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New community garden planned for Legends Centre in Oshawa

Site will feature 80 garden plots for rent

People need to get back to basics when it comes to food. Joan Kerr, Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities

OSHAWA -- Oshawa's newest community garden is set to sprout at the Legends Centre this fall.

It's the second local community garden project spearheaded by the Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities, a group dedicated to preserving the planet.

"People need to get back to basics when it comes to food," said FBSC president Joan Kerr. "Growing and cooking your own fresh produce is nutritious and it's good for the environment."

The FBSC opened its first community garden in Oshawa this spring at Windfields Farm. Ms. Kerr said the response has been enthusiastic, with families working together on their plots.

"It's using food as a catalyst for community building," she said.

When it came time to choose a location for the next garden, Ms. Kerr worked with City of Oshawa staff to find a spot that met all the criteria, from water availability and security to shade and parking.

Mike Molinari, the City's director of parks and environmental services, said the Legends Centre -- located on Harmony Road North -- was the clear winner, especially because it already has ample washrooms and parking.

"All the infrastructure is already in place, and that land wasn't being used for anything, so it's perfect," he said.

Council's community services committee approved the Legends Centre location on June 15 and council is expected to confirm its support June 28.

The site has room for 80 garden plots, which will be rented out for between \$40 and \$50 per season, as well as space to build raised, accessible garden beds.

Water from the Legends Centre will be used on a temporary basis. City staff are proposing a new outdoor water supply system and water meter be installed next year, with the costs referred to the City's 2011 budget for consideration.



New community garden planned for Legends Centre in Oshawa. OSHAWA -- Joan Kerr is the Director of the Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities. She developed the Windfield Community Garden on a 10 acre plot of land on Simcoe Street which will be split between a teaching garden and a community garden. She is now working on opening a community garden at the Legends Centre *Ryan Pfeiffer / Metroland*

City staff said a third community garden is in the works for North Oshawa Park, but volunteers there have yet to incorporate or formally organize who will oversee the project.

In addition to approving the Legends Centre site, the community services committee gave the green light to a community garden protocol that sets out terms and conditions for operation.

The FBSC will enter into an agreement with the City before opening its new garden, and City staff expect future community gardens to follow the same rules, which include maintaining the garden to a minimum aesthetic standard and not selling the produce for profit.

For more information about the Foundation for Building Sustainable Communities and its Oshawa garden projects, contact Joan Kerr at joankerr@fbsc.org or 905-434-6655.