

# **Medford Community Garden Commission Working Practices**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to describe the working practices of the Medford Community Garden Commission. It serves as an internal document but will be available on our web site as public information. It is a summary and does not include all of our yearly activities.

This document was adopted by the Commission on [date] It will be reviewed annually and updated as needed to reflect current practices.

## **Makeup and Governance of the Commission**

The Medford Community Garden Commission was established on August 11, 2015 by Medford City Ordinance (1). The explicit purposes of the Commission are:

- To encourage community gardening in the city of Medford
- To provide an oversight body for existing community gardens
- To identify new garden sites and consult with neighbors, City employees and other stakeholders about the viability of each
- The Commission falls administratively under the Energy & Environment Department and our finances are monitored by E&E Officer.

## **Membership**

The Commission at this time consists of seven commissioners and up to two alternate commissioners, appointed by the city. This is an unpaid volunteer position subject to all of the rules, ethics and regulations governing Medford city commissions and councils. Six Commission members serve at the request of the Mayor; one serves at the request of the City Council; all appointments are for three years.

## **Meetings**

Commission meetings are subject to Massachusetts open meeting law, are open to the public, and are announced at least three days prior to the meeting using the following methods: posting by the City Clerk in City Hall, City online calendar, Facebook page, email to the Community Garden Google Group, event on the neighborhood resource NextDoor.

Commission decisions are taken by two-thirds of the voting body when a quorum is present.

## **Current Gardens**

The following locations currently hold gardens overseen by the Commission: Winthrop Street (Condon Shell), Tufts Park, McNally Park. Each garden community is self-governing; the Commission's role is to oversee gardens, coordinate membership, and mediate disputes among garden plot holders as needed.

Note: The Riverbend Garden near McGlynn Elementary School is an independent garden that was established before the commission was formed in 2015. It maintains its own waiting list but operates under similar rules to other Medford gardens.

## **POLICIES**

A waiting list is maintained by the Membership Coordinator and includes the names of all current applicants as well as those who have requested a plot in a different garden. It is organized by date of original application.

Within each garden beds are allocated and rotated based on seniority.

The steering committee for each garden handles disputes; problems are referred to the Garden Commission as needed.

Information about community gardens and the Commission is available on the Community Garden web page.

New garden locations are ideally identified by community members in a particular neighborhood but may also be suggested by City officials or members of the Commission. Once it is determined that there is neighborhood support for the new garden, through open meetings and communication with neighbors, a design may be proposed and funding sought.

Ideally the procedure for establishing a new garden should be a collaboration between the Commission and local residents:

- One or more residents suggest a location to the Commission
- Residents determine optimal location based on observation of park activities and sun study
- Petition is circulated to all abutters and nearby residents (sample petition available on MCGC web site)
- Open meeting is held preferably near the site to gauge neighborhood feedback
- DPW staff, Parks Board and Recreation Department consulted for feedback about use of space
- Design is initiated and funding sought.

Resources:

(1) Medford Municode that established Medford Community Garden Commission on 8/11/2015:  
[https://library.municode.com/ma/medford/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIREOR\\_CH2AD\\_ARTIIBOCOCO\\_DIV14COGACO](https://library.municode.com/ma/medford/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIIREOR_CH2AD_ARTIIBOCOCO_DIV14COGACO)

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/healthtopics/healthyfood/community.htm>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4929211/>

<https://escholarship.org/content/qt6bh7j4z4/qt6bh7j4z4.pdf>