



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

Michael Budabin Chairperson / **Joseph Marziliano** District Manager

To: All Board Members

From: Paul DiBenedetto, Parks Committee Chair and
Fleur Martino, Public Relations Committee Chair

Date: March 21, 2023

Re: Community Gardens

On Monday, March 20, 2023, the CB11 Parks and Public Relations Committees met to discuss community gardens.

Committee Members Present

Paul DiBenedetto, Parks Committee Chair
Fleur Martino, Public Relations Committee Chair
Henry Euler, 3rd Vice Chair
Karen Mazza
Jessica Burke
Christina Scherer
Rosemarie Guidice
Eileen Miller
Stephan Popa
George Hadjiconstantinou

NYS Parks Representative

Erinn White

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager
Christina Coutinho, Community Associate
Jane Bentivenga, Community Coordinator

Ms. Martino opened the meeting by saying how the Public Relations Committee has been discussing ways to engage the community in public events. They discussed community gardens and if any spaces are available. This meeting had a presentation from NYC Parks Green Thumb.

Erinn White, NYC Parks Community Coordinator, gave a presentation on Community Gardens. Please see attachment for full presentation.

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Currently, CB11 has one Community Garden, Pembroke Avenue Community Garden located at 253-13 Pembroke Avenue, Little Neck.

Ms. White explained how community gardens started with empty lots and the neighborhood residents would maintain them. NYC Parks Dept. Green Thumb supplies the gardens with soil, seed packets and some tools. They also supply technical support like rodent control, how to build a vegetable bed, etc.

Pembroke Avenue Community Garden is currently managed and owned by NY Restoration Project. This garden was established in 1925 and is 4400 square feet. The current amenities are garden beds, a gazebo and picnic tables, and a free book-share club. Community Gardens must be open to the public 20 hours a week. Ms. White was not sure on the membership of the garden.

Ms. White said for now, there is a hold on opening new gardens. They are working on finishing the gardens that are in process of opening. There are no vacant City-owned properties within the boundaries of CB11. She suggested identifying potential new garden space that is privately owned for when the new garden application process resumes.

Ms. White stated that Pembroke Avenue Garden has not had an open event in a long time. June 3rd and 4th is Open Garden NYC.

Mr. DiBenedetto opened the floor to Committee Member discussion. Ms. White said that a community garden is not allowed in a City park. Ms. Burke also asked about liability insurance for the gardens. Ms. White said there is a release form that is completed. Ms. White advised that the events posted in the presentation are open to the public; usually community garden planners attend. Soil testing is not usually preformed; there are garden beds and the method of garden mounds. If a private lot is found, the owner would remain, and they would allow the garden to be on the premises. Mr. DiBenedetto suggested a lot at the end of 24th Avenue. This lot was identified to be in CB7. Industrial pesticides are not allowed to be used in the gardens. Supplies are given to help with the cost of maintaining the gardens. Community Gardens must be accessible to the public and must be adjacent to the sidewalk.

Ms. Martino discussed locations that could be a possible garden. Ms. White said there has been success with gardens that are located next to a school. Mr. Euler said schools used to have an activity for students to plant and maintain gardens. Mr. Marziliano wanted to confirm that gardens (Pembroke Garden) must be open to the public for a minimum of 20 hours per week and have two public events per year. Ms. White confirmed that the main requirement is 20 hours opened to the public from April 1st through October 31st, 10 hours (5 hours on the weekend) must be posted, and the other 10 hours could be when the gardeners are working in the garden; there must be two public events per year. Mr. Marziliano stated that the Pembroke Garden gates are locked, and the public does not have access. Ms. White said the gates do not have to be opened from November 1st through March 31st. Ms. White will give Mr. Marziliano a contact for NY Restoration Project. To receive supplies and support, the 20-hour minimum requirement must be met. She will also investigate as to why the Pembroke Garden has not been open to the public. Ms. Martino suggested that the garden projects could be tied into the civic engagement initiative. She also stated that she would like to follow up with the City Council's Parks Committee.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 PM.