



August 31, 2011, Community Services Committee

Re: Agenda Item 8, Report PR-38-11, Community Gardens Operating Model

Thank you Mayor Goldring, Councillors and City Staff as I am really thrilled to appear before you today with BurlingtonGreen's **support** of this report's staff recommendation of Option 1 for the City to accept BurlingtonGreen's proposal to enter into a partnership agreement to operate the City's first community garden on public land at Central Park.

We have been working diligently with the Parks staff for most of this year to reach this point, so it is very exciting to be on the threshold of being able to offer this new, important opportunity to the citizens of Burlington. We certainly hope you will agree tonight to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity available to you and recommended by staff. The Province of Ontario has recognized the value and potential of our Growing Roots project by awarding us almost \$75 k to establish a publically accessible demonstration community garden and a supporting Local Food Resource Network.

BurlingtonGreen is committed to promote the benefits of urban food production with interactive learning opportunities to a city wide audience. In addition to overseeing the administration and reporting of the leased plots we will be providing a demonstrative garden to showcase many food growing techniques, provide the resources for other residential groups to move ahead with community gardens in other public or private locations, and offer food growing and harvesting learning opportunities through workshops and meetings open for any citizen to attend.

Since we last delegated before you, we have met with staff to further review our proposal and consistent with our organization's solution focused approach, we have demonstrated flexibility and positive action to help realize an even better opportunity for the City. We are pleased to inform you that the Ministry of Health and Sport Promotion liaison has confirmed that the capital budget monies to install the garden you have previously approved is eligible to support the grant's matching 15% cash partner requirement! We expect this is a welcomed, refreshing change – we are not asking you for funds, we are asking for your partnership support to realize an exciting new initiative to benefit the environment & the health of citizens in an effort to support a more sustainable future.

Thank you again and we hope for your support in moving forward with this two year project and opportunity to work with city staff to finalize a partnership agreement.

Sincerely,

Michelle Bennett & Amy Schnurr

Local Food Outreach Coordinator & Executive Director
BurlingtonGreen Environmental Association