

-----Original Message-----

From: Rhodes-Conway,Satya

Sent: Monday, April 08, 2013 3:18 PM

To: Fruhling, William

Cc: nanfey2@gmail.com; ghansen@cacscw.org

Subject: Item 3 at Plan Commission

Bill -

Please share this email with the Plan Commission. Thanks.

Dear Plan Commissioners:

I write you today as a board member of the Community Action Coalition and as a co-sponsor of the lease for the Brittingham Community Garden. I am in full support of the lease. However, I do not support two of the items in exhibit B requested by Ald. Ellingson, and I urge you to remove them from the lease before passing it.

I have no concern with item #3, "Abandoned plots shall be mowed down within 30 days of abandonment.", as this is current practice. Item #2 "No permanent or temporary fencing shall be allowed." does not make sense to me - if the issue is aesthetics, then it is a matter of opinion whether or not fences are aesthetically pleasing. Some people will complain if you have them, others will complain if you don't. I recommend removing the clause and allowing CAC and the gardeners to do what they feel is appropriate if concerns are raised.

My strongest objection is to item #1, "CAC shall be required to maintain an aesthetically-pleasing planted border, two feet in width, within and along the length of the perimeter of the Leased Premises. This planted border shall contain low-growing (eighteen inches or less) non-woody plant material such as strawberries or flowers and shall be kept free of weeds during the growing season. In addition, CAC shall be required to maintain a mulched pathway adjacent to and within the planted border for access to the garden plots, four feet in width, which shall also be kept free of weeds." First, it is inappropriate to task CAC with this. Although they are graciously managing the garden, it is not their garden - it belongs to the community of gardeners who will have plots there. Second, requiring a border of 6 feet around the garden substantially reduces the amount of land available to garden in, which means that fewer households will be able to participate and fewer families will have access to fresh, healthy food.

Of course we want our neighborhoods and parks to be beautiful. But beauty, famously, is in the eye of the beholder. Who is to say that a border of flowers is more beautiful than a plot of vegetables? The real beauty we should be seeking here is the beauty of families growing their own food, the beauty of neighbors gardening together, the beauty of community.

As always, thank you for your service.

Satya Rhodes-Conway
Alder, District 12
(for 1 more week)