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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### MEMORANDUM

Planning,  
Zoning,  
Building Safety,  
Construction Inspection Services,  
Public Health,  
Housing Inspections,  
Code Enforcement

**To:** Mayor and City Council Members

**Cc:** Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator  
Steve Boka, Community Development Director

**From:** Adam Thompson, Planning & Community Development Coordinator

**Date:** February 20, 2014

**Re:** Taylor Park Community Garden

#### INTRODUCTION:

Community gardens around the world have been credited with an array of beneficial outcomes for participants. These include environmental education where participants learn about sustainable urban agriculture, biodiversity and improved waste management. Nevertheless, the most significant and widely reported benefits are associated with individual and community health and well-being. Gardens require physical exertion, provide relief from stress and prompt creativity, participation with nature and a sense of stewardship for the land. Individuals reap direct benefits from the physical activity involved in gardening and having access to fresh, cheap produce on a daily basis.

#### BACKGROUND:

This project stems from the Leadership Muscatine program and is a Blue Zones initiative. We understood early on that connecting with community stakeholders is important to the success of community gardens. We have worked with the Muscatine Iowa State Extension office, Muscatine Master Gardeners and the Muscatine Blue Zones Project. Recently we gained support from the Mulford Church who currently offers limited community gardens. In writing a grant to receive funds from HyVee for community gardens we connected with the local Muscatine HyVee who will support community gardens with educational classes.

Our proposed community garden project will be self-sustaining. Revenues from leased plots will go to offset soil preparation, water supply, youth programs and maintenance. We will seek outside funding for expansion and improvements. Three grant applications were submitted to HyVee. All three grant applications were funded totaling \$2,250.00. This is more than enough to get the gardens up and going.

A community meeting was held on Tuesday February 18<sup>th</sup> at Franklin Elementary School. Five community members were in attendance. They were in support of the project.

Our group has outlined three sites; Taylor Park, Roby-League, and Muscatine Community College. At this time Taylor Park is the preferred site in order to continue moving forward permission from council must be given so that we can finalize plans, policies, programming, and designs.

At this time, due diligence has been completed and a motion to use the selected area of Taylor Park is requested.

**BACKUP INFORMATION:**

Satellite view of selected portion of Taylor Park

