

Group wants to build community garden in downtown Fredericton

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Community gardeners came out to help plant garlic in the market section of the New Brunswick Community Harvest Gardens' plots in Marysville in this file photo from last summer. Above, from left, are Madeleine Berrevoets, Hailey Lanteigne, Grace Hicks, Edee Klee.

Photo: the Daily Gleaner Archives

New Brunswick Community Harvest Gardens has been trying to get a community garden up and running in downtown Fredericton for five years.

“There is a large, high-density, low-income population here in the downtown and we need to bring the gardens to the people,” said Edee Klee, co-chair of the gardens group.

Fredericton's community services committee talked about more city support for community gardens at its meeting Thursday.

One piece of suitable land for a community garden mentioned during the meeting was the Sunset U-Pick on the north side, which is already used for agricultural purposes.

But Klee said that wouldn't help many people in the downtown.

"Most people that really need help don't have the money for bus fare," she said.

That means a community garden needs to be close, she said.

Klee said an ideal community garden in downtown Fredericton would be in the south-west corner of city-owned Wilmot Park and be about 15 metres by 4.5 metres with about 25 individual garden plots.

"That's where we originally wanted to have it," she said.

It could also include a walking labyrinth in the centre for the public with the garden plots radiating outward, she said.

But one of the complicating issues is that Wilmot Park is located in a well-field protection area, she said. But organic gardening could be tied to well field protection in an educational way, she said.

"We would be a really good flagship for that mission," said Klee.

There are also activities such as the proposed new water park, the tennis courts and the lawn bowling green already located in Wilmot Park, so a new activity shouldn't be an issue, she said.

Another downtown city-owned park is Queens Square, but that is also in the well-field protection zone, said Klee.

New Brunswick Community Harvest Gardens already operates two of the seven community gardens in Fredericton, including one in St. Marys with 77 plots and one in Marysville with 85 plots, she said.

"All our gardens are accessible, inclusive and sustainable," said Klee.

She said she would love it if a downtown developer read about their plan for a community garden and called up with an offer of land.

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