the only changes being the addition of another almost one hundred (100) beds due to the extensive interest in the facility by City residents.

In 2018, a proposal for the use of property was submitted to the City that would include a two (2) acre site located between the theater and the Community Garden. This proposal included a four (4) story building and almost sixty (60) parking spaces, along public and private open space areas. The proposal was approved by the City Council and, as part of it, the need for the Community Garden location was identified. With this identification, the City was given notice by the property owner under its agreement of this need and vacated the site by November 30, 2018. This action led to the City's 136 gardeners not having a location for their hobby and the City needing to determine another site for it, with only a few months to complete such, and have a new location available for the Spring 2019 planting season.

Available Locations for the Wildwood Community Garden >>> Under the guidance of the Planning and Parks Committee, the Department of Planning and Parks has been investigating sites and determined that two (2) options exist for consideration by its members and City Council. These sites are very different in terms of locations, but similar in some regards. These locations are the unused area of the City Hall property, south of the existing parking lot, and a portion of undeveloped property at the Wildwood Family YMCA that is situated on New College Avenue, between State Route 109 and Generations Drive. The location at the Wildwood Family YMCA was offered by its leadership, given it has a large Community Garden like that of the City, which is located to the west of its existing building. The leadership at the Wildwood Family YMCA would eventually like to expand its building and the current garden location would be a logical extension area for this improvement. This future expansion plan, and the loss of the City's garden location, led to these discussions between the two (2) parties.

The other location, situated on City-owned property, is part of its current City Hall site and was not needed for development purposes to accommodate the construction of this building, which was completed in 2013. This location is approximately 1.5 acres in overall size and fully treed, although the area had previously been cleared and the revegetation of the area is principally second and third growth types. This location is also now in proximity to the new six (6) acre parcel of ground recently purchased by the City of Wildwood. This undeveloped portion of the City Hall site adjoins the southern edge of the existing parking lot and where the building's trash enclosure is located.

Both locations are not developed areas of their respective sites, but will require extensive preparation of them. This preparation will include the removal of all vegetation within the defined garden area and the grading of them to accommodate level surfaces. Along with the sites' preparation, access to the locations needs to be provided, extension of utilities, and development of accessways and the bed locations themselves. Given their current undeveloped natures, providing garden-ready sites will take some time and the estimated costs have yet to be determined, but certainly comparable, but expected to be somewhat greater, than the amount spent to create the original garden of the City, which was approximately twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00). The Committee Members would note the Department had anticipated this situation and did budget for a cost, as part of its budgeting process for 2019.

The Committee was provided plans that had been developed for both locations by the Department of Planning and Parks for its consideration. Together, these plans reflect the combination of both gardens, as well as a standalone facility for the City at the City Hall property. The development of these plans also reflects the collective improvements to the gardens' designs, which have been learned over the last seven (7) years by the two (2) entities, i.e. the Wildwood Family YMCA and the City of Wildwood. These designs include shade structures, better irrigation systems, ADA accessible bed designs, and demonstration and composting areas as well. These improvements, learned through experiences, do add convenience, comfort, and education.

Request >>> The Planning and Parks Committee was asked by the Department of Planning and Parks its input on the location for the new Community Garden for the 2019 Season and beyond. The cost factor is a major consideration and still needs to be developed at this time. However, regardless of cost, the Committee was first asked as to whether the City should again have a community garden, noting it had 136 garden member plots at the end of the 2018 Season, with over one hundred fifty (150) residents on the current waiting list. The Committee agreed the Community Garden should continue, which the Department endorsed, with the next request being its future location, as noted earlier. The two (2) locations offer